The Management Diagnostic
Youth Justice Services
December 1996
Introduction

The Audit Commission study of Young People and Crime (*Misspent Youth*) and follow-up local audits

1. Offending by young people (10-17 years) is a serious social problem that commands increasing attention from politicians and the media. It also represents significant public expenditure - addressing criminal behaviour in young people and processing offenders through the criminal justice system costs around one billion pounds a year.

2. In November 1996, the Audit Commission published its study of young people and crime, *Misspent Youth*. This report examines the efficiency and effectiveness of current procedures to deal with juvenile offenders, and makes a number of recommendations to the various agencies involved in tackling this problem. The study is being followed up at a local authority level by audits of youth justice services. Youth justice is only one agency within the criminal justice system but it plays a critical role in determining how effectively young offenders are dealt with; it is also pivotal to inter-agency co-operation.

3. The local audit will, initially, be a data collection exercise, comprising six worksheets, some of which are completed by authority staff and the remainder by the auditor. The results will provide comparative information on individual authorities, which should prompt managers of the youth justice service to review its efficiency and effectiveness in reducing offending behaviour by young people. A second data collection exercise planned for 1998 will monitor the impact of any changes carried out. Specifically, the audit will examine:
   - the time and resources spent on processing young people through the system;
   - the degree of effort invested in tackling offending behaviour in young people; and
   - re-offending rates after different disposals.

The role of this management diagnostic

4. This management diagnostic is designed as a self-assessment tool for use by managers in the youth justice service (YJS). It draws upon a similar instrument developed in London by the probation and youth justice services (Ref. 1), and has been piloted in a number of areas. It consists of a series of questions about the organisation and delivery of services, which should highlight good practice. The questions begin with the issue of inter-agency co-operation and then follow the logical progression of a young person through the criminal justice system.
The final section considers the adequacy of information systems. At the end of each section are potential benchmarks on aspects of efficiency and effectiveness. The links between the management diagnostic and the data collected by the worksheets are presented at Appendix 1.

5. Completion of the questions on the diagnostic is optional, but managers may find it helpful in considering whether there are areas of practice within their service that need to be improved. It complements the comparative information obtained from the audit worksheets, which also aim to identify any priority areas for action. A checklist of summary information on service set-up and availability (which forms part of Worksheet 6 of the audit) is presented at Appendix 2.
A Management Diagnostic for the Youth Justice Service (YJS)

1 Co-operation with other agencies

Liaison

1. Is there a local forum bringing together the agencies involved with young offenders on a regular basis? Does this include:
   - the youth justice service?
   - the probation service?
   - the police?
   - Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)?
   - magistrates?
   - education officers?

2. Is there a local court users' group (or similar) that allows the YTS to discuss matters of mutual interest around court processes with magistrates, justices' clerks and probation officers? If yes, how frequently do these meetings occur?

3. Are there multi-agency forums addressing youth crime issues at:
   - chief officer level?
   - senior management level?
   - practitioner level?

4. Is there an inter-agency forum for community safety work on which the YJS is represented?

Clarity of objectives

5. Do these forums/groups have clear objectives?

6. Do actions develop as a result of the group discussions?
7. Have the YJS, social services and probation service agreed:
   - a written policy for dealing with young offenders?
   - a clear split of responsibility for aspects of work with young offenders?
   - guidelines to ensure speedy and efficient handling of offenders going to court?
   - options for joint training, for example, between probation, police, education, and magistrates?
   - clear mechanisms to involve the education department?

8. Are the YJS and probation teams integrated, fully or partially? If not, are there plans to develop joint teams between the YJS and the probation service?

9. Is the education department informed about offences by young people of school age?

10. Does the education department offer services to young offenders of school age who are not attending school (either excluded or other long-term absence)?

11. Are efforts made to get these young people back into full-time education or to offer constructive alternatives?

Agreement on caution/disposal

12. Have gravity factors (to guide decisions on whether to caution or prosecute) been agreed between YJS and the police?

13. Is there a clearly understood policy about the circumstances in which the police will issue a caution? Do the police caution young people where guilt is admitted but the CPS nonetheless decides not to prosecute?

14. Is there an inter-agency ‘caution plus’ programme?

15. Are there clear policy criteria guiding the appropriate use of various community sentences? (For example, always recommending supervision orders before probation orders; or limiting the use of community service/combination orders.)

16. Do police officers share information with other relevant agencies on the ethnicity of offenders? Some forces discuss written reports at local forums and/or with YJS and social services departments - does this happen in your area?

Special needs

17. Are staff trained to recognise mental health problems in young offenders? Is there a strategy, agreed with local health authorities, to deal appropriately with such offenders?
18. Is advice on young people’s needs offered to young offenders over and above those on ‘caution plus’ programmes, supervision/probation orders, or post-custodial supervision? Are voluntary referrals accepted/followed up?

19. Young offenders who have been excluded or are truants often miss out on careers guidance which can link them into training schemes, prospective employment etc. Are efforts made by YJS or probation services to re-access this service?

Benchmarks

- **Percentage of pre-sentence reports (PSRs) for young people of school age that contain educational input**
  
  National Standard states that where the young offender is of school age each PSR should include information from the local education authority (LEA), school or pupil referral unit (PRU) about the young person’s attendance, behaviour and performance.

- **Adoption of PSR recommendations by magistrates**
  
  The percentage of cases where magistrates sentence in line with PSR recommendations, reflecting high quality advice and good rapport between the YJS and magistrates.

- **Number and percentage of court users’ group meetings which YJS attend**

2 Pre-court services

Pre-court services aim to support young people going through the criminal justice system whose parents are unwilling or unable to do so and to provide appropriate alternatives to prosecution in court for young offenders who acknowledge guilt through the court.

PACE interviews

1. Is an appropriate adult service available 24-hours per day?
2. If an emergency duty team (EDT) operates the out-of-hours service, have these staff received training specifically for this role?
3. Are all volunteer appropriate adults trained?
4. Do you have an agreed target time for the attendance of an appropriate adult? Is this:
   - within one hour of the request being made
   - within two hours of the request being made
   - within three hours of the request being made
   - longer than three hours?

A Home Office Study in 1992 found the average wait for a social worker to arrive, after being contacted, was between three and three and a half hours (Ref. 2).

Diversion from court

5. Is there a multi-agency panel to liaise with police on decisions whether to warn, caution or prosecute a young person?
6. Does the panel have the opportunity to consider all cases where prosecution of 10-17 year olds is likely?
7. Does the panel meet regularly enough to avoid undue delay in the resolution of cases?
8. Is there a policy to ensure that there is accurate, current information regarding young people who are on the boundary of cautioning/prosecution? (For example, an independent visit to the family for assessment of the situation, with all other workers involved being consulted.)
9. When the police caution a 10-17 year old, does the YJS have the opportunity to address the offending behaviour in order to reduce the likelihood of further offending?
10. Is this support available for all young people aged up to 17 years?

11. Are the following components present in ‘caution plus’ schemes:
   ♦ work on offending behaviour?
   ♦ reparation and compensation?
   ♦ use of leisure time?
   ♦ addressing young offenders’ problems including education, training, misuse of alcohol and other drugs, housing and benefits?

12. Are the views of victims taken into account when a ‘caution plus’ package is developed?

Benchmarks

♦ Percentage of YJS workers’ time spent working with young people outside court addressing offending behaviour

♦ Percentage of YJS workers’ time spent on
  - appropriate adult visits
  - discussions with police

♦ Percentage of young offenders given:
  (a) warnings (b) cautions (c) ‘caution plus’ and (d) prosecuted

♦ Young offenders receiving ‘caution plus’ as a percentage of all offenders dealt with (warnings/cautions/prosecutions)

♦ Average unit cost of appropriate adult visit

♦ Number of appropriate adult visits in a year

♦ Percentage of appropriate adult visits undertaken by
  (a) social worker (b) volunteer in a year

♦ Percentage of appropriate adult visits that rely on the emergency duty team (EDT)
3 Bail and remand services

Bail and remand services aim to help limit the use of custodial remands to the most appropriate cases, and to make the most efficient and effective use of remand care, including escorts to court.

Bail and remand procedures

1. Are there clear procedures, for transfers under PACE provisions to local authority accommodation?

2. Is accommodation available, to which the police can transfer young people required to be kept in custody before they appear in court?

3. Is there agreement with courts' officers that YJS officers are consulted before decisions are made in respect of:
   - bail support programme?
   - remand in custody?
   - remand to local authority accommodation?

Availability of services

4. Is there a bail support scheme or similar arrangement to reduce remands to custody?

5. Are there 'remand fostering' arrangements in place locally?

6. Does this area have remand facilities? If yes,
   - are these shared with other authorities?
   - are residential children's homes used for remand cases?

7. Is there a bail hostel or similar accommodation to offer 16 and 17 year olds who are at risk of being remanded into custody?

8. Are there reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities for providing pre-court services to young people who offend out of their home authority? If yes, do these include provision of:
   - appropriate adults?
   - temporary local authority accommodation?
   - bail support packages?
   - transport to and from court?
Benchmarks

- Number of 10-17 year olds known to be re-offending while on court or police bail, as a percentage of all offenders
  (At two study sites, rates of re-offending on bail were 19% and 33% respectively).
- Number/per cent re-offending while subject to bail support
- Number/per cent of 10-17 year olds re-offending while on remand (denied bail)
- Unit cost (per week) of remand fostering
- Average weekly unit cost of bail support services
- Number/per cent of those charged who are:
  - remanded to custody
  - remanded to LA accommodation (LA secure accommodation, remand units, fostering or sent to their own home)
  - bailed on condition they reside as directed by LA - in bail units, fostering or own accommodation
  - bailed with other conditions (non-residence) or offer of bail support services
- Take-up of bail support services
- Percentage of YJS workers’ time spent on bail support
4 Youth justice work in court

Court services aim to provide good quality information both about individual defendants and the various sentencing options available to magistrates, with maximum efficiency.

PSRs

1. If a PSR has been requested by the court, are young offenders routinely interviewed before they leave court?

2. Is there a system for checking that PSRs meet national standards before they are submitted to court?

3. Are social workers consulted when PSRs concern young people who are known to them?

4. Is there a procedure for assessing 'risk to the public' posed by a young offender during preparation of a PSR?

5. Are supervision plans included in PSRs?

6. Is there written information available for young people explaining procedures for PSRs, supervision orders etc?

7. Is there effective co-ordination between education and the YJS in providing reports for magistrates? If not, how could co-ordination be improved?

8. Are magistrates' views sought on the quality of the PSRs they receive? Are these views monitored and acted upon?

Youth justice service work in the court

9. Is duplication of work/responsibility between YJS and probation workers avoided?

10. Do youth justice workers in court provide:
    - advice and support to young people and carers?
    - advice and information to magistrates?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Average elapsed time from arrest to sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average time taken to produce a PSR (national standard is 15 working days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average number of visits to court:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- when young person has been remanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- when young person has not been remanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of PSRs produced per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Percentage of YJS workers' time spent:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- writing PSRs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Post-sentence work

The aim of post-sentence work is to reduce re-offending by young people.

Supervision

1. Are the following elements adequately covered in supervision orders:
   • offending behaviour?
   • reparation and compensation?
   • use of leisure time?
   • addressing young offenders' problems including education, training, misuse of alcohol and other drugs, housing and benefits, and anger management?

2. Are all young offenders under supervision, probation or combination orders, or given a community service sentence, assigned to a named YJS or probation worker?

3. When young people are given combination orders is it always clearly stipulated who will act as the supervising officer?

4. Is there a procedure for monitoring compliance with the terms of supervision plans?

5. Are there agreed and clearly understood procedures for breaching young offenders who fail to keep appointments on supervision orders?

6. Is each community sentence reviewed regularly in accordance with national standards?

7. Is there a comprehensive range of services from which community-based programmes can be constructed for young people? (For example, autocrime projects, mentoring, advice and counselling.) If not, what are the main gaps in provision?

8. Is effective use made of information on re-offending by individuals who have attended various types of supervision and probation order?

Custodial sentences

9. Are YJS workers allocated responsibility for young people in custody?

10. Do these workers liaise with the custodial institution and visit the youth there?
11. Are YJS workers involved in drawing up sentence plans for every young person serving a custodial sentence?

12. Is there effective liaison between agencies working with young people on post-custody licence and supervision?

13. Is the Home Office warned appropriately of potential Section 53 offenders who might benefit from LA secure accommodation?

---

**Benchmarks**

- Re-offending during the two years following each type of community sentence or release from custody
- Percentage of young offenders given community orders with either youth or probation officers who are interviewed within five working days of the order being made (national standard)
- Percentage of supervision plans drawn up within 10 working days of the order being made (national standard)
- Percentage of supervision plans for school-age offenders that have involved parents or other carers to ensure proper education provision (national standard)
- Percentage of supervision plans that have a strategy for training or employment, where this is appropriate
- Attendance rates by young people on orders
- Percentage of young people who missed more than two sessions within 12 months and were breached (not acceptable absence)
- Percentage of YJS time spent:
  - with people on supervision orders
  - with people on licence from custody
  - visiting people in custody
6 Information systems

Information systems are important in ensuring efficient processing of cases through the system and effective liaison between agencies. They are also vital in monitoring and evaluating outcomes, especially re-offending.

1. Does the YJS have accurate information on recidivism rates?

2. Is this information related to the various processes/options involved such as cautions, ‘caution plus’ and community sentences, to identify what works?

3. Does the YJS monitoring system record:
   - re-offending while on bail?
   - re-offending while on bail support?
   - re-offending while on remand?
   - re-offending after sentence?

4. Are current arrangements for exchanging information between various agencies adequate to inform policy and practice?

5. Does the YJS have (a) a computerised or (b) a manual monitoring system that identifies on a regular (eg, quarterly) basis how many of the following took place:
   - interviews in the presence of an appropriate adult, provided through the YJS/social services?
   - transfers of young people to LA accommodation (under provisions of PACE)?
   - release of young people on police bail with conditions?
   - bail of young people by the court with conditions?
   - remands to custody and LA accommodation?
   - placements of young people in secure accommodation?

6. Is there a monitoring system to identify the numbers of young people who are:
   - warned (where police forces record formal warnings)?
   - cautioned?
   - on a ‘caution plus’ programme?
   - prosecuted?

7. Is there a monitoring system that records:
   - remand status (this may often change after the first seven days when more information has been put before court)?
   - final main sentence?

8. Is there a system to monitor the number of offenders on Section 53 orders placed in secure accommodation and custodial institutions?
## Appendix 1

### Links between the management diagnostic and the data collected using the worksheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management diagnostic</th>
<th>Worksheet number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 1: Co-operation with criminal justice and other agencies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of PSRs for young people of school age that contain educational input.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptake of PSRs (ie percentage where magistrates sentence in line with PSR recommendations)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and percentage of court user group meetings a year which youth justice service staff attend (per petty sessional division).</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 2: Pre-court</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of YJS workers’ time spent on addressing offending behaviour of young people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of YJS workers’ time spent on process</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Caution plus’ as percentage of total formal warnings/cautions/prosecutions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit cost of appropriate adult visit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of appropriate adult visits per annum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of appropriate adult visits undertaken by social worker or volunteer per annum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of services that rely on the emergency duty team (EDT) out of hours</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 3: Bail and remand services</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit cost of remand fostering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly unit cost of bail support services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of those charged who are:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• remanded to custody</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• remanded to LA accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in remand units, fostering or own accommodation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• bailed on condition they reside as directed by LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in bail units, fostering or own accommodation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• bailed with other conditions (non residence) or offer of bail support services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptake of bail support services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 1 cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management diagnostic</th>
<th>Worksheet number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 4: Youth justice work in court</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days through the system from arrest to sentence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of days taken to produce a PSR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of PSRs produced within 15 working days</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of visits to court:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when young person has been remanded</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when young person has not been remanded</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of PSRs produced in a year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 5: Post sentence work</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information collected on recidivism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of young people given community orders either youth justice or probation officers for whom their first interview takes place within five working days of order being made</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance rates by young people on orders in last year</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of young people who missed more than two sessions within 12 months and were breached (not acceptable absence)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of supervision plans drawn up within 10 working days of order being made</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of supervision plans for young people of school age that have a clear strategy for involving parents or other carers to ensure that the young person receives education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of supervision plans, for young people over school age who are not in employment or training, that have a strategy for employment or training.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Summary information on service set-up and availability

Service set-up

Does the YJS work locally as separate service, distinct from area social work teams?

Do the YJS and probation work locally as joint teams with probation staff seconded to teams?

How many YJS teams are there?

Are they split geographically?

Are they split functionally? (1)

Is any day-to-day youth justice work conducted by area social work teams?

Pre-court

Are volunteers used as appropriate adults?

Is there a police liaison/multi-agency panel?

If yes, state frequency of meetings per year

Do the police use gravity factors?

Were these agreed locally with other agencies?

Is there immediate access to PACE beds? (2)

Is the availability of PACE beds ever a problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service/scheme</th>
<th>Available locally?</th>
<th>No. of places (where applicable)</th>
<th>Take-up/occupancy in last 6 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caution plus (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remand fostering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Court processes</th>
<th>mark 'yes/no' or as directed (Authority-wide availability)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there court users' group meetings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, state frequency (by each petty sessional division, if necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of project to address offending behaviour*</th>
<th>Type of project</th>
<th>No. of places (where applicable)</th>
<th>Has project been evaluated?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service/facility *</th>
<th>Available locally?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto-crime projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on constructive use of leisure time*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim reparation and mediation schemes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits advice*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing advice and support*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and counselling services*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol misuse services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug advisory and rehabilitation services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for young people with emotional or mental health problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment services for sexual offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* likely to be provided by YJS staff as part of their routine supervision order duties

1. eg, pre- and post-court teams
2. for young people detained overnight, transferred from police cells
3. caution with additional action which addresses offending behaviour
4. used either as part of a court sentence (supervision order with additional requirements) or as part of a caution plus package
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information on numbers. Is there regular information (eg quarterly) available on how many young people are:</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>provided with an appropriate adult?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transferred to LA accommodation (under PACE)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>released on police bail with conditions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bailed by court with conditions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remanded?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>placed in secure accommodation (whether YOI or LA secure)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are these systems (mainly) computerised?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Actions/warnings following a PACE interview**

- Are warnings used (not informal warnings prior to PACE interview)?

Does the system identify young people who are:

- warned? - leave blank if the above answer was “N”
- cautioned?
- given caution plus support?
- prosecuted?

**Sentence/Section-53 Orders**

Does the system record the final main sentence (eg the numbers on supervision orders)?

Is there a system to monitor the number of Section-53 orders placed in secure accommodation & custodial institutions?

**Re-offending**

Does the system record re-offending:

- whilst on bail?
- whilst on bail support?
- whilst on remand?
- after sentence?
References

1. Inner London Youth Justice Services, Checklist for Youth Justice Services, Inner London Probation Service, Association of Directors of Social Services, 1996.

Prepared by:
Judy Renshaw, Mark Perfect and Clare Weiss, Audit Commission,
1 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PN

If you want to know more:
The national report, *Misspent Youth*,
looks at the subject of young people and crime in more detail. Price £20.00
available from Freephone 0800 502030