



Youth Justice Board
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuenctid

Call for evidence: DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

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Summary

The introduction summarises reform of the youth justice system since the late 1990s (with further detail on the role of YJB in Annex 1) noting the positive evaluation of the system in general including its contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people. Multi-agency Youth Offending Teams have been identified as an effective model for co-ordination and delivery of services and have a critical relationship with both criminal justice and children's services. The strength of partnership arrangements with mainstream and specialist children's services is noted as being a critical as to the level of effectiveness.

The paper notes the high level and of often complex needs of children and young people in the youth justice system and of those identified as at risk of offending and the need for holistic responses both to prevention and those on statutory intervention and concern that insufficient services are being delivered to them to address those needs. The importance of sustaining support beyond the end of sentences when there are continuing needs is noted. YOTs should not be seen as an alternative form of provision for children and young people but a mechanism to help support wider services, including any existing lead professional in place, to assess and arrange a package of intervention and support using their skills of engagement with some of the more challenging young people in our communities. YJB believes there is scope to increase incentives to provide additional services to address their complex needs both in terms of prevention and early intervention but also reducing reoffending.

In terms of prevention the paper refers to research commissioned by the YJB on risk and protective factors related to onset of youth offending and conclusion that an evidence based risk and protection model can be expected to be successful.

The paper notes the case for early intervention and prevention and positive reports on programmes delivered by YOTs. Noting that we are most likely in the realm of 'promising evidence' rather than having information yet to a higher level the YJB would welcome further work with government partners on developing the cost-benefit case.

The papers sets out information on the current expansion of targeted youth crime prevention programmes commissioned and delivered by YOTs following SR2004 and Budget 2005. This funding is helping to link community safety and children's service partners locally and has led to additional investment from local partners.

The paper notes that shifting resources from acute to prevention is difficult noting the potential role of clear cross cutting incentives and looking at perverse disincentives. The paper notes that given investment in preventative services in recent years, part of the issue is ensuring the allocation of resource remains and is not dissipated as inevitable demands on acute services arise. In terms of the youth justice system specifically the YJB is interested in increasing incentives to invest in community alternatives to custody, and also maximising the use of pre-court interventions where appropriate that can help realign use of resources. The YJB would be keen to investigate further incentives to invest in effective early action that can reduce the need for custody.

In relation to youth services the paper notes the importance of reaching the hardest to reach and most disengaged young people and working with them consistently over time

with potential lessons from the experience of the Youth Inclusion Programme and other prevention work. The paper notes that the need to provide additional support for young people in the youth justice system in order to help engage in education, training and employment both during and above schools age, and to learn from promising approaches such as the Keeping Young People Engaged programme and wider work between schools and youth justice. The Resettlement Aftercare Provision programme has also provided a model for how services and support can be maintained beyond the end of sentences when necessary.

In relation to high cost, high harm families the paper notes the work on increasing parenting interventions for the parents of adolescents with the youth justice system both on a voluntary and statutory basis. The paper notes that whole family and systemic approaches are promising and refers to investment in a current ‘intensive fostering’ pilot that is at the high end of the youth justice system. In terms of aligning services, the paper notes that Youth Inclusion and Support Panels have provided a model that is being used in relation to both targeted support and early intervention pilots and pathfinders.

As noted, Annex 1 refers to the reform of the youth justice system and the role of YJB. Annex 2 sets out briefly the YJB Key Elements of Effective Practice programme including links to source documents with overviews of the evidence base.

Introduction

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence for the DfES/HM Treasury joint policy review on Children and Young People.

This document sets out some of the information that we think is relevant to the review including background information on the development of the youth justice system and targeted youth crime prevention programmes. It is not exhaustive and the YJB would welcome further discussion with DfES/HMT about the review as it progresses and to provide more detail on the points that are made.

Background: reform of the youth justice system

The YJB agrees that a lot of progress has been made in developing the life chances of children. The reform to the youth justice system that has taken place since 1998 is a significant part of that progress.

Prior to the reforms in the late 1990s there was no integrated youth justice system. There were no shared aims or objectives across agencies, the system was preoccupied by processing young people rather than seeking to prevent or improve behaviour. There was little strategic overview or national leadership with responsibilities and financial accountability divided. Secure facilities were fragmented and mostly inadequate. There was little focus specifically on youth justice – it was the poor relation of the criminal justice system. A defining characteristic of youth justice services prior to the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was “inconsistency”. Inconsistency of organisational structures, services provided, monitoring and reporting arrangements, procedures used for the assessment of children and young people, custodial standards and training of youth justice staff.

Improvements in the youth justice system since the late 1990s have been the result of the work of a wide range of partners. Of significance to the remit of the review has been the focus on individual assessment of children and young people in the youth justice in order to inform interventions to address identified risks and needs and the development of targeted prevention programmes for children and young people identified at high risk of offending.

The YJB has contributed to the reform of the youth justice system by providing co-ordination to a complex system, developing links across government, helping to set and driving priorities for services and requiring that basic standards are met while supporting locally managed services to innovate and develop new approaches that meet local needs. A key function has been to bring overdue co-ordination and coherence to the secure estate sector and to the placement of children sentenced or remanded to custody. More information on the key elements of the reforms is included in the Annex.

Evaluation of the new approach to youth justice has been on the whole positive. The Audit Commission report *Youth Justice 2004* reported the view that the new system is a considerable improvement on the old one. The report noted:

YOTs connect with services such as education and health, and direct young people under their supervision to help in addressing their offending behaviour. Their co-ordinating role and clear focus on addressing offending enables YOTs to make optimum use of the available resources. The YJB has also been critical in making YOTs effective, and the combination of a national board with local management has ensured that YOTs focus on both strategy and service provision. Audit Commission Youth Justice 2004

There have been some key lessons learnt from the experience to date. In terms of the effectiveness of Youth Offending Teams a critical factor is the multi-agency nature cutting across criminal justice and children's services and their ability to combine strategy and service delivery at the local level that meets both criminal justice and children's service objectives:

Yots are a good example of a flexible, multi-disciplinary approach to service delivery from which other public sector partnerships could learn" and "The 155 Yots are critically placed between criminal justice, health and local government services to co-ordinate and deliver services to young offenders and the courts. Audit Commission Youth Justice 2004

The reforms of children's services and changes to other partners is requiring reassessment of YOT relationships but it is vital that links to criminal justice and community safety is not lost in order to maintain confidence. In terms of addressing needs of young people in the youth justice system and improve outcomes more can be done to engage mainstream and specialist children's services and the quality of local partnership arrangements is key. Education, Training and Employment remains an area for improvement despite gains. It is crucial that YOTs benefit as well as contribute to the development of children's services and the Every Child Matters agenda. Finally, perverse incentives remain that potentially let the youth justice system pick up the costs of failure.

Preventing offending and re-offending

It is well evidenced that children and young people in the youth justice often have complex and wide ranging needs, often at a more acute level than other children and young people. For more serious and persistent offenders in particular their lives can be complicated and face a wide variety of problems. It is difficult to address risks of offending and re-offending and other problems such as substance misuse and mental health problems without addressing their wider needs at the same, requiring a holistic multi-agency approach. Often children and young people in the youth justice system have far reaching educational shortfalls and some have accommodation needs.

The reforms of the youth justice system have led to a lot more information becoming available about the needs of young people at risk or involved in the youth justice system. This information can help inform national policy but also local planning and allocation of resources. YJB has encouraged YOT steering groups to use information from ASSET assessment and KPIs to inform the work of the statutory youth justice partners and the work of YOTs. Research commissioned by the YJB has support this knowledge base. Furthermore, YJB has invested in developing an Effective Practice approach to understanding what is the more effective approach to undertaking work with children and young people at risk or involved in offending (see Annex 2). As a holistic approach is necessary, it is the combined level of intervention that is likely to reduce risk of offending and improve outcomes, rather than individual specific interventions.

In order to meet the statutory principal aim of the youth justice system to prevent offending by children and young people the YJB is interested in ensuring that public services are effective at three levels

- Good quality children's services that are incentives to act early to prevent and address the early onset of problems that can lead to poor outcomes that can also be associated with later offending and anti-social behaviour. We support an approach of giving additional support to those with additional needs.
- Targeted approach for individual children and young people and their families including those specifically on the cusp of offending, (often already becoming involved in offending and anti-social behaviour but not yet within the criminal justice system) where problems are manifesting themselves – with an objective of accessing mainstream and specialist children's services that can address their assessed risk factors.
 - For those in the youth justice system as part of statutory interventions assessment and multi-agency intervention to address the range of needs for children and young people – again with the objective of accessing mainstream and specialist children's services that can address assessed risk factors – and providing continuing support after the end of statutory youth justice sentences when there are continuing needs.

Support for Parents: the best start for children noted that:

Unfortunately, for some children crime is a way of life from a very young age. Offending and ending up in custody are negative outcomes in themselves, but they will also have an effect on other aspects of a young person's life, such as their chances of gaining an education and their employability. Although not all young offenders will continue to offend as adults, adult persistent offenders usually start out as young persistent offenders. Around 100,000 persistent and priority offenders (10 per cent of all offenders) commit approximately half of all crime. Early, targeted and where necessary, intensive intervention with children at risk of offending must be key to the Government's long-term strategy for crime reduction.

In terms of the CSR Support for Parents asked “what more needs to be done to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as looked after children, disabled children, children with special educational needs and young offenders.”

From the YJB's perspective what is needed is continuing action to improve prevention and early intervention, including targeted early intervention for those children and young people at higher risk, and also continuing action to support and provide services to children and young people, and their families, who are brought into the criminal justice system and to continue that support following the end of statutory sentences.

In general, while recognising the important reforms to children's services that are in place the YJB remains concerned that issues are not picked up at an early enough stage and there are questions about both the capacity and incentives for children's services to intervene early.

There is evidence that intervention within the youth justice system can be wasted if there is not continuing support. This has been observed by the Social Exclusion Unit and reinforced in review of evidence on resettlement for YJB¹ Especially considering that statutory sentences can last a matter of months, and the average period in custody by a young person on a Detention and Training Order (the primary custodial sentence for under 18s) is 4.2 months, it is vital that services that are in place do not drop off when young people enter the youth justice system and continue following sentence. YOTs should not be seen as an alternative form of provision but a mechanism to help support wider services, including any existing lead professional in place, to assess and arrange a package of intervention and support using their skills of engagement with some of the more challenging young people in our communities, that is then can be maintained beyond the expiry of court orders.

Clearly YOTs with partners need to also meet government objectives in terms of public confidence and public protection, support for victims and responsiveness to local communities.

The issue of incentives for public services is a primary concern for the YJB. This will be especially significant with moves to rationalise the number of targets that are centrally set and greater devolution of priority setting. Youth justice issues are cross cutting and the YJB believes there is a strong case for a cross cutting PSA and/or targets to help increase incentives for early intervention and prevention as well as involvement with young people in the youth justice system. There are still issues about potentially counter acting centrally set targets and financial disincentives to investing in prevention and earlier intervention.

¹ YJB, Key Elements of Effective Practice – Resettlement (source) <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=176&eP=YJB>

Prevention (B1)

Risk and protective factors

The YJB has taken a strong risk and protection approach to the prevention of offending. YJB commissioned Communities that Care to undertake a comprehensive review of risk and protective factors associated with the onset of youth crime and review the evidence of successful programmes to prevent offending². This report has directly informed the work of the Youth Justice Board. The report identified key risk factors associated with the onset youth crime in four categories:

Family

- Poor parental supervision and discipline
- Family conflict
- A family history of criminal activity
- Parental attitudes that condone antisocial and criminal behaviour
- Low income and poor housing

School

- Low achievement beginning in primary school
- Aggressive behaviour including bullying
- Lack of commitment to school including truancy
- School disorganisation

Community

- Living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood
- Community disorganisation and neglect
- Availability of drugs
- High turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment

Individuals, Peers, and Friends

- Hyperactivity and impulsivity
- Low intelligence and cognitive impairment
- Alienation and lack of social commitment
- Attitudes that condone offending drug misuse
- Early involvement in crime and drug misuse
- Friendships with peers involved in crime and drug misuse

The review identified the most ‘salient’ (most influential risk factors in predicting offending) as:

- a family history of problem behaviour

² Risk and Protective Factors associated with youth crime and effective interventions to prevent it November 2001 <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=58&eP=YJB>

- low achievement beginning at primary school
- friends involved in problem behaviour

The key protective factors identified:

- Individual characteristics including female gender, resilient temperament and outgoing disposition
- Social bonding
- Promotion of healthy standards within family, school and community
- Opportunities for involvement
- Social and reasoning skills
- Recognition and praise

The report states that “Whilst the relationship between risk and protective factors and the precise ways in which they interrelate and react is uncertain, it is clear that risk factors cluster together in the lives of the most disadvantaged children. The chances that those children will become antisocial and criminally active, increases exponentially as the number of risk factors increases.” The report also states that “The risk factors for youth offending and illegal substance abuse overlap to a very considerable degree with those for educational underachievement, youthful parenthood and adolescent mental health problems”. The report states that “programmes that can prevent youth crime can contribute to the reduction of these harmful phenomena, which, taken together, underpin social exclusion.”

The report concluded that “A considerable body of research has been identified demonstrating clearly that a firmly evidence-based approach to prevention of youth crime is both a realistic proposition and a strategy that can be confidently expected to be successful.”

In terms of prevention strategies, the report concluded that a “relatively prescriptive approach” on the part of policy-makers is desirable in order to know that programmes are likely to work and to ensure programme fidelity.

The YJB commissioned a follow up report to investigate further the role and relationship of risk and protective factors.³ The conclusions of this study included:

- Factors are not fixed as either risk or protective, and can change with time
- High risk of offending does not equal ‘no hope’
- Domains are all linked – that all areas of a young person’s lives are linked and that work on risk and protection should take this into account.
- Lone protective factors should not be ignored – it is the combination of individual factors that provides most protection for a young person
- Establishing a ‘coping repertoire’ is important such as preparing them to deal with some of the situations they might face by exploring possible reactions and examining potential outcomes is useful

³ Role of Risk and Protective Factors 2005 <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=277&eP=YJB>

- The importance of examining ‘offending thresholds’ – finding out what an offender will or is prepared to do, and his or her reason for doing or not doing it, may allow practitioners to determine the limits of offending behaviour or what a young person finds personally acceptable. It may shed light on the why they will offend when they do.

Emerging evidence from a recent literature review recently commissioned about child abuse indicates that it may be that child maltreatment should also be considered a specific risk factor in relation to future offending. Other research has also emphasised that the proportion of youth offending that is related to group offending, emphasising peer relationships that may require further investigation.

Prevention and early intervention

As noted above, in order to reduce the likelihood of offending as well as improve other outcomes, the YJB is interested in seeing

- Good quality children’s services that have clear incentives to act early to prevent and address the early onset of problems that can lead to poor outcomes that can also be associated with later offending and anti-social behaviour. We support an approach of giving additional support to those with additional needs.
- Targeted approach for individual children and young people and their families including those specifically on the cusp of offending, (often already becoming involved in offending and anti-social behaviour but not yet within the criminal justice system) where problems are manifesting themselves – with an objective of accessing mainstream and specialist children’s services that can address their assessed risk factors.

The YJB believes that a strong case has been made for investment in prevention and early intervention in general terms and specifically to prevent youth offending and anti-social behaviour. There is a relatively strong understanding of the risk factors associated with poor outcomes in general and youth crime specifically. Pathways to offending can start early and early intervention can be the best proposition to prevent future persistent and serious offending.

The YJB CtC commissioned study referred to above set out the case in relation to youth crime. The Audit Commission have set out the potential financial savings that can be made from effective early intervention. (“James” case study, Youth Justice 2004 and cited in the Social Exclusion Action Plan 2006). The Child Poverty Review 2004 supported the analysis identifying the relationship with cycles of deprivation and poor outcomes and the case for early intervention and prevention:⁴

Existing research from both the UK and the US indicates that it is possible to identify at an early stage the children and young people at risk of poor outcomes, including those engaging in offending or substance misuse. Furthermore the existing evidence base suggests that early intervention can prevent the development of patterns of serious or persistent criminal behaviour later on in life, bringing numerous benefits to both the short and long term life-chances and experience of the child, and also to society as a whole.

⁴ Chapter 5 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D37/18/childpoverty_chap5_290704.pdf

The Audit Commission noted that:

Targeted and well-managed early intervention programmes can be effective if they are properly co-ordinated both nationally and locally, such as those managed by Yots.

Because programmes that are in place are relatively new we do not have information on the lifetime effect and therefore full cost effectiveness of the approaches. However, in terms of UK programmes, we believe there is promising evidence including from the Youth Inclusion Programme. YJB would welcome further work with Home Office, DfES and HM Treasury on expanding the cost benefit case and for early intervention, including targeted youth crime prevention. In general, given the targeted nature of the approaches, it only takes a relatively small decline in offending and improvement in wider outcomes for the services to be cost-effective.

In terms of programmes to prevent youth crime the approach not only potentially reduces offending, reducing victimisation, but improves the likelihood of good outcomes for children, young people and victims and meets wider objectives to promote confidence in communities. Programmes such as Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) and restorative justice in schools can also potentially contribute to wider government objectives such as improving behaviour and attainment and attendance in schools. The evaluation of SSPs, with caveats, for example indicated a reduction in offending behaviour compared with a control group and other benefits related to truancy and pupils' perceived feelings of safety.

Youth crime prevention

Working with partners in government and youth justice services the YJB has helped to develop innovative programmes, based on research evidence, to address risk of offending. The programmes are primarily voluntary and aimed at multi-agency identification, assessment and planning delivering targeted interventions with those identified at high risk of becoming involved in criminal justice system or in early stages of offending based on individual assessment. A key objective is to target hard to reach young people and obtain access to mainstream and specialist services in order to address risk factors and promote protective factors. The programmes seek to address wider risk factors, including disengagement from education which relates to wider social exclusion not just the preventing of offending.

The YJB is increasingly clear that a whole family approach is needed. The success of interventions is limited if we are not addressing home/community circumstances - this means reaching parents in particular, as research shows they are by far the biggest influence in a young person's life.

As noted the Audit Commission gave positive analysis of the approach. This has been subsequently supported by the Home Affairs Select Committee in their report on anti-social behaviour⁵ and the Child Poverty Review.

⁵ "We welcome the introduction of targeted diversionary and support schemes such as Yips and Yisps. All the indications are that these schemes are extremely successful and cost effective in terms of their impact on ASB." Home Affairs Committee 5th Report 2004-05

Up until 2005, the YJB's prevention budget consisted of £7m for the provision of existing Youth Inclusion Projects, and small amounts of funding from the Big Lottery Fund to provide grants for prevention programmes in Wales. However, additional resources were provided by the Spending Review 2004 (£20m) and the Budget 2005 (£25m).

This funding has been pooled together, and offered on a formula basis to Youth Offending Teams as a 'prevention grant'. YOTs were invited to provide plans to the YJB setting out which programme/s, from a menu of options, they would seek to spend their funding on. The options which they had were:

- Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)
- Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISPs)
- Parenting Programmes
- Safer School Partnerships (SSPs)
- Individual Support Orders (ISOs) supporting ASBOs
- Innovative schemes

The *Youth Inclusion and Support Panels* (YISPs) are multi-agency planning groups across England and Wales targeting 8-13 year-olds (up to 17 in some areas) and their families. The Panels comprise representatives of local agencies such as the local Youth Offending Teams (YOT), police, schools, health, social services, Fire Service, voluntary and faith groups, depending on local circumstances. They work to ensure that children on the cusp of offending or anti social behaviour, and their families, can access mainstream public services. Any involvement with the YISP is voluntary and therefore requires the written consent of both the young person and their parents. The children are referred to the Panels on the basis of their level of risk, history or risk of offending, as well as the recommendation of at least two agencies that there is need for support. A full assessment is undertaken from which a 3-6 months Integrated Support Plan is tailored to the identified needs of the child and family, and agreed by the young person, their family, and the respective key worker. The Panels regularly review the plan to ensure its effectiveness as well as ensuring that families and children are satisfied with the intervention. The emphasis is on helping these families to access mainstream services although some Panels may develop group projects for selected students, such as group meetings, outings and workshops during school term or summer holidays.

YOTs submitted their plans in January 2006 and the YJB negotiated with them to ensure the plans were best suited to the needs of local areas and young people and families while also adhering closely to YJB guidance. It was a requirement that YOTs agreed their plans with local CDRPs and Children's Services emphasising that these programmes work at the interface of children's services and crime reduction and to ensure they fitted with wider local plans and government objectives. The funding provided has also generated additional investment from local partners. All plans have now been approved, and YOTs were given a deadline of 1 June 2006 to begin delivery with young people. The YJB's new prevention monitors as part of the YJB performance monitoring and improvement framework have been visiting YOTs to gauge progress.

The following information is based on the plans provided by YOTs. It should be noted that while the plans were detailed and comprehensive, some estimates had to be made (for example how much partnership funding would be provided). Plans also included details of expansion of existing programmes as well as provision of completely new services.

New Programmes

The full list of new programmes is set out below. However, some 'headline' figures are as follows:

- 81 YOTs are now allocating funding to Youth Inclusion Projects. This includes YOTs which already had existing YIPs and those YOTs which are funding more than one YIP. The total number of new Youth Inclusion Projects will be 39, meaning that there will be 110 YIPs across England and Wales. At least ten of the existing 71 YIPs will be expanding under this new funding.
- 90 YOTs will be using part or all of their prevention funding on Youth Inclusion and Support Panels. This includes both the expansion of existing YISPs (either into new areas or expanding the age range of young people they work with) and the set-up of new YISPs. When added to the YISPs funded by the Children's Fund and with the YOT involved in their management, the total number of YISPs across England and Wales is now approximately 220.
- 87 YOTs are using prevention funding to develop new parenting programmes. This does not reflect the full level of parenting provision which will be created by the prevention funding, however, because YIPs and YISPs will also provide their own parenting programmes.
- 8 YOTs will be using YJB prevention funding to develop Safer Schools Partnerships (SSPs); 37 YOTs are using funding to increase prevention staff or put in place innovative programmes; 7 YOTs will use funding for ISO schemes although all new prevention schemes are designed to support young people on ISOs.

Number of Programmes Receiving YJB Prevention Funding

	YIP	YISP	Parenting	SSP	ISO	Innovation
Eastern	4	6	9	1	0	5
East Midlands	1	6	6	0	0	3
London	16	22	19	0	1	7
North East	7	3	2	1	1	1
North West	15	11	13	1	0	8
South East	3	11	11	2	2	2
South West	9	8	10	2	0	3
Yorkshire	11	7	4	1	1	1
Wales	7	9	7	0	0	2
West Midlands	8	7	6	0	2	5
Number of YOTs receiving funding	81	90	87	8	7	37
Estimated number of programmes	110	220	87	8	7	37

Estimating partnership contributions to prevention programmes is difficult given that full commitments from all partners have not been made, and some contributions will be in kind rather than in cash. Where YOTs have given a cash value to in-kind funding we have included this, but YOTs have not done so for all contributions so figures may be underestimates.

Based on these assumptions, we can estimate that the £19.9m million provided to YIPs will draw in around £16m in partnership funding. While this may look high, it should be noted that YIPs have over the past six years had to make a commitment to at least match any YJB funding which has been provided to them, and for some new YIPs, YJB

funding is being supplemented by significant cash and in-kind contributions, including NDC and NRF funding. It is estimated that YJB funding for YISPs will be supplemented by a further £21m of funding from other sources, including the Children's Fund contributions to existing projects and contributions from Panel members.

Engagement of young people and families

At this stage, it is impossible to know how many young people and families will be given services by prevention programmes which have only recently come into operation. However, based on the plans submitted by YOTs, in which they set out projected figures for young people engaged, and on the experience of existing prevention programmes, we have made some estimates. Prevention programmes will begin to submit management information returns including exact numbers of young people worked with, enabling us to begin to verify these estimates.

Forecasted figures for throughput of young people and families on prevention programmes are as follows:

- YIP – Approximately 26,000 over the period 2006-08 (17,000 through pre-existing schemes and 9,000 from the 39 new schemes). These figures include both targeted young people and peers and siblings of targeted young people.
- YISP – Approximately 36,000 over the period 2006-08
- Parenting – Approximately 18,000 to 20,000 per year by 2008
- Other Prevention Programmes – Approximately 1,000 young people (this is extremely difficult to estimate, especially for innovation programmes which, by their nature, have not been delivered before)

Based on these figures above, it is possible that prevention programmes will work with between 50,000 and 100,000 young people and families over the period 2006-08. However, it should be re-stated that these are estimates and will be revised once management information returns begin to come in.

A prevention performance framework is in place to highlight issues and support YOTs to address them. New prevention monitors have been appointed. Monitors are currently visiting all YOTs to gauge progress against clearly defined 'set-up standards'. As secondees from the field, monitors will be able to offer on the spot advice to prevention staff.

In addition to the above funding and development of programmes YJB has supported other initiatives to help prevent youth offending. These include piloting of Restorative Justice approaches in schools, the piloting of Family Group Conferencing in conjunction with YISPs, and wider involvement in government approaches including the Safer School Partnerships approach, the Children's Fund and Positive Activities for Young People.

YJB believes there is scope to develop the relationship between schools and YOTs focused on joint objectives of reducing offending and improving behaviour and engagement in education. There is some positive evaluation of SSPs that indicates new ways of identifying and working with children and young people at risk of offending and becoming victims can be developed. Combined with restorative approaches being developed this could provide a way for mainstream and targeted services to support each other in related objectives. Youth justice potentially provides a valuable resource that can support schools around behaviour and engagement.

Specific questions in the call for evidence

Regarding the role of universal services in providing access to protective and preventative support, risk assessment and referral, the YJB remains concerned that the ability of universal services to meet the needs of the most socially excluded and disadvantaged is highly variable. In the YJB's view the services alone do not sufficiently contribute as they could to meeting the objectives of the youth justice system. Until they can there is a continuing case for targeted services. Effective partnership working between targeted and mainstream services at national and local level can be achieved but the mutual advantages of doing so have to be made clear to each partner so they realise 'what's in it for them' i.e. incentives provided. More to use programme funding and other levers to encourage the formation of partnerships and information sharing at local level could be investigated. Making universal services genuinely inclusive may continue to be difficult given some tension between key objectives and targets but targeted preventive services that can operate alongside (even within) universal services, share their resources and help young people to reintegrate will help universal services become better at working with the most excluded over time.

One of the recommendations from the evaluation of the Children's Fund for the 'future development of prevention' is that: 'Front line practitioners need to be supported to talk across professional boundaries and develop effective preventative practices around the needs of children and young people in collaboration with mainstream service providers.'

Regarding how repeatedly moving in and out of contact with targeted services can be achieved a key objective is for intervention/s to be appropriate based on assessment, high quality and having clear objectives and clear exit strategies for the young person to reintegrate them into mainstream services.

Regarding what can work in reaching out to the most vulnerable families to ensure they are able to take full advantage of service provision first of all we would recommend clear incentives for services to engage the most vulnerable. Our experience is that good, well trained staff are critical. YIPs have been able to engage families because they have shown a positive impact on young people and to some extent because they have refused to take no for answer, even though it is a voluntary programme. Staff from the local community who share experiences with the families being worked with can be helpful as can volunteer mentors for both children and parents. Involvement of people from within the local community to act as mentors and volunteers, liking in with people the local community trusts as opposed to all staff being external to the local community is helpful. Mentor roles for parents being taken on by parents who have previously received a service can also be positive. Through effective partnership work between agencies, those agencies also can identify who is best placed to take on the key role by establishing who has the best relationship with the family. Having a clear route of referral for those agencies that are aware of who the most vulnerable families are is helpful, and may need positive marketing of prevention services to mainstream services that have access e.g. GPs, schools and health visitors. Finally, involving families in any process, just as with young people, is not simply about consultation but about participation with families being involved in planning the service – a case of a service with the family as opposed to to the family. Family Group Conferencing involves empowering families in the planning process, ensuring views are listened to and acted upon and has been developed to be used in relation to youth justice.

Regarding what evidence is there of major barriers to developing a preventative system as set out above there are still concerns about ensuring there are sufficient incentives for public services to engage the hardest to reach or those presenting the more difficult

problems, leading to a tendency to work with lower risk young people. The barrier is the lack of incentives. Other potential problems can be poor information sharing and multi-agency identification and poor assessment leading to incorrect intervention/resource allocation and commissioning.

Regarding what evidence is available on how funding can be freed up at the acute end of provision to spend on preventative services it is first of all worth noting that for youth justice a separate but related issue is ensuring that young people in the system can access sufficient acute services from other agencies that in turn can prevent future offending and escalating offending behaviour. It is not solely about shifting from acute services to prevention. However, the YJB would entirely support further efforts to shift funding and focus from acute to preventative services. We do not underestimate the difficulty there can be in achieving this aim particularly given the pressures that can be faced on services to provide acute services. The YJB is already concerned that thresholds for intervention can be set too high because of limited resources. Greater financial and performance incentives especially those that cut across service boundaries may provide assistance, and to a lesser degree, information around costs of failure that can help make the case for investment in prevention. Because of the time lags that inevitably arises between investment in prevention and savings, invest to save processes may be necessary to assist with the transition. While we are unclear about firm evidence on how this can be done, the YJB is interested in investigating models that more clearly set incentives for earlier intervention and address perverse incentives not to act. We think there is a strong case for a cross cutting PSA or targets that provide incentives for early intervention and prevention including the prevention of re-offending.

In terms of youth crime, as there has been some investment in prevention, part of the issue is ensuring that this funding is maintained for preventative purposes and is not dissipated as pressures arise on local services. This may require specific protection of the funding. It will be relevant to the future of the Children's Fund and Positive Activities for Young People funding post the current spending review period. In the YJB's view there remains a danger that while appreciating the case for increase local determination over use of funding there will inevitably be pressure to shift resources back towards the acute end. It is worth noting that specific prevention funding for the Children's Fund and PAYP were in part developed precisely because local authorities with conflicting priorities had been unable to develop sufficient preventative services.

In the youth justice system itself the YJB seeks to ensure that where possible there is earlier intervention to prevent the escalation of offending behaviour that is not only more serious for communities but more costly for public services. In relation to custody specifically we are concerned about potential financial disincentives to invest in community interventions as the costs of custody are mostly met centrally. We are keen to explore further how financial incentives can be improved, potentially initially focusing on secure remands. Alongside moves to maximise the use of pre-court disposals, and the potential role of neighbourhood policing in providing more preventative action, these approaches could improve the allocation of resources within the youth justice system.

Regarding what the impact would be of more preventative services and early intervention on the life chances of children and young people and on the value for money of public spending on children, young people and families, as noted above, while the evidence available on specific programmes may be promising but not yet provide full analysis, the YJB believes there is a strong case for further focus and

investment in preventative services and early intervention. While new youth crime prevention funding has expanded service provision considerably, it is not possible to say that overall demand has been met – e.g. there are still many areas within YOT area which lack a dedicated prevention programme, or have a stretched service (e.g. most London YOTs only have one YIP when they probably have at least ten relevant neighbourhoods each). A 'saturation point' has not been reached yet. With more commitment and incentives from the agencies that can support targeted programmes, including schools, LEAs, children and family services, impact could also be improved further.

As noted above the targeted youth crime programmes are relatively new. The Youth Inclusion Programme has been established for the longest period. While it is difficult to say categorically that there has been an impact solely as a result of the YIP due to the nature of evaluation evidence to date, the evidence is very promising. The arrest rates for young people engaged by YIPs have gone down by between 65% and 67% over the past six years, while the best comparison group we have - non-engaged young people - have seen arrests go down by between 44% and 56%. The latest figures are unpublished and the evaluation has not had peer review, but have looked into these differences and they seem to indicate a significant reduction in the rate of offending for young people engaged - not necessarily that young people have stopped offending but they have done so much less frequently than before coming on. There also appears to be a greater reduction in seriousness of offending for those engaged. In total there has been data for six years showing a greater arrest rate reduction for young people engaged than those not engaged.

In terms of youth crime prevention to ensure effectiveness as far as we know it and value for money, we believe that evidence-based models that comply with YJB guidance and Key Elements of Effective Practice ensuring the following key stages in targeted preventive practice take place are more likely to be effective:

- Multi-agency identification and information sharing
- Engagement of the most socially excluded, at risk of involvement in crime and anti social behaviour
- Assessment of risk and protective factors related to offending (through the use of the ONSET assessment tool)
- Delivery of appropriate interventions of sufficient intensity based on individual assessment and knowledge of community needs and concerns
- Monitoring, evaluation and review of the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions, with a particular emphasis on preventing offending

Youth Services for young people (B3)

The YJB supports measures to ensure that all young people should have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of positive activities. The YJB is supportive of an approach that seeks to empower young people to shape what is on offer for them and we agree that it is important to focus on young people who are disadvantaged or currently not participating in positive activities.

YJB supported the publication of *Youth Matters* noting that meeting the objectives set out in the Green Paper would not only improve the quality of life for young people, but could have a significant impact on reducing the likelihood that young people become involved in offending and anti-social behaviour and of reoffending if they have already become involved. To achieve this, it is critical that services effectively reach those young people most at risk of offending who are themselves often the most disaffected and marginalised young people in our communities.

The YJB's response to *Youth Matters* noted some concerns about the future of provision of support and information, advice and guidance to young people. While welcoming the proposals to set clear minimum expectations of the IAG that each young person and their parents should receive the moves from Connexions as the single point of delivery to a mixed economy of providers commissioned through local authorities, schools and colleges does include some implications in relation to services for young people in the youth justice system. The YJB has been keen to ensure that successful work carried out by some Connexions partnerships with YOTs and the custodial sector providing direct support to the hardest to reach young people in the youth justice system to improve ETE participation is not lost as the reforms are taken forward. For example, Connexions personal advisers working in YOTs and in custody have in general provided a much needed combined support and IAG service at a point when these young people are 'captured' and often amenable to being worked with. The Keeping Young People Engaged model that has been developed through the provision of funding to provide additional support to engage young people in the youth justice system in education and training has had positive results. Delivered by mentors, education support workers and Personal Advisers the scheme has been active in 90 YOTs. Funding has been either direct from the YJB to YOTs or to Connexions Partnerships. The final evaluation is due in February 2007 however an interim evaluation improvement in levels of engagement of between 4%-5% within the hardest to reach group, reoffending risk factors assessed through ASSET reduced and seriousness of offending reduced after 15 months. Evaluation of the project in Greater Manchester showed a high percentage successfully being assisted into a positive destination, improved links made to other services including health and accommodation and high levels of user satisfaction. The YJB is keen to ensure that experience and success in working with the hardest to reach young people is taken into consideration in determining the development of new arrangements and believe there is scope for development of the Keeping Young People Engaged approach.

Research for the YJB shows that are considerable barriers to engagement in education for young people in the youth justice system despite some improvements in performance since the youth justice reforms. The continuing high levels of

disengagement of young offenders from education and training services as outlined in ‘Barriers to Engagement’ commissioned by YJB⁶ continues to prevent one of the greatest risk factors related to youth offending. A DfES led review is currently considering the issues relating to the education of school age offenders (which was a commitment in the Green Paper ‘Reducing Reoffending through Skills and Employment’). The YJB would hope that the review can lead to increased cross government support to target this group for improved ETE engagement and attainment levels, in similar ways to measures in relation to looked after children (while recognising the clear overlap in the two cohorts).

In terms of support, as set out in the introduction, YOTs should not be seen as an alternative form of provision but a mechanism to help support wider services, including any existing lead professional in place, to assess and arrange a package of intervention and support using their skills of engagement with some of the more challenging young people in our communities, that is then can be maintained beyond the expiry of court orders.

Providing accommodation and support for vulnerable people is a complex and challenging task including concern that statutory duties are often obstructed by lack of local accommodation, targeted funding, and support infrastructure and young people who have offended are competing for scarce resources from a wide variety of providers against a range of other vulnerable groups, who are often felt to be more worthy

A snapshot survey from 2004, of young people accessing services within YOTs showed that young people who have offended experience considerable difficulties in accessing adequate accommodation, with approximately 15% of those surveyed identified as being in housing need. YOT performance data against a YJB accommodation target indicates that 6% of young people at the end of all interventions are not in suitable accommodation – and for young people leaving the secure estate, this increases to 15%.⁷ Neither the snapshot research nor the YOT performance data are conclusive and may not indicate the true extent of the problem. We have commissioned Nacro and Middlesex University to undertake further research into the accommodation needs of young people who offend, focusing in greater detail on the nature of their housing need and the factors underlying it.

Although there is a clear statutory framework with regard to age and housing responsibilities (indeed, local housing authorities now have a duty to produce a homelessness prevention strategy that includes young people), actual practice sometimes seems confused. Some young people continue to be passed from agency to agency, falling through the net and failing to receive a service as a result.

In addition young people who offend require considerable levels of support, whether they are living in the family home or not. This may be quite basic assistance in areas such as budgeting, life skills or benefit claims, or of a more specialised nature, concerning issues such as substance misuse or mental health. If the assessed level of support required is not in place, accommodation arrangements can break down, leaving a young person homeless and at increased risk of reoffending.

⁶ <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=290&eP=YJB>

⁷ The discrepancy between these data and the snapshot survey may be partly due to the lack of an agreed definition of ‘suitable’ accommodation.

Local authorities have an important role in making sure that the right local support services are in place to help vulnerable people. To do this, they need to work in partnership with service providers and other local agencies, looking at support needs in the round, and maximising the impact of a range of funding sources.

The Supporting People programme provides the primary, co-ordinated funding for local housing-related support for vulnerable people. With limited funding, and many vulnerable groups to cover, young people who offend are often not seen as a priority within Supporting People strategies. YOTs are not usually represented on the local Supporting People commissioning bodies responsible for key decisions regarding local housing support commissioning decisions, and therefore rely largely on Probation Service staff (who sit on local commissioning bodies) to represent the needs of young people who offend.

The Resettlement and Aftercare Provision (RAP) schemes developed by YJB in partnership with Home Office DIP is a model of end to end provision for substance misuse for young people in the youth justice system from which there are lessons. This programme is delivered through close working with the National Treatment Service, HO and DfES. The aim is to improve health outcomes for young people with significant substance misuse leaving custody and on community sentences. RAP schemes are currently available in 59 Local Authorities in England and Wales with a capacity to work with over 2000 young people a Year. RAP provides intensive community based 'tailored' and 'voluntary' resettlement support during the young person's sentence and up to 6 months after their sentence if required. RAP seeks to ensure that the young person has access to mainstream services including: mental health and substance misuse specialists, education training and employment, accommodation, family and peer interventions, assists young people to improve their use of leisure time and uses voluntary mentors to provide extended support especially on weekends and during extended periods of aftercare.

RAP was launched in May 2005 and has been a catalyst for innovative work with high risk and high need young people and their families targeted those with the most complex needs, many of which are persistent offenders. RAP is being independently evaluated and early data indicates a positive up take and engagement by young people with close to a third of young people staying voluntarily with the schemes for a period of ongoing support after their formal sentence and management by the YOT has ended. This is particularly important for young people on short sentences to allow more time for them to engage and stabilise with the support of mainstream services. Very early data which needs further validation and exploration by the evaluation indicates that while young people are supported by RAP there are both low rates of re-offending and also low rates of young people returning to custody. RAP as a model of targeted intervention and support to enable high need young people achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes, reduce their offending and return rate to custody, is already showing a potential model for how services can be co-ordinated for positive outcomes with this group of vulnerable young people.

Specific question in the call for evidence

Regarding what the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement services available across the country, in the previous section we have set out the number and regional distribution of youth crime prevention programmes following the expansion in funding. Of most relevance to this section are Youth Inclusion

Programmes that involve elements of youth work, albeit based on multi-agency targeted identification and engagement of children and young people.

Regarding what are the particular barriers faced in accessing services in terms of children and young people at risk of offending or involved in the youth justice system they often likely to be the most disaffected and disadvantaged young people in our communities. They can be excluded from other mainstream services and therefore difficult to reach. Also, the type of behaviour they can exhibit can be challenging making it more difficult to engage them in youth services and more challenging for services to sustain attempts to engage them. Also their parents may not be willing to engage or support their engagement with previous negative experiences of services, mistrust, mental health issues, drug misuse, alcohol misuse all being raised by professionals as reasons for lack of support. Traditional youth services can be effective but can exclude the hardest to reach in these circumstances. There has been a cultural change towards youth service involvement with targeted work with the development of programmes like YIPs. Youth services are involved in the management and delivery of many YIPs with YOTs

Regarding what principles and priorities should guide the allocation of resources and who do we need to target from the YJB perspective there is a clear need to seek to engage the hardest to reach and most disaffected who can also be at the highest risk of involvement in youth crime. Multi-agency identification procedures enshrined in YIP/YISP and by YOTs can be of assistance. If we want to prevent crime and ASB through targeted youth services we must be prepared to take investment decisions including consideration of the social and economic costs of crime and anti-social behaviour and potentially to disproportionately invest in those areas with higher youth offending rates.

Regarding what measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at the local level the approach the YJB has taken to youth crime prevention programmes has included the monitoring of the quality of delivery and outcomes which includes:

- Quality assurance against effective practice models
- Data collection against output and outcome targets e.g. towards the YJB set target of reducing the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system.
- Monitoring of and advice on strategic performance (e.g. partnership working)

In the pipeline we have:

- Prevention National Standards (now in draft form for 2008 launch)
- A tool to work out the necessary inputs/outputs to achieve the first time entrants reduction target

We offer performance improvement support where necessary and our conditions of grant give us the option of withdrawing grants where unacceptable performance does not improve.

Regarding what can be done to improve the ability of universal provision to identify and provide a service to those with greater needs alongside sharing targets with other services, participation in and learning from mechanisms such as Youth Inclusion and Support Programmes can improve the identification and planning for support for children and young people

Regarding what projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people in the section above we have made references to the evidence from YIPs. In terms of innovation, YIPs have helped to develop traditional youth work, focussing on the holistic needs of the young person and increasingly on their family and community. Consistent, thorough assessment and interventions linked to those assessments, detailed management information recording, substantial advocacy, restorative justice approaches, and behaviour management are all innovative, especially when put together with the imperative to identify the very most at risk and to actively target them on a voluntary basis.

Regarding what encourages young people to try new and different kinds of activities from those they already do YJB is commissioning review of the evidence in relation to keeping young people engaged as part of its revision of the Key Elements of Effective Practice. However, from experience, involving children and young people in the process through proper participation can support the involvement in new activities but a provider has to listen to feedback and adapt services accordingly. Strong, well respected staff who may occasionally sail a little close to the wind, but who need to do that to capture the interest of young people, are also important. Finally, relationships built with staff on the basis of mutual trust mean that young people will feel confident trying new things. Essentially this can mean investing time and faith in the young person, making strenuous efforts to engage with them and their families, raising their self-esteem. YJB has developed guidance on elements of this e.g. within the YIP management guidance that practitioners can use.

High Cost, High Harm Families (B4)

As set above, family factors – including poor parental supervision and discipline, family conflict, a family history of criminal activity – can all be significant risk factors for youth offending. The research also points to intergenerational cycles of deprivation, social exclusion and offending. Young People at high risk of offending or brought into the youth justice system often have multiple needs and family issues are a part of that overall assessment.

Intervention with young people at risk or involved in the youth justice system provides an opportunity not only to work with that young person but their family. Again, as noted, in order to effectively address offending behaviour a whole family approach may be necessary. Where possible this can be done on a voluntary basis. Where family factors are directly related to the behaviour of the child and there is wilful refusal to engage on a voluntary basis, an element of compulsion can be appropriate.

Regarding what progress has already been made in addressing the needs of high cost, high harm families we have moved from a position where there was practically no parenting programmes available for the parents of adolescents to where YOTs are now delivering in the region of 11,000 interventions each year. A significant proportion of these interventions are likely to be with parents who fall into the high cost, high harm category. The additional funding made available following SR2004 will significantly increase the number and range of interventions through YOTs including a new focus on BME young parents and those within the secure estate. In addition, prevention programmes that focus on the most at risk young people in communities are likely to work with the children of some of the most challenging families in those communities.

YJB is currently investing in piloting intensive fostering specifically as an alternative to custody for children in the youth justice system. The pilot uses the evidenced based Multi dimensional Treatment Foster Care model that was developed by the Oregon Social Learning Centre and has been used in the USA for over 20 years. The model requires a clinical team trained in the use of the MTFC model. They support the young person and the foster carers who are also specifically trained in the model. The clinical team comprises a programme supervisor, a foster trainer / recruiter, an individual therapist, a family therapist and a skills trainer. Young people are sentenced to Intensive Fostering as a condition of the supervision order as an alternative to custody. The eligibility criteria for the programme are dependent on the family circumstances contributing significantly to offending.

The three pilot sites will run till March 2008 and are being evaluated by York University. Funding from YJB for a maximum of 15 young people over the three sites at any one time. The Intensive Fostering programme for the young people lasts 9 to 12 months. The young people have a structured individual programme based within a foster home, with weekly intervention from an individual therapist and a skills trainer. The programme works to get the young person back into mainstream school, training or work. The young person is supervised and monitored in all settings: the foster home, the community, school or work and their contact with peer group is strictly controlled.

So far 18 young people have commenced the programme of these, 6 young people have successfully completed the programme, 8 young people are currently on the programme and 4 young people have been breached and have received a custodial sentence.

The experience so far from the pilot sites has indicated that some aspects of applying the model in the UK are proving more problematic than in the USA experience including getting young people into education without significant delays, the complexity of the families and the family work required (including the identification of other family members who could become responsible for the young person if a return to parents is not viable) and working with other agencies to provide follow up services after the programme ends.

Subject to the evaluation YJB would be interested in the development of the Intensive Fostering programme further as an alternative to custody for YOTS. For this development Intensive Fostering may need to be linked to the development of other evidence based practices so that on a regional basis it can be part of a range of systemic interventions offered to the more challenging families. This fits with wider development of work with the whole family and looking at the most problematic families. Linking with the DfES's treatment foster care on a regional basis could provide wider coverage of Intensive Fostering.

YJB would be interested in working with other departments in supporting systemic approaches through further development and evaluation of approaches. US research suggests that systemic family based support services deliver outcomes not just for justice but also for wider outcomes.

The families on the intensive fostering programme come from a variety of backgrounds and composition. An issue they all appear to struggle with is to regain control as a parent of an adolescent. This loss of control can be longstanding or can be a relatively recent phenomenon. The circumstances that contribute to this do often appear to have the theme of family loss, through circumstances that can commonly include: bereavement, rejection, divorce, adoption. Anecdotally another common denominator appears to be that the Intensive Fostering programme in particular and the youth justice system more widely are picking up young people, often after some intervention from other agencies but without it being sustained. While they have had some intervention they have not been cases that have been subject to care orders or becoming looked after by the local authority.

Regarding how we can better align local services to improve identification of these families earlier on and before become high cost high harm this links to wider preventative and early intervention work with children and young people. Providing family support alongside work with intervention with the young person may help to prevent the deterioration. Multi-agency identification and planning mechanisms such as YISPs can help improve alignment of local services and are being used as a mechanism in the development of the integrated targeted youth support team pilots. We understand that Respect Early Intervention Pathfinders overseen by DfES and offering support to the parents of the most at risk young people are using YISP as the delivery vehicle in some pilot areas.

The young people that have been on the Intensive Fostering programme to date have had significant difficulties in education either being permanently or temporarily excluded or not attending on a regular basis. If these young people had been worked with sufficiently at an earlier stage, there may have been the opportunity to work with the families to help avoid the disruption in education. This may in a number of cases provide a diversion from the criminal justice route for the young person and helped prevent deterioration of family problems. High cost, high harm families are more likely to need relatively intensive interventions and support.

Regarding what is the appropriate balance between support and sanctions for these families, while voluntary based support must be the first and primary option for families, where the behaviour of parents is harming a young person's development and they do not accept the voluntary route and refuse to accept any responsibility for their child behaviour compulsion may be necessary and in the interest of the child. Information has shown that in the region of 85% of YOT delivered interventions have been on a voluntary basis. Compulsion may be distinct from financial sanctions however where sanctions could effect the family's ability to cope and support itself.

Annex 1

The role of the YJB in reforming the youth justice system has included the following

- **strong local organisation structures and partnerships** - the YJB has supported the successful rollout and development of locally managed multi-agency YOTs in all areas, adapting guidance and support as arrangements have developed. YOTs have been recognised as a successful model of public service delivery.
- **established national standards, overseen local planning, and developed performance management and improvement frameworks** – the YJB has encouraged good local planning through the oversight of youth justice plans, established strong performance management and performance improvement arrangements through the use of KPIs, Effective Practice Quality Assurance and the use of targeted consultancy in areas that are underperforming; advised the Home Office on the setting of national standards and audited progress against those standards. Reflecting the cross cutting nature of youth justice YJB has made progress on aligning performance arrangements with other departments and structures including NTA, Connexions, and recently the CPA of local government and Joint Area Reviews of children’s services. Overtime YJB has reduced the amount of KPIs and started to move to more outcome focused measures as basic processes have been established.
- **development of knowledge base** – YJB has invested in research and evaluation of projects to improve the understanding of approaches to reduce offending and reoffending, and used this to inform its Effective Practice approach.
- **provision of priority youth justice services** – the YJB has centrally stimulated the development and provision of key youth justice services through the use of funding and KPIs (and encouraged YOTs to commission out services where appropriate).
 - **intensive supervision and surveillance** – established in all areas and ensuring higher levels of contact for more serious and persistent young offenders in the community; in addition intensive fostering is being piloted.
 - **innovative targeted prevention programmes** – bringing a new focus on working with young people at high risk and linked to the wider government prevention agenda. These are now undergoing a major expansion aligned with local priorities for children’s services and community safety.
 - **parenting interventions** – YJB has ensured this has been a priority so that from practically no interventions being available for parents of adolescents there are now 11,000 per year.
 - **use of restorative process and involvement of victims** – when victims are involved high levels of satisfaction are reported.

- **assessment based on risks and needs** – standardised assessment tools, ONSET (for preventative services) and ASSET, have been developed. ASSET has been validated as a strong predictive tool and staff have been provided with training in its usage. YJB has aligned ASSET with the new children services Common Assessment Framework.
- **focus on key risk factors** – YJB has prioritised work on key risk factors associated with offending in particular education, training & employment and health services; programmes of work and partnership with government departments and agencies has led to improved delivery of services. According to KPIs improvements in engagement in services has been achieved although there remain continuing concerns about overall levels
- **encouraged community engagement and use of volunteers** – including the successful recruitment of 5,000 community volunteers on Youth Offender Panels and work with NOMS on community engagement
- **monitoring and reporting arrangements** – all YOTs are using electronic case recording and a case management system and an electronic assessment system (eASSET), will be deployed by early 2009 within each of the Secure Establishments, enabling key processes within the youth justice system to be conducted electronically. A YJB YJS ICT Programme has been developed including objectives to further increase the management information available for research, planning and service development.
- **speeding up youth justice system and improved decision making** – YJB has supported work to meet the government’s pledge to halve the time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders. YOTs have contributed, via the submission of pre-sentence reports within prescribed timescales, to the cross agency achievement of the pledge.
- **training of youth justice staff** – YJB has established a national approach to the provision of training for both managers and practitioners and developed a new youth justice qualifications framework including qualifications to encourage a more diverse workforce. YJB has aligned its HR and Learning strategy with both the development of Children’s and Justice workforce strategies reflecting the cross cutting nature of youth justice.
- **Reform of the Secure Estate** – there is a diversity of provision with standards of care and programmes overall having been driven up through contractual requirements with the providers and investment in priority areas, specifically education and training and substance misuse. A culture shift is being progressed with some evidence of custody and community staff working together with young people on mutually agreed sentence plans, so beginning to support the practice of end to end sentence management. In particular
 - Developed the YJB’s approach to commissioning over time and moved towards a strategic partnership approach reflecting limitations on developing the sector through commissioning alone
 - Managed some reconfiguration of the estate including the extension of STCs and a more robust contracting procedure for SCHs and major progress on achieving a discrete estate separate from adults
 - Work with government agencies to deliver improved education, health and substance misuse services

- Improved approach to safety including use of advocates and social workers and other safeguarding initiatives in YOIs
- Established a national placement system
- Improved staff training focused on working with young people – JASP
- Development a cross government resettlement framework and development the Resettlement Aftercare Provision programme

The reforms have resulted in improvements in outcomes. As well as a reduction in headline reconviction rates (primarily for lower tariff disposals) there is a more skilled and diverse workforce, improved involvement of both community volunteers and victims and relatively good confidence levels from other key stakeholders. Self report surveys show that young people are now more likely to receive an intervention when they are caught. The courts report relatively high confidence in the work of YOTs. In general there is now a strong sense of a youth justice system with a clear focus on the statutory principal aim of preventing offending. As noted above performance indicators have pointed to improved access to services for children and young people in the youth justice that can address their needs as well as risk of offending and reoffending – although concerns remain about reaching a plateau in performance, including those with more persistent and serious offending behaviour.

Annex 2

Key Elements of Effective Practice

The YJB has identified effective practice as a key element in developing and improving youth justice services. We are committed to identifying and promoting effective practice across the whole of the youth justice system to ensure that work with young people is as effective as possible and based on best practice and research evidence.

To this end, the YJB has developed the Key Elements of Effective Practice which describe the features of effective services and support the identification of staff learning and development needs. They are also the foundations of a simple quality assurance framework which the YJB wishes to see implemented in all youth justice services.

The original Key Elements of Effective Practice are listed below. These documents were based on literature reviews with these source documents underpinning all of them. The KEEPs and source document can be found on the YJB website⁸

- Assessment, Planning Interventions and Supervision
- Education, Training and Employment
- Final Warning Interventions
- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes
- Mental Health
- Mentoring
- Offending Behaviour Programmes
- Parenting
- Remand Management
- Resettlement
- Restorative Justice
- Substance Misuse
- Swift Administration of Justice
- Targeted Neighbourhood Prevention Programmes
- Young People who Sexually Abuse

The YJB is in the process of commissioning new and revised KEEPs including a review of the evidence on how to keep young people engaged.

⁸ <http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/PracticeAndPerformance/EffectivePractice/KEEPS/>

