



Survey of Youth Offending Teams

The Report

Prepared for:



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1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Background

1. Young people are responsible for 17 per cent of all proven offences, and on average young offenders are more likely to re-offend than adults. Youth offending teams (YOTs) were established in 1998 to address offending behaviour by young people in England and Wales. There are 157 in total, covering all local authorities. They are made up of at least one representative from each of local police, probation, social, educational and health services, and are responsible for the delivery of youth justice services such as the assessment of offenders and supervision of community based sentences. YOTs receive support from the Youth Justice Board (the Board), which oversees the whole of the youth justice system in England and Wales.
2. The NAO commissioned Carol Goldstone Associates (CGA) to undertake a survey with YOTs as part of its value for money study.¹

1.2 Research objectives

3. The survey concentrated on four areas: the setting of priorities, the role of the Board and centrally produced guidance, working arrangements (specifically attitudes towards funding), and ways in which the system could be improved.
4. Within these areas, the topics of interest were:
 - How YOTs decide which groups to prioritise
 - How priority groups influence the allocation of resources within YOTs
 - Whether there are any groups not normally recognised as a priority that YOTs believe should be further supported
 - Exploring how applicable the range of assessment tools is to local needs
 - The quality and uptake of centrally produced guidance, and whether this embodies best practice
 - How well the Board's Performance Improvement Framework measures the overall effectiveness of YOTs' work with young people

¹ This report can be found on the National Audit Office website at www.nao.org.uk/Youth-Justice-2010

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- Positive and negative aspects of having a wide range of potential sources of funding

1.3 *Research methodology*

5. A Delphi methodology was adopted, using a baseline and a follow-up questionnaire. With a Delphi methodology the first wave is exploratory, allowing respondents to identify and fully explore in their own words exactly what they consider to be the key issues. Once these key issues have been identified, the second wave is intended to confirm the extent to which these messages are shared or rejected by the full sample of respondents.
6. A web-based survey was deemed the most appropriate method, as this allowed electronic questionnaires to be sent to the YOT heads of service and passed, if necessary, to nominated deputies. Where requested, questionnaires were made available as a hard copy.
7. The NAO prepared and piloted a draft baseline questionnaire prior to the award of contract. The final version of the baseline questionnaire was refined by the NAO, with input from CGA. It comprised nine open questions. Heads of service were given the option to consult with colleagues within the YOT before finalising their submissions.
8. The follow-up questionnaire, sent to all YOTs, including those who had not responded to the baseline questionnaire, was inserted in the body of an e-mail, and comprised ten statements, each with a four-point agree/disagree scale, clarifying some of the key messages emerging from the baseline survey. Copies of the questionnaires used for both elements of the survey are appended to this report.
9. The timescale for both surveys was fourteen weeks from commission to draft report. In order to meet the timing and maximize response rates, we adopted the following methodology:
 - Distribution of an advance e-mail letter from the NAO, sent to heads of service of all YOTs in England and Wales, advising them of the research, explaining the requirements of the survey and requesting their input. In addition, the Board sent out a separate letter to YOTs alerting them to the survey.

Baseline survey:

- E-mail to all heads of service with electronic link to on-line baseline survey

- Provision of a hot-line telephone number at CGA in case of queries
- Two e-mailed reminders to non-respondents during the main fieldwork period
- After the second e-mailed reminder, follow-up phone-calls to non-respondents before the close of the survey, and if required, an extension date agreed
- A final round of phone-calls and e-mails after the close to those who had completed some, but not all, of the questionnaire to request use of the incomplete data held.

Follow-up questionnaire:

- Following the preliminary analysis of the baseline questionnaire, an interim report was compiled and ten follow-up questions were devised.
- A one-page e-mail was compiled, including an explanation of requirements and the follow-up questionnaire, which could be read and completed in an estimated time of five minutes, to minimise the burden on the recipient.

1.4 Target and achieved samples

10. The baseline survey was sent to all 157 YOTs in England and Wales on 18 June 2010. Table 1 shows that, out of the 157 YOTs, we received a total of 83 responses (53 per cent response rate), including twelve partial responses where not all questions were answered.

Table 1 Baseline questionnaire timescales and response rates

Week	Date	Action/Stage	Total number and % achieved
1	w/c 7 June 2010	Survey commissioned	
2	18 June 2010	Baseline online survey despatched	0 (0%)
5	9 July 2010	Online survey closed	68 (43%)
6	w/c 12 July 2010	Hard copies added	71 (45%)
6	w/c 12 July 2010	Partial submissions added	83 (53%)

11. Table 2 shows that the follow-up survey obtained a response rate of 67 per cent.

Table 2 Follow-up questionnaire timescales and response rates

Week	Date	Action/Stage	Total number and % achieved
7	23 July 2010	Survey e-mailed out	0 (0%)
9	4 August 2010	1 st reminder e-mailed out	51 (32%)
10	13 August 2010	2 nd reminder e-mailed out	76 (48%)
13	3 September 2010	3 rd reminder e-mailed out	104 (66%)
14	10 September 2010	Close of survey	105 (67%)

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 *Setting priorities*

12. Statutory groups, i.e. those who are subject to a disposal, were the first priority for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), but other groups were identified as priorities on the basis of their Asset scores and using the Scaled Approach. The most highly violent and persistent offenders tended to be prioritised.
13. Setting priorities was often undertaken through partnerships so that the partnership priorities informed those of the YOT. It was common to use local intelligence to set priorities and, in some cases, consultation with the local community. Both national and local issues were considered.
14. Resources followed priorities. This meant that resource was often scarce for non-priority groups and this situation was expected to worsen with the anticipated cutbacks.
15. In general, YOTs thought that the most appropriate groups had been identified as priorities. However, other groups most likely to be identified as requiring higher priority were young people with learning difficulties or mental health issues; young sex offenders and children in care or looked-after children.
16. While recognized as a priority area, there was no universal pattern for handling prevention work and the involvement of YOTs varied substantially. A relatively common route was for prevention work to be undertaken by local multi-agency groups.
17. Prevention work was limited by lack of funds. In particular, some areas could undertake very little outreach work. In such cases, siblings of young offenders tended to be the first priority although elsewhere, outreach programmes were far more expansive and covered schools and street work. Several YOTs reported good outcomes from recently introduced Triage programmes.
18. YOTs described clearly developed routes to engage with families, either directly or through partnership agencies. In particular, 'Think Family' was mentioned by a number of YOTs as having been adopted within their area. Every area had dedicated parenting or family workers either within the YOT or based in other agencies, such as social services, or within local neighbourhood and family units.

2.2 *The role of the Youth Justice Board*

19. Centrally produced guidance was generally considered a valuable template for good practice, although some criticised the 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Overall YOTs used guidance as a basis for their day to day work but adapted it where necessary to meet their own local circumstances. Although many sources of guidance provided good 'how to' guides, some YOTs said that they lacked sufficient relevant detail about 'what works best' in individual cases and considered that overall guidance failed to provide evidence-based, fully researched information to assist them in their work with young people.
20. Some sources of guidance were more useful than others, and often they were perceived as too detailed and repetitive for practitioners to use effectively. Of the sources of guidance used currently by YOTs, information on the National Standards for Youth Justice Services emerged as the most frequently mentioned, useful source. Few YOTs felt strongly that any one source is particularly poor. A minority however, did single out the Directory of Emerging Practice as limited in its usefulness, and Case Management Guidance as overly dense and requiring a quick reference guide.
21. The Youth Justice Board's Performance Improvement Framework elicited mainly negative reactions, and was not seen by the majority as an effective tool to fully capture the strengths and weaknesses of YOTs' work. Some felt it did not measure 'soft outcomes' efficiently, while others complained that the documentation was excessively time consuming to complete. Currently completion of the Capacity and Capability Framework can take up what was thought to be a disproportionate amount of senior personnel's time.

2.3 *Working arrangements*

22. Slightly more YOTs identified negative aspects of having a wide range of potential sources of funding than mentioned positive ones. One of the main challenges was the administrative burden in terms of the application and monitoring process. A minority felt strongly that prescriptive terms and conditions could be counter-productive because they preclude flexibility and creativity. Moreover, the short-term nature of most funding sources has a negative impact on long-term planning.
23. Among the positives, YOTs said that multiple funding sources allowed for closer partnership working, and helped create resilience. Ring-fencing money was viewed

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- positively by some YOTs, preventing money from being absorbed into mainstream funding.
24. Good working relationships with partner agencies were perceived as critical and, with few exceptions, relationships worked well and to the benefit of the service. Commonly, YOT staff developed relationships with their peers in other agencies within the local authority.
25. There was little evidence of YOTs experiencing difficulties obtaining local information and intelligence. Most were able to access relevant databases or had procedures in place for information sharing. When facing difficulties in moving cases forward, a substantial number had formal protocols for escalating issues.
26. Few YOTs wanted or needed intervention from the Youth Justice Board or central government to aid their collaboration with other agencies. However, some YOTs, especially where working relationships were not deemed good, felt it would be helpful if other agencies were given some accountability for young offenders and/or had congruent targets to the YOT.

2.4 Potential changes

27. When asked to name changes that would make their work with young people more effective, half of the YOTs that responded called for changes to the funding system. The need for sustainable funding was highlighted by a number of YOTs, in particular the need for guaranteed funding streams for prevention work. When this was quantified in the follow-up survey, there was almost total agreement with the statement 'There is not enough stability in the funding our YOT receives for prevention', with 92 per cent agreement, mostly strong agreement.
28. The other most common request was for more evidence-based intervention programmes specifying 'what works'.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 *Setting priorities*

3.1.1 Local priorities

Q1. Some groups of young offenders have been identified as priorities for action. These groups include persistent offenders, those who commit violent crime, and those engaged in anti-social behaviour.

How applicable are these priorities to your local situation?

We would be interested to hear:

- How you decide which groups to prioritise in your local area.
- How priority groups influence the allocation of resources in your Youth Offending Team.
- Whether there is any group that is not normally recognized as a priority, but that you believe should be.

Deciding which groups to prioritise in the local area

29. In general, the first priority for all YOTs were statutory groups. These are young people subject to a reprimand, final warning or conviction in court (collectively known as 'disposals'). In particular, those in the 'Deter Young Offenders' (DYO) cohort were identified as a key priority. These are the 20 to 50 individuals in each area who are not yet prolific but, without intervention, may become so.² Other groups within the youth justice system were also identified as priorities. Examples of these included cases such as anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) recipients, first-time offenders and those at risk of offending.
30. Asset assessments and the Scaled Approach were widely used to assess the risks and needs of young people.³ Figure 1 shows that, within the follow-up survey, the vast majority of respondents (90 out of 105, 86 per cent) agreed with the statement 'The

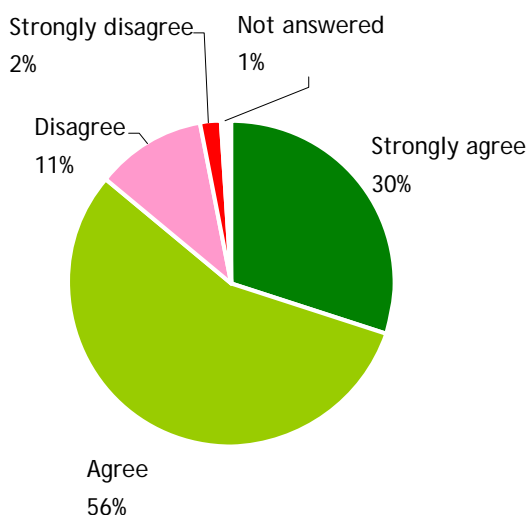
² See the Board's website: <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/ImprovingPractice/PPO/>

³ See HC 663 *The Youth Justice System in England and Wales: Reducing offending by young people*, Part two, www.nao.org.uk/Youth-Justice-2010

Scaled Approach allows our YOT to target resources at those young people who most need them’.

Figure 1 Attitude to Scaled Approach

"The Scaled Approach allows our YOT to target resources at those young people who most need them"



Base: 105 YOTs

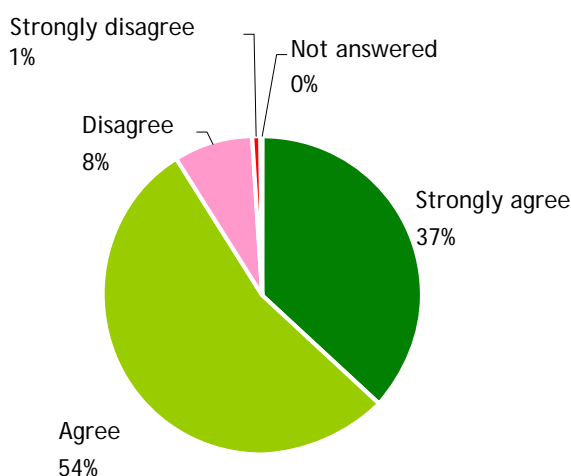
31. This finding was supported by the favourable impression of those YOTs commenting on these assessment tools.

'In terms of identification, the introduction of the Scaled Approach has been very useful. While in the past we always sought to manage cases using a risk model this change has brought greater clarity and consistency to the work'

32. There was no indication that the structure of the YOT impedes their work with priority groups. Figure 2 shows that, within the follow-up survey, nearly all YOTs agreed with the statement 'The structure of our YOT is suited to helping the groups of young people we identify as local priorities'. Out of 105 YOTs, 96 agreed with this statement (91 per cent), with a substantial number of these agreeing strongly (39 respondents, 37 per cent).

Figure 2 Suitability of YOT structure

"The Structure of our YOT is suited to helping the groups of young people we identify as local priorities"



Base: 105 YOTs

33. YOTs set priorities in liaison with their partners, for example, Crime and Safety Partnerships (CSPs). Several YOTs noted that they used available data such as local police intelligence data to identify priority groups. Others consulted with local agencies such as schools, businesses and, particularly, local community groups and residents.
34. Priorities were generally a mixture of national and local concerns. YOTs acknowledged the need to incorporate national priorities but also wanted to include the local context.

'Some groups of young offenders are prioritised as a result of national requirements e.g. prolific and other priority offenders (PPOs), multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) cases, offenders who pose a risk of harm (driven by the inspectorate). Others are driven by local priorities e.g. sex offenders.'

'Priorities are decided by local partnerships (taking into account national priorities) but are based on impact to the local community or risk posed to either individuals or groups'

35. A small number of YOTs felt that national priorities meant that they could be obliged to concentrate resource on issues that were not significant problems locally.

'Priority groups are often defined by central government and are mandatory, some have funding attached to them. These groups are not always a high priority locally.'

How priority groups influence the allocation of resources

36. In nearly every case, YOTs reported that resources follow priorities. Thus, those individuals identified through the Scaled Approach as requiring intensive intervention were allocated the most resource. This generally implied the most experienced case workers as well as a greater time allocation.
37. Some YOTs faced challenges with resourcing, especially for non priority cases. Once resource had been allocated to priorities and other mandatory requirements had been accounted for, the remaining resource had to be spread very thinly.

'We are a small YOT ... and funding enables us to perform our statutory duties ... However this is spread across the field with little opportunity to move funding around to concentrate on particular areas. With this year's cuts already impacting this is unlikely to change.'

38. A few YOTs discussed how they allocate resource in conjunction with partners. Partnership resource discussions were generally perceived as a positive feature. Partners could be called on to provide resource under specific circumstances or to fill unmet needs.

'We sit on the [CSP] locally and the annual strategic intelligence assessment also helps us to identify priority groups / types of offence to focus on.'

'We do have panels that focus specifically on those young people who are persistent offenders / violent offenders which are multi-agency and we gear some of our group programmes more keenly to these groups as funding allows.'

'This group of young people [DYO cohort and MAPPA cases] will receive additional management oversight at High Risk Planning Meetings (HRPM), this forum is a multi-agency planning meeting that agrees objectives for individual young people and the relevant agencies. Any unmet need is recorded and escalated through the appropriate management structures.'

Identification of groups that would benefit from increased support

39. Just under half of responding YOTs identified one or more types of young people who would benefit from higher priority and increased resources. A small number of those not identifying other priorities specifically commented that they were already able to prioritise all appropriate groups.
40. Amongst those groups identified as requiring higher priority, those most frequently mentioned were young people with mental health problems, learning disabilities or other types of special education needs; young sex offenders; and looked after children and those in care. Several other groups were each identified by between three and five YOTs as requiring higher priority. These included young women; very young

children; care leavers and other homeless young people; those from homes with alcohol problems and suffering or inflicting domestic violence; travellers and asylum seekers; vulnerable young people (including those who are first time offenders or at risk of becoming so); and those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Arching across these groups, there was concern for vulnerable young people leaving home, school or care.

41. In a small number of instances, YOTs provided examples of local initiatives that have been introduced to try to deal with those whom they had identified as requiring higher priority.

'Outcomes Research Project evidences that an area we need to focus on is the emerging medium risk group. It appears that this group, particularly those on a higher numerical scale, have poorer recidivism outcomes.'

42. Some of the programmes that were currently in place for groups not identified as priorities were considered to be inappropriate, inadequately targeted or under resourced.

'Working with young females often requires differences in approaches and so forth and it would be helpful to see more national attention on this issue. We would like more national attention to be focused upon the needs of young perpetrators of 'domestic violence'. The latter are often not seen by a relevant domestic violence agency within the period of their Statutory Order due to the length of waiting lists.'

3.1.2 Prevention work

Q2. In recent years, the Government has increased its focus on prevention work with young people. YOTs are expected to carry out prevention as well as sentence-related work.

How do you *identify* and *engage with* young people in your local area who are on the cusp of getting involved in crime for the first time?

- How do you balance your prevention work with your work with young people who have sentences?
- When it comes to prevention work, how many of the service users you work with are referred to you by the police or the courts and how many are young people to whom you yourself have reached out?
- How do you use neighbourhood- and family- focused work to identify young people who are on the cusp of getting involved in crime for the first time?

How prevention work is organised within the area

43. YOTs handled prevention work in a range of ways. Amongst the variations described by YOTs were:

- In some areas, prevention was the sole responsibility of the YOT whereas elsewhere it was undertaken by special units set up by partnerships, for example, involving police and social services.
- Some YOTs were the lead partner for prevention while elsewhere another partner took the lead.
- Where YOTs did have the prime responsibility for prevention work, some had dedicated workers and/or teams who handled only prevention work.

'(Our city) has established a Youth Crime Prevention Partnership (YCPP), chaired by the YOT head of service. This is the strategic lead for prevention services in the city and comprises managers from a wide variety of services and agencies including police, anti-social behaviour, education, children's services and both local authority and third sector service providers.'

- A range of programmes were identified as undertaking all or part of the prevention agenda. Common programmes included Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs), Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISPs) and Targeted Youth Support Services (TYSSs).⁴

Balancing statutory and prevention work

44. There was a wide diversity in the balance of prevention cases compared with statutory cases. A substantial number of YOTs found it difficult to comment on this, because they do not have the prime responsibility for prevention. Where a balance was identified, the proportion of prevention cases, as defined by the number of referrals, ranged from 15 to 50 per cent of the total in the YOTs' caseload, with 20 to 25 per cent being most frequently cited.

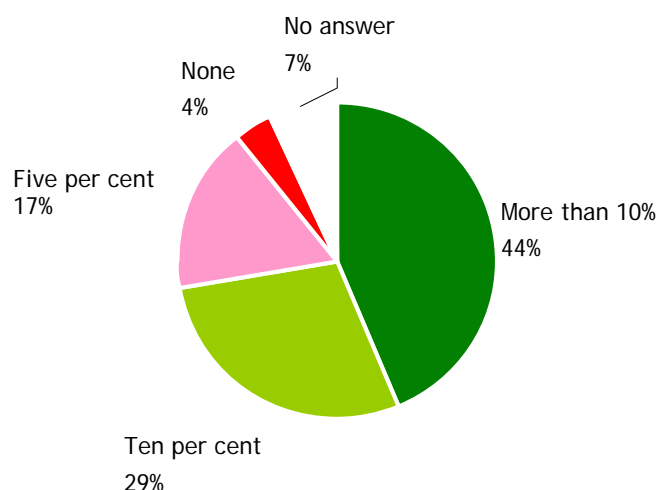
45. Figure 3 shows some findings from our follow-up survey. A substantial majority of YOTs devoted 10 per cent or more of their resources to young people who have not yet

⁴ See the Board's website: <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjs/Prevention/YIP/>

committed an offence. Nearly half (44 per cent) devoted more than 10 per cent of resources to this group and a further 29 per cent devoted around 10 per cent.

Figure 3 Percentage of resources devoted to prevention work

"Approximately how much of the resources of your YOT are devoted to young people who have not yet committed an offence?"



Base: 105 YOTs

46. There were some concerns voiced that funding for prevention, primarily through grants, was inadequate. Others were worried about future funding as any reduction could have a substantial negative impact on the service they could provide.

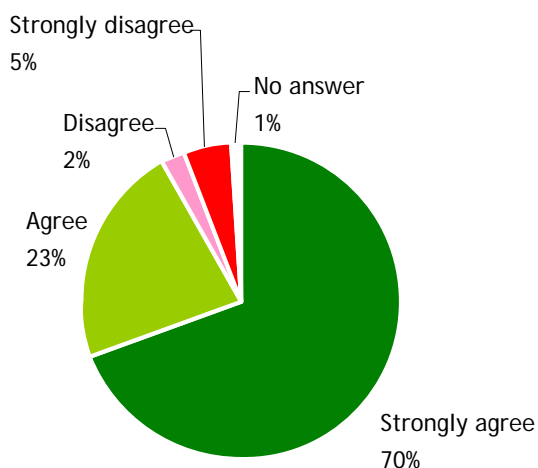
'All our preventative work is grant funded and if the grants end as they are due to in March 2011 we will no longer provide preventative work. At present we can provide good prevention work as we get special ring fenced grants for it so easy to keep separate but if the grants end the work ends. Government guidance is not enough if not backed up by funding. We currently struggle to meet the needs of our offenders on statutory orders and thus will not dilute this work further to carry out work that is good and valuable but which we are not funded for and which we do not have a statutory duty to provide.'

'At present the preventative work is carried out by grant funded staff who we are at risk of losing as funding for their posts is only assured to March 2011.'

47. We followed this up in the quantitative survey, asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with the statement: 'There is not enough stability in the funding our YOT receives for prevention'. Figure 4 shows that the level of agreement with this statement was almost total, with 93 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing. No other question in our follow-up survey produced such a strong reaction.

Figure 4 Perceived lack of stability in funding for prevention

“There is not enough stability in the funding our YOT receives for prevention”



Base: 105 YOTs

48. Several YOTs noted that they review their prevention services regularly to target resources in the optimum way.

'We regularly look at cohorts of young people within the criminal justice system and resources are allocated to address issues identified. For example, review of the custody cohort highlighted that many of those receiving custody entered the criminal justice system at an early age. As a result, prevention practitioners have been required to offer support to young people at risk of entering the [criminal justice system] and those receiving first disposals.'

49. Several YOTs reported having to restrict their prevention work, either by limiting their target groups or by trying to prioritise potential cases.

'Prevention is seen as crucial in order to divert young people away from the criminal justice system. The YOT has about 300 statutory cases and 250 prevention cases and we now have to prioritise referrals and operate a waiting list.'

Working with partners on prevention

50. YOTs provided several examples of successful collaboration with their partners. However, a small number of YOTs acknowledged that this is a challenging area for them or that there was little prevention work available within their area.

'(Our) YOT currently has no specific preventions service/team. In terms of targeted youth support, this has been led by the youth service/integrated services with little impact on outcomes for this vulnerable group.'

51. One YOT was particularly concerned with the role of the Board. It felt that prevention work should have been led by local authorities, YOTs and Children's Trusts.

'It should have been clearer from the outset that the prevention agenda is one to be led by the local authority with its partners (including YOTs) and a key focus of Children's Trusts. The hijacking of this agenda by the YJB was not helpful and led to a lack of clarity and to some extent let the local authority off the hook.'

Outreach and sources of referral

52. Some YOTs ran outreach programmes whereas others did none at all. Lack of funding and resource were the main reasons given for doing no outreach, although some areas were structured so that the outreach work was undertaken by partners rather than by the YOTs.

'Prevention work is not undertaken from within the YOT but is managed through Community Safety Partnership which is part of the same management structure as the YOT ... We do not have the resource to undertake outreach work from the YOT.'

53. Those YOTs undertaking outreach programmes most commonly involved schools. Others undertaking outreach included street engagement teams, teenage pregnancy workers and anti-social behaviour (ASB) teams. Amongst those targeted for outreach, however, the most commonly mentioned group were siblings of those in the youth justice system.
54. YOTs (or their partners) received referrals from a very wide range of agencies in addition to those from the police and courts, including schools, children's social services, ASB teams and Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISPs). Many areas accepted self-referrals, although these were rare, and those with dedicated teams, such as street engagement teams, were also able to generate their own referrals for prevention cases.
55. A number of YOTs identified Triage schemes as a relatively new but very successful area for prevention work. This is a scheme that aims to bring a YOT worker into the

police station to make early and rapid assessments of young people, so enabling diversion of those on the cusp of entering the youth justice system.

'The development and implementation of the Triage process within [our YOT] has further supported and impacted on the reduction in first time entrants'

'In partnership with the police, we introduced Triage ... We anticipate that referrals by the police of vulnerable young people to our prevention service will increase as a result of this development'

56. One YOT reported that its new Triage scheme now accounts for 50 per cent of its prevention cases.

Engaging with families

57. YOTs described clearly developed routes to engage with families, either directly or through partnership agencies. In particular, 'Think Family' was mentioned by a number of YOTs as having been adopted within their area. This is a cross-departmental programme that aims to improve the coordination of children's, adults' and family services. Many respondents mentioned that, as a result of 'Think Family', there are now Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) established in their areas. These projects comprise a number of interventions with the top 50 families most in need.

'The YOT manages the Family Intervention Project for the county and this is used to work with those families with complex needs where offending is a serious possibility.'

58. YOTs tended to have close relationships with local schools. A number of YOTs mentioned that they could engage with families through Safer School Partnerships (SSPs). These are initiatives to address crime in and around schools. All SSPs have a police officer based in the school.
59. One YOT reported that its work with schools included training of teachers in the restorative approach for children at risk of entering the youth justice system. Restorative justice encompasses a number of initiatives to make offenders aware of the consequences of their offences, and give victims an opportunity to explain the impact that crime has had on them. Discussion groups, involving both offenders and victims, are an example of restorative justice.
60. Every area had dedicated parenting or family workers either within the YOT or based in other agencies, such as social services, or within local neighbourhood and family units. Ties between the YOT prevention workers and these other teams were strong.

The overall objective for the YOT was to engage an entire family to try to change a young person's behaviour before they enter the youth justice system.

'The service concentrates on a family-focused approach with the emphasis on engaging both the child and parent in the interventions. This means that initial assessment[s] are agreed with the family prior to taking their case to the multi-agency Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (YISP). From the YISP, staff return to the family to agree and sign off the package of interventions and the worker maintains this contact through the intervention at regular home visits when work is undertaken with the whole family. Staff also support the parent(s) to attend parenting support programmes which are purchased in the borough under the 'Think Family' strategy.'

3.2 The role of the Youth Justice Board

3.2.1 Applicability of guidance

- Q3. How do you use centrally-produced guidance to implement interventions in your local area?
- Does the available guidance embody good practice as you understand it?
 - Does it provide the right level of detail for you to apply it successfully in your work?
 - Are there any gaps?

Overall view of guidance and good practice

61. Centrally-produced guidance was mainly viewed positively and overall YOTs felt it embodied good practice as they understood it, although a number commented that it needs to be contextualized locally. For example, one YOT felt that guidance is more appropriate to urban rather than rural circumstances.

'We note that there is a generally urban-centric model used that needs to be varied to meet the needs of large rural areas'

'I have not received any adverse comments (from practice staff), aside from the common London-centric mantra.... My view is that national guidance operates on a one-size-fits-all analogy and therefore is not always applicable at a regional, sub-regional and particularly local level'

'The documents embody good practice however, as they are national documents, staff are required to seek guidance elsewhere on the procedures and resources that are available locally and that can limit the frequency that staff refer to them'

62. A number of YOTs mentioned that guidance ensured consistency in the YOTs at management, practice and partnership levels. Others considered it to be an essential part of training, and used it as an induction and reference tool for all new members of staff. Many YOTs reported that it was a good reference point for their staff and formed a comprehensive and regularly consulted resource used to inform much of their work with young people.

63. A small minority commented that they found much of the available guidance was poor, repetitive and quickly outdated. Others commented that it has become unwieldy and therefore difficult to navigate. A minority felt it could be improved by streamlining and two YOTs suggested that an 'easy to look up/bullet point precis' would be helpful for Case Management Guidance. This was produced by the Board in 2009 with the aim of assisting YOT workers in managing cases. It covers the procedures from dealing with a young person following arrest, to working in court and planning and managing interventions after sentencing.

'The Case Management Guidance is very comprehensive but it is really necessary to look up [this] and National Standards to ensure nothing is missed and to read and understand both fully is very daunting prospect for busy staff and managers'

Guidance content and level of detail

64. Many YOTs, including some that considered centrally produced guidance embodies good practice, found some sources more useful than others in terms of content and level of detail. One of the challenges mentioned by several in the baseline survey was the fact that guidance could be too general.
65. Examples were found of YOTs describing the guidance as providing the correct amount of detail, too much or insufficient:

'Guidance is good, helpful and supportive and provides the right level of detail for YOTs'

'The guidance is a useful tool ... but it can sometimes be too lengthy and over prescriptive'

'Guidance on the Scaled Approach was well set out and helpful in preparing for the legislative changes. However, what made this particularly helpful were the regional meetings which allowed an interactive learning process. I think without these the guidance may have been a little limited as it didn't really focus on the level of detail I felt was needed to fully understand the changes.'

66. Some felt that while guidance provides a framework for good practice, there was insufficient detail about 'what works best' in individual cases.

'The guidance varies in its usefulness. Generally I find the guidance too general without sufficient specific detail about what intervention would work best'

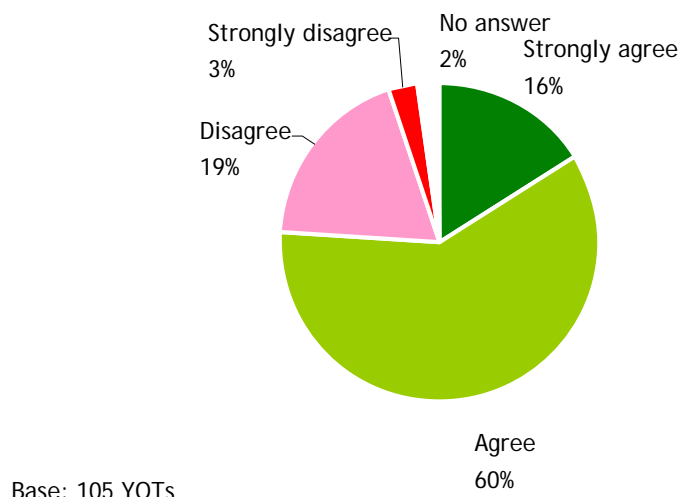
'The guidance embodies good practice, but this is largely about what should be done and not always how to do it ... detail can sometimes be lacking on specific interventions for specific issues, although the principles of effective practice are clear'

67. In the follow-up survey we asked whether YOTs agreed or disagreed with the statement 'It is difficult to find evidence on 'what works' for certain areas of our

work'. Figure 5 shows that approximately three quarters of YOTs that replied (80 out of 105), agreed with this statement.

Figure 5 Evidence on 'what works'

"It is difficult to find evidence on 'what works' for certain areas of our work"



68. Another difficulty highlighted in the baseline survey by several YOTs was the problem that guidance on 'what works' can sometimes fail to differentiate sufficiently between what is evidence-based and what is not. Guidance tends to be presented as 'good practice' or 'best practice'. Although one YOT commented that they assumed that guidance is based on sound research and evidence, others disputed this assumption. There were several calls for more information on evidence based practice to assist them in their day to day work with young people:

'The available guidance probably does embody 'good practice' but distinguishes insufficiently between what is evidence based and what is not. It is alarming that the research evidence in relation to much of what we do seems not to have improved over the past decade'

'There is a proliferation of documents saying what you 'could do' but nothing that says to a practitioner that this is what research shows will work with this young person in this particular circumstance In the end this confuses the practitioner'

'There's very little on evidence based interventions to tackle different offences'

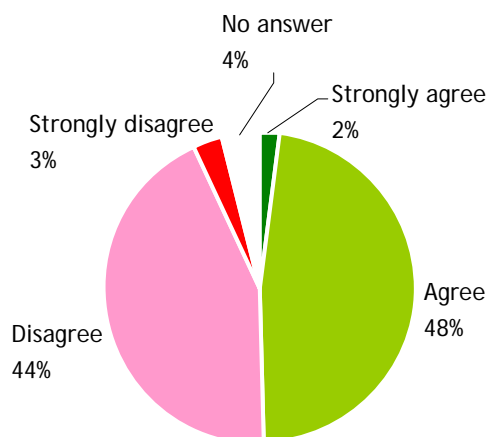
'YJB-accredited, evidence-based (or preferred) programmes would have assisted in effective joint commissioning and procurement at a sub-regional and local level'

69. To clarify to what extent information disseminated by the YJB on 'what works' is perceived as having a convincing evidence base, we put this directly to respondents in

the follow-up survey. As shown in Figure 6, there was a division of opinions, with half agreeing (52 out of 105, 50 per cent) and half disagreeing (49 out of 105, 47 per cent).

Figure 6 Evidence base for information disseminated by the Board

"The information disseminated by the YJB on 'what works' has a convincing evidence base"



Base: 105 YOTs

70. A few commented that guidance can be too prescriptive and a minority felt it does not allow for or encourage innovative approaches:

'(Guidance is) sometimes too restrictive and constrains the innovative approaches that we feel sometimes work better (locally)'

'It does not always recognise the need for differing practice and innovation in response to local priorities, agendas and organisational constructs'

71. Another criticism was that the guidance tends to be adapted from the adult model, which is not always appropriate for younger age groups:

'Detail can sometimes be lacking on specific interventions for specific issues, although the principles of effective practice are clear - though drawn largely from research for older age groups'

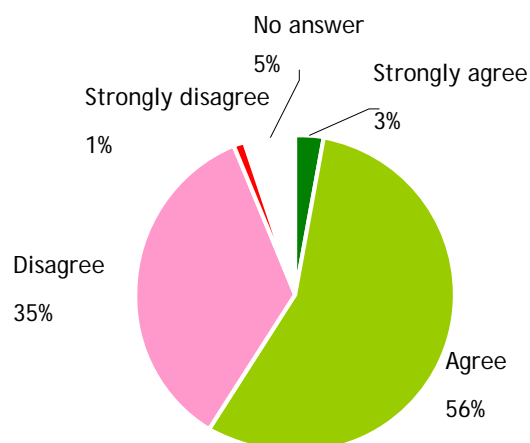
'... much of it (evidence) is drawn from the adult world, or research from the USA and other countries which does not necessarily translate into the UK context'

72. A follow-up statement in the quantitative survey, 'The available information on 'what works' produced by the YJB and others, is difficult to implement in practice', illustrates the problem encountered by a large number of YOTs here. Figure 7 shows

that more than half (62 out of 105, 59 per cent) agreed that it is difficult to implement in practice.

Figure 7 Difficulties in implementing 'what works' information

"The available information on 'what works'. produced by both the YJB and others, is difficult to implement in practice"

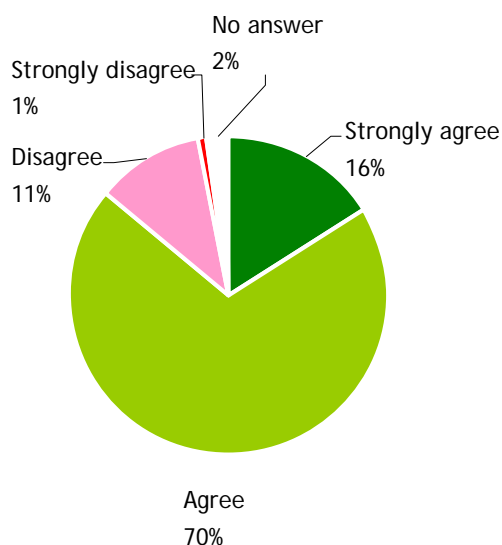


Base: 105 YOTs

73. Despite the difficulties in finding and implementing evidence-based interventions, Figure 8 shows that the majority of YOTs believe that their programmes match their understanding of best practice.

Figure 8 YOTs' understanding of best practice

"The majority of the programmes our YOT has in place match our understanding of best practice"



Base: 105 YOTs

3.2.2 Most and least useful guidance

Q4. Some of this guidance may be more theoretical than practical or may be more or less useful to you.

- Please tell us about the guidance you find most useful in your work with young people.
- Please list up to five pieces of guidance and be as specific as possible.
- Please tell us about any guidance that you find of little use in your work

Most useful guidance

74. YOTs rely on a very large body of sources of guidance. The 'top five' most useful were⁵:

1. National Standards. These establish the minimum requirements to which YOT services should adhere. They were revised in November 2009 by the Board alongside the introduction of the Scaled Approach.

⁵ It should be noted that the top four were all mentioned in a list of available guidance that was included within the questionnaire as a prompt.

-
2. Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEPs), especially the source documents. The Board defines KEEPs as a description of the features of effective services. It is a set of documents informed by the most recent national and international research.
 3. Case Management Guidance. See paragraph 63.
 4. Scaled Approach Guidance. See footnote 3.
 5. Asset Guidance. See footnote 3.
75. There were minority mentions for a wide range of other sources of guidance, including 'Assessment, Planning Interventions and Supervision Guidance', 'Sustaining the Success', 'Defending Young People', 'Managing Risk in the Community', 'Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements Guidance', 'Serious Incident Guidance', 'Making it Count in Court', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the practitioners' section of the Board's website.
 76. The most frequently mentioned guidance (by more than half of the YOTs that responded to this question) is National Standards and comments were mainly positive:

'National Standards provides [a] framework for casework practice and is the required guide for staff to relate to'
 77. However, a minority criticised the new National Standards, finding this guidance:

'too wordy and not very easy for frontline practitioners to use as an off the shelf guide ... vague about some things and can be open to interpretation - i.e. when it talks about monthly is it 28 days, 20 working days or a calendar month?'

'too detailed and should focus on the essentials'; 'overly-dense'

'useful but too cumbersome'
 78. The other most frequently mentioned source was the Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEPs). This elicited a mix of opinions.

'The bedrock of our practice'; an effective measure and a good way to assess baseline for improvement'

'KEEPs is good for new practitioners and those training, but rather basic for qualified workers.'

'Cumbersome [and] could benefit from consolidating into one resource'

Least useful guidance

79. When asked about any guidance that they felt was particularly poor or they found of little use in their work, less than half of the YOTs felt they could name any specific source that fell into this category. The general feeling among those who did mention

a particular source was that most guidance is of some use, although a minority of sources could be improved. For example KEEPs was mentioned by several as no longer referred to on a regular basis.

80. The Directory of Emerging Practice is a tool that enables members of YOTs to post their opinions on 'what works'. It is available on the Board's website. In our survey, a few YOTs commented that the Directory had not been very successful. The main criticism was that it contains examples that are presented as 'good practice' but some YOTs were not convinced that this is the case:

'The Directory of Emerging Practice does not include anything that leaves us thinking - we must do that'... - we haven't found this very helpful. Maybe YJB put on whatever people submit - we are not convinced they are always best practice'

'The Directory of Emerging Practice is a flop and symptomatic of the YJB's reluctance to go beyond their statutory functions ... and provide services for YOTs. So it's a ragbag of mediocrity'

'Has its limitations ... Does not contain practices that have been independently measured and evaluated ... Difficult to download, little new material and lacking in innovation'

'The Directory of Emerging Practice is not useful ... We acknowledge the role of the YJB in disseminating good practice but this is not an effective way to do it. We need practice that has evidenced results and outcomes'

'The Directory of Emerging Practice on the YJB website - it is often out of date'

'Helpful but only in a limited way - it is always interesting to see what other Teams are doing, but the quality of what is offered is not always apparent'

81. A minority of YOTs called for a gatekeeper to oversee the on-line information and review suggested items before they are uploaded.

Missing topics

82. Only a small number of YOTs identified what they felt were any significant gaps, mainly referring to their own individual circumstances. Most felt that the available guidance was fairly comprehensive and sufficient for day to day work. A small minority commented that one of the main gaps was around training. Due to budgetary constraints, some YOTs were now less able to support staff training to the same degree as formerly:

'As a service, we have largely avoided national conferences and training due to the high cost and limited benefits'

'The main gaps in the YJB support model are around training - it is very difficult to find good quality training companies which support YJB guidance and practice.'

'Not so much gaps as a need to consolidate the many different streams (of information and guidance) - this has become doubly important with local authorities strapped for cash and a corresponding impact on attending training/conferences'

-
83. A minority of YOTs suggested they had a need for legal advice:

'Legal advice is a problem - we use the Office of Public Sector Information website for legislation but we need access to legal advice - few local authorities can provide this effectively to YOTs. Again the YJB will say it is beyond their statutory brief (true) but they could really add value here again. We waste hours of time on this'

'It would be useful perhaps to have some more detailed legal guidance in relation to day to day legal implications/scenarios which crop up on a regular basis in the court setting'

84. One YOT commented on the lack of a framework, with clearly defined aims, within which YOTs can use available guidance:

'Any attempt to try to identify what is useful and what isn't would miss the key point that the very approach to guidance is misguided. It is not that the contents of the KEEPs or other guidance is poor (necessarily), the problem is there is no strategic framework within which to apply them. ... [This should be} an evidence based interventions framework (that is a framework - not a list of interventions!).'

3.2.3 Performance Improvement Framework

Q5. The Youth Justice Board has recently implemented the Performance Improvement Framework, which focuses on the capacity and capability of YOTS and their performance against National Indicators.

How well do you think the Performance Improvement Framework measures the overall *effectiveness* of your work with young people?

We would be interested to hear:

- if you think the Framework captures your strengths and weaknesses; and
- if you have any different ways of measuring effectiveness locally.

85. There were a range of attitudes towards the ability of the Board's Performance Improvement Framework to measure the overall effectiveness of the YOTs' work with young people. Only a quarter of YOTs responded in an overall positive manner and the majority were either negative or, while mentioning some benefits, felt it required modification, in order to fully capture the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

86. Several felt that the Performance Improvement Framework does not allow for the measurement of 'soft outcomes', e.g. engagement of young people with the YOT:

'It is perhaps not always able to reflect or measure the 'quality' of the work of the YOT on the frontline. The latter can be more of a 'soft' outcome than a 'hard' outcome'

'Let's not forget the importance of softer outcomes'

87. While many agreed that it does capture the strengths and weaknesses of their work with young people, and felt it is a useful device, many others agree with one YOT's comment that there is still a '*way to go to find a system of measuring effectiveness in every measure of our work*', and as an appraisal of overall effectiveness, in its current form it has its limitations:

'I don't think it captures the diversity of the work we do which may have a longer-term effect on community cohesion and re-offending. For example we have been training teachers in restorative practices to deal with poor behaviour in schools and this has resulted in halving of school exclusions over the last two years, but neither the framework nor the inspection process was interested in this element of our work'

'It's very limited as it doesn't measure the range of what we do.'

88. One of the main criticisms, voiced by several YOTs, was the fact that the Performance Improvement Framework documentation is very time consuming to complete. They felt that completion of the Capacity and Capability Framework element can be an

extremely bureaucratic exercise, involving a great amount of senior personnel's time, and can therefore be a costly process to complete:

'It was disproportionately bureaucratic and burdensome, taking up weeks of my time which could have been better used and therefore also a highly costly exercise'

'The Youth Justice Performance Improvement Framework has been extremely time consuming: estimate of 30+ management days to compile the necessary evidence'

89. There were calls from a few YOTs to streamline the process:

'The Capacity and Capability assessment is a useful tool for self-assessment but it needs to be streamlined and it would benefit from sections on governance and partnerships'

'... the present position would appear to see duplication and a phenomenal amount of Officers' time doing things twice. Therefore the key message is: streamline collection of information/data'

90. Another criticism levelled at the Performance Improvement Framework by a few YOTs was that it is too focused on the process rather than the outcome:

'It captures weaknesses better than strengths. The assessment criteria are too rigid. It is process rather than outcome-driven'

91. Comparisons with others within their 'YOT families' were not always thought to be appropriate because local circumstances could be different. A 'YOT family' is a group of YOTs with similar socio-economic indicators and is used by the Board for comparison purposes. A minority of YOTs felt the process could be misleading:

'Local effectiveness is not about how we do compared to our YOT family but how we improve year on year and more importantly, how this impacts on the community'

'... they are particularly inept in observing issues for YOTs that cover more than one area - i.e. ourselves. YOTs should be measured ...in relation to their specific contextual position, e.g. gangs and gun crime are essentially non-existent in our YOT but in neighbouring (urban) YOTs it is a very different situation'

3.2 Working arrangements

3.3.1 Multiple sources of funding

Q6. YOTs have access to funding from a wide range of sources in central and local government, as well as from grant-making bodies.

What are the *positive* aspects of having a wide range of potential sources of funding? Are there any *negative* aspects? We would be interested to hear about:

- How you decide whether or not to apply for a specific source of funding;
- How flexible or prescriptive the conditions attached to different sources of funding can be and what the implications of this are; and
- How you would assess the balance between the time you spend on funding administration - both applying and reporting back - and what you get in return

92. Slightly more YOTs identified negative aspects of having a wide range of potential sources of funding than mentioned positives.
93. Apart from the obvious advantage of additional funds being able to increase and enhance service delivery, the main advantage, highlighted by several YOTs, was that having access to multiple sources helps develop more creative and innovative ways of working:

'A diversity of funding sources provides a diversity of opportunities for trying things differently - if the funding for the service was restricted to one source, the risk would be that with one management line the opportunities for flexibility in approaches would be lost and there would be a danger of becoming risk-averse'

94. A number of YOTs mentioned that it allowed for closer partnership working:

'It promotes partnership working at operational and strategic levels across all agencies'

95. A minority of YOTs felt that it helps create resilience as the service was not entirely dependent upon one revenue stream, which could be cut or dry up:

'Having different funding streams can create resilience as the service is not entirely dependent on one single funding stream'

'It can help a team to become resilient as areas which become vulnerable due to uncertainty on funding may be supported elsewhere if the funding from local authorities is strong, for example'

96. The main disadvantage in having multiple sources of funding was the administrative burden it placed on YOTs in terms of the amount of time that was required: firstly to apply for them, and secondly to monitor and report back upon the spending once the grants have been allocated. More than half the YOTs who responded to this question complained about the amount of administration that the process involves, and a minority had been reluctant to apply for certain sources due to what they saw as the negative cost benefit:

'External funding is always sought and occasionally sourced but there is a considerable management cost - for example 80k per annum [from a specific funder] has 'cost' at least three weeks of senior management time, equating to approximately 3.5k in reporting and governance issues'

'Completing funding applications takes up a considerable amount of staff time and I have decided not to apply for funding before now on the basis of the amount of time I had to put into the application and then the quarterly feedback reports and visits from the funder meant that it was not cost effective or worthwhile for the amount available'

97. Many commented that grant terms and conditions are often very prescriptive and the implications of this were that it could stifle creativity, and the service's ability to respond effectively to local need:

'Less prescriptive funding conditions can allow for a broad opportunity to be creative and imaginative in delivery'

'The prescriptive nature of grant criteria means that we spend money on something that is just not relevant to meeting the needs of service users and our communities'

98. A few YOTs called for greater flexibility in the terms and conditions of funding in order that spend could suit local and current need:

'We prefer maximum flexibility so spend can suit local circumstances'

'Ring fencing of grants is useful but criteria should be relaxed to allow us to decide how best to deliver and meet need/risk'

99. However, ring-fencing was often seen as a positive, as well as a negative. One positive aspect of ring-fencing was that money allocated for specific purposes was indeed used for targeted schemes and not absorbed into mainstream provision:

'Although initially the prescriptive nature of the terms of the grants and the associated reporting mechanisms seem more trouble than they are worth, without them we would definitely not have created our highly successful custody Triage team'

'The benefits are that having some funds ring-fenced to YOTs (e.g. substance misuse) ensures service to young offenders and can be a protection from cuts'

'The conditions attached to grants are very prescriptive, however at least they ensure that the funding is spent on reducing offending and not subsumed into mainstream provision'

100. Many YOTs commented negatively upon the short term nature of some funding sources and the impact this had upon their work. One or even two years was sometimes a very short time to get a project off the ground and up and running. A number commented on staffing problems caused by the short-term nature of some grants, particularly where staff were recruited using these funds:

'The short-term nature of some funding makes long-term planning difficult. Practical issues such as recruiting experienced workers into short-term projects. And the lengthy processes to get projects up and running can impact on the decision to apply for specific sources of funding'

'The short-term nature of some funding streams ... makes recruiting and retaining staff difficult and sometimes the project is almost finished before it has had a chance to take effect'

'The short-term nature of grant funding means that just as the project starts to reap rewards, the funding ends ... it creates uncertainty for staff ... Staff are trained, delivering excellent outcomes but move on before the end of the grant term should another employment prospect come along'

3.3.2 Partnership working

Q7. YOT workers have to liaise with a wide range of local agencies in order to meet the needs of young people.

How, if at all, could central government, including the YJB, help you to work more effectively with local agencies?

We would be interested to hear about:

- How you obtain and use information held locally in order to do your work; and
- How you move your cases forward when input from local agencies is required but not forthcoming.

Working relationships

101. YOTs identified working relationships with their partners as critical in providing the highest quality service to the young people they work with. Only one indicated that they saw no benefit in developing relationships. A small number expressed a desire for improved relationships, suggesting difficulties with one or more of their partners. One respondent suggested that inter-agency relationships might be less robust in a period of financial restraint because of the increased tussle for limited funds.

'Now that money is tight, partnerships are starting to gently unravel and this needs to be checked.'

102. The general pattern was for staff to develop relationships with peers at a similar level in their area of responsibility. Allowing for occasional clashes of personality,

partnership relationships appeared to be particularly strong where staff were seconded or where office space was shared. Relationships could suffer if a new incumbent had a different approach or different priorities from his/her predecessor.

Obtaining local information

103. Most YOTs had access to a number of local databases and entry to these was greatly facilitated when appropriate protocols were in place. Information was used both for the preparation of local statistics and for handling specific cases. Amongst the databases mentioned were those held by the police, Crown Court, health services, social care and children's services.
104. A small number of local authorities maintained a central database for use by all relevant agencies. Where available, this was highly valued. Conversely, where there were a large number of databases, each held by a different agency, information sharing could be hindered by access problems.

'The fact that there are large numbers of different databases run by the partnership can sometimes make it more time consuming to locate where the information is held and there are times when information which might be useful is not known about so can't be accessed. However, there are plans to have an integrated system within children's services which should assist this.'

105. A number of YOTs reported that their area had implemented protocols or service level agreements that lay out the relevant framework for data sharing. They were considered to work well although one YOT expressed concerns that staff were not aware of what data could be legitimately shared. A small number of YOTs who currently worked under no protocols indicated a need for legislation to ensure partner agencies give adequate weight to the needs of the YOT and young offenders.

Moving cases forward

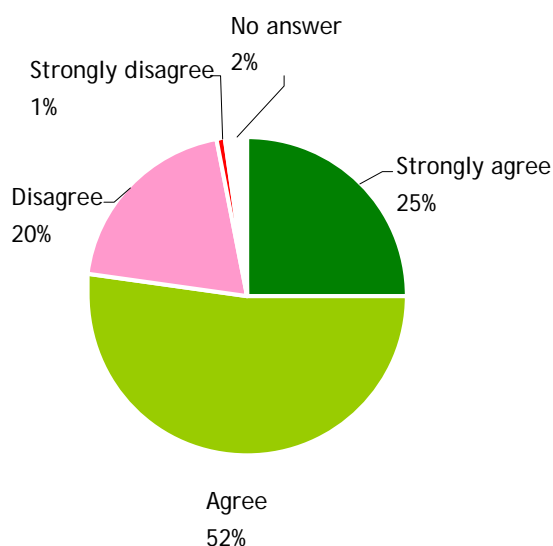
106. Protocols and service level agreements were important when considering how to move forward cases when the required input from other agencies was not forthcoming. Wherever possible, YOTs found it more fruitful to use their good relationships with partners to move cases along. While this was the preferred procedure, many reported that they had clear and approved escalation procedures which could be invoked when informal methods fail. These were often part of the service level agreement with

providers and generally indicated how cases should be moved up the line management chain.

107. There was also quantitative evidence that relationships between some YOTs and their partners could be improved. In the follow-up survey, YOTs were asked whether 'improving the relationships of their YOT with certain local agencies would enable them to speed up some of their processes'. **Figure 9** shows that the majority of respondents (81 out of 105, 77 per cent) agreed with this statement including 26 (25 per cent) who agree strongly.

Figure 9 Effect of improving relationships with local agencies

"Improving the relationships of our YOT with certain local agencies will enable us to speed up some of our processes"

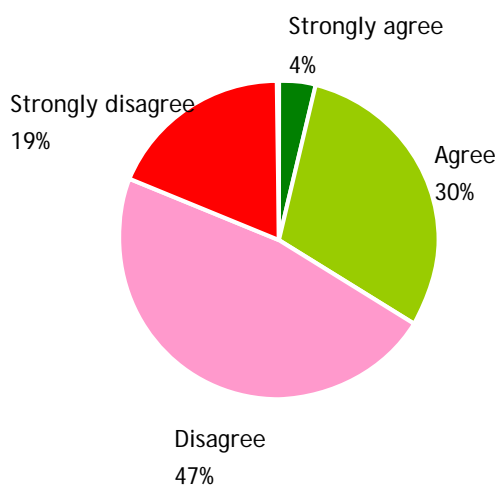


Base: 105 YOTs

108. Although the baseline survey indicated that YOTs do not generally want extensive intervention from Government, in the follow-up survey 69 out of 105 (66 per cent) disagreed with the statement 'There is no need for central government to support inter-agency work at a local level', as shown in **Figure 10**:

Figure 10 Perceived need for central government support

"There is no need for central government to support inter-agency work at a local level"



Base: 105 YOTs

109. Only a minority of YOTs took the opportunity to identify possible ways in which central government could help YOTs work more effectively with local agencies. The most common suggestion was for government to improve accountability and clarify the role of the different agencies in preventing offending and re-offending. The other most common request was for consistent targets across all departments and agencies. Conflicting targets had been identified as a key reason why cases are held up.

'It is a constant frustration that some services do not seem to be in a position to action referrals from YOTs, even when YOT staff have identified specific needs. One of the reasons for this can be the number of targets and performance measures that individual agencies are required to work to that are not congruent with the targets of other agencies within the criminal justice system and local government.'

3.4 Potential changes to improve working practice

Q8. What would you change to make your work with young people more effective? Please highlight up to THREE changes.

110. Towards the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to identify up to three changes that would make their work more effective. Many of the issues raised were those that had already been covered elsewhere in the questionnaire.

Funding

111. Half of YOTs suggesting changes referred directly to problems associated with funding. Funding administration was the main area of concern for a large proportion of YOTs.

Programmes

112. Almost half of YOTs suggesting changes referred to programmes and interventions, with several expressing the need, voiced earlier, for more evidence-based programmes specifying 'what works':

'Availability of centrally-developed, evidence-based, nationally-used intervention programmes'

'Some 'what works' research on offending behaviour programmes with young people - we have lots of programmes resources for all kinds of allied issues - substance misuse, behaviour, parenting, etc. - but would like better material addressing offending directly'

'More interventions and programmes based on 'what works' to include accredited programmes for those young people (who have offended)'

'Accredited programmes on key issues, e.g. gangs/groups, domestic violence/abuse, identity (particularly boys), sexually harmful behaviour'

The administrative burden

113. Almost as many YOTs as those mentioning funding and improved programme requirements, mentioned the need for 'lifting the burden' of administration to allow for more creative approaches.

'Decrease in bureaucracy and processes to allow creativity and 'thinking out of the box' for case managers to develop and deliver meaningful interventions'

Youth Justice Board

114. Opinion on the role of the Board ranged from 'essential' to 'it is not justifiable in the current economic circumstances'. Comments made by a small number of YOTs tend to be somewhat negative in tone, and highlight areas of duplication which were considered unnecessary:

'Get rid of the YJB. It has outlived its usefulness by several years and is not justifiable in the current economic circumstances Performance monitoring (based on reliable and sensible measures) should be part of the role of the MoJ and standards covered by inspection, both of which exist already'

'It currently feels that YOTs are doubly inspected by both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and YJB. If the YJB is going to continue to exist it should take on the inspection role'

'End the tendency to want to centrally control everything (the YJB as policers of YOTs)'

'The YJB should take a more proactive role in certain areas, i.e. the issues of Out of Area Looked After Children - transfer of cases between YOTs - workforce development issues - what is a nationally qualified YOT officer - and use its national status to transcend disagreements at the local and micro levels'

115. A number voiced concerns about the future role of the Board, particularly in the light of the move to accountability being solely through the MoJ, with the worry that its focus on youth could be diluted:

'Don't lose the emphasis on vulnerable young people and children with the move to the MoJ'

'..... the YJB is accountable solely through the MoJ (not the right message re. young offenders being children first possibly?)

Opportunities for young offenders

116. A few YOTs called for schools to be held to account more for non-attendance. One YOT felt schools should be financially penalized for their pupils' non-attendance. Better quality educational provision across the board was called for by one YOT:

'Education, training and employment. Increase the quality of local education provision for all young people to reduce disengagement, maximise the numbers of young people receiving full time education and reduce exclusions. I would increase the range of post-16 training provision for young people'

APPENDICES

1. BASELINE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAO Study into the Youth Justice System: Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

The following questionnaire is designed to gather the views of all Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales on whether central government's spending on youth justice is achieving value for money.

We will treat your answers as representing the corporate view of the YOT where you work, but we will not refer to your YOT by name in our report without clearing it with you first. There is a small possibility that details of individual responses might be requested by the Public Accounts Committee or under the Freedom of Information Act, but in this unlikely case we would also get in touch with you first. Our report will reflect what you and others have told us in aggregated form. As we analyse your responses, we may get back in touch with you to clarify that we are interpreting what you have told us correctly. We will keep any such communications as short as possible.

Instructions for Completion

Some of the questions that follow are complex and will require much more than a tick-box answer. We suggest that answers should be no longer than 400 words, but have provided space for up to 800 words. We anticipate that it will take around 30 to 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire, although it may take longer if you have lots to tell us.

When answering, please bear in mind the following:

- a. when discussing service users you should specify whether you are referring to those who are subject to a pre-court or court disposal OR those who are not'
- b. you should avoid including personal details of any service users, or any other information that might lead to them being identified;
- c. when providing examples you should be as specific as possible - for example, the 'Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme' rather than 'intensive programmes'; and
- d. you should tell us when any examples you give are 'the exceptions that prove the rule', rather than the norm.

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE IN YOUR OWN WORDS, BUT NOTE THAT SOME QUESTIONS HAVE WORD LIMITS.

Report on: Survey of Youth Offending Teams

Prepared for: National Audit Office



CSG/10/478

SETTING PRIORITIES

Some groups of young offenders have been identified as priorities for action. These groups include persistent offenders, those who commit violent crime, and those engaged in anti-social behaviour.

Q1. How applicable are these priorities to your local situation?

We would be interested to hear:

- (a) how you decide which groups to prioritise in your local area.
- (b) how priority groups influence the allocation of resources in your Youth Offending Team (YOT); and
- (c) whether there is any group that is not normally recognized as a priority, but that you believe should be.

(400 words maximum)

In recent years, the Government has increased its focus on prevention work with young people. YOTs are expected to carry out prevention as well as sentence-related work.

Q2. How do you identify and engage with young people in your local area who are on the cusp of getting involved in crime for the first time?

- (a) How do you balance your prevention work with your work with young people who have sentences?
- (b) When it comes to prevention work, how many of the service users you work with are referred to you by the police or the courts and how many are young people to whom you yourself have reached out?
- (c) How do you use neighbourhood- and family-focused work to identify young people who are on the cusp of getting involved in crime for the first time?

(800 words maximum)

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD

YOTs have access to a wide range of centrally-produced guidance to assist them in their work with young people, much of it from the Youth Justice Board (YJB). This includes:

*Key Elements of Effective Practice
Guidance on the Scaled Approach
Case Management Guidance*

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*National Standards for Youth Justice Services
Directory of Emerging Practice
Conferences and other training events.*

Q3. How do you use centrally-produced guidance to implement interventions in your local area?

- (a) Does the available guidance embody good practice as you understand it?
- (b) Does it provide the right level of detail for you to apply it successfully in your work?
- (c) Are there any gaps?

(800 words maximum)

Some of this guidance may be more theoretical than practical or may be more or less useful to you.

Q4a. Please tell us about the guidance that you find most useful in your work with young people.

Please list up to five pieces of guidance and be as specific as possible. For instance, write 'Key Elements of Effective Practice: Accommodation' rather than just 'Effective Practice booklets'. Selected guidance does not necessarily need to be guidance from the YJB.

(30 words maximum)

(30 words maximum)

(30 words maximum)

(30 words maximum)

(30 words maximum)

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Q4b. Please tell us about any guidance that you find of little use in your work.

Please be as specific as possible.

(100 word maximum)

The Youth Justice Board has recently implemented the Performance Improvement Framework, which focuses on the capacity and capability of YOTs and their performance against National Indicators.

Q.5 How well do you think the Performance Improvement Framework measures the overall effectiveness of your work with young people?

We would be interested to hear:

- (a) if you think the Framework captures your strengths and weaknesses; and
- (b) if you have any different ways of measuring effectiveness locally.

(800 words maximum)

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

YOTs have access to funding from a wide range of sources in central and local government, as well as from grant-making bodies.

Q6. What are the **POSITIVE** aspects of having a wide range of potential sources of funding? Are there any **NEGATIVE** aspects?

We would be interested to hear about:

- (a) how you decide whether or not to apply for a specific source of funding;
- (b) how flexible or prescriptive the conditions attached to different sources of funding can be and what the implications of this are; and
- (c) how you would assess the balance between the time you spend on funding administration - both applying and reporting back - and what you get in return.

First, the **POSITIVE** aspects:

(800 words maximum)

Are there any **NEGATIVE** aspects?

(800 words maximum)

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YOT workers have to liaise with a wide range of local agencies in order to meet the needs of young people.

Q7. How, if at all, could central government, including the YJB, help you to work more effectively with local agencies?

We would be interested to hear about:

- (a) how you obtain and use information held locally in order to do our work; and.
- (b) how you move your cases forward when input from local agencies is required but not forthcoming.

(800 word maximum)

FINAL QUESTIONS

Q8. What would you change to make your work with young people more effective? Please highlight up to THREE changes.

(100 word limit)

Q9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about any of the following?

a) Setting Priorities

(200 word limit)

b) The Youth Justice Board

(200 word limit)

c) Working Arrangements

(200 word limit)

d) Any other comments?

Q10 Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Q11 Please indicate the job title or role of each of the people in the YOT who have contributed to the answers

--

Thank you very much for taking time to fill in this questionnaire. We are most grateful for your help. We will share key findings with you in due course.

Please make sure that your answers are transferred to the on-line questionnaire and submitted, pressing the 'Submit' button at the end of the questionnaire.

Or:

If you prefer, you may email the completed Word questionnaire directly back to us.

2. FOLLOW UP QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Heads of Service,

Thank you to all of you who had time to respond to our survey. We now understand much better the role of YOTs and the work you do. Some YOTs expressed strong views and we just want to check how widely these are shared.

Please answer by first clicking 'Reply' in your e-mail toolbar, then typing an 'x' in the appropriate cell for each of the statements below. When complete, please click 'Send'.

		strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1	There is not enough stability in the funding our YOT receives for prevention.				
2	The structure of our YOT is suited to helping the groups of young people we identify as local priorities.				
3	There is no need for central government to support inter-agency work at a local level.				
4	Improving the relationships of our YOT with certain local agencies will enable us to speed up some of our processes.				
5	It is difficult to find evidence on 'what works' for certain areas of our work.				
6	The information disseminated by the YJB on 'what works' has a convincing evidence base.				
7	The available information on 'what works', produced by both the YJB and others, is difficult to implement in practice.				
8	The majority of the programmes our YOT has in place match our understanding of best practice.				
9	The Scaled Approach allows our YOT to target resources at those young people who most need them.				

		0%	5%	10%	more than 10%
10	Approximately how much of the resources of your YOT are devoted to young people who have not yet committed an offence?				

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Prepared for: **National Audit Office**



Please note that these statements are not the opinions of the National Audit Office or of the YOTs as a whole.

Once we have completed our analysis of this survey we will get back in touch to let you know about the results.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aileen Murphie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Aileen Murphie