COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR PROJECTS

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD'S COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR PROJECTS

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SUMMARY

The Youth Justice Board set up a development fund in 1999 to provide support for 270 intervention projects in youth justice. There were seven different areas of interventions with the overall aim of 'reducing offending by young people': restorative justice; education, training and employment; parenting; mentoring; prevention; drugs and alcohol; and cognitive behaviour. This report describes and assesses the development and the implementation of 23 'cognitive behavioural' projects, and covers the period from September 1999 to 31 October 2001. As the national evaluators, we were commissioned to draw together the experiences and findings of the evaluations of 23 projects carried out by 18 local evaluators, all of them appointed by the projects. We largely depended on local evaluators' reports in order to 'collate' data for this overall 'national evaluation'.

SETTING THE SCENE

Cognitive behaviourism is a psychological model of change, incorporating the principles of both behavioural and cognitive therapy. Cognitive behavioural approaches were introduced into probation and youth justice with the emergence of the 'what works' movement, which had reported that these approaches offer the most promising outcomes in work with offenders. Although this conclusion has not been uncontested, it resulted in the adoption of cognitive behavioural programmes in probation and youth justice.

The setting-up of the national evaluation as a three-way relationship between national evaluators, local evaluators and project staff was challenging and caused a number of problems for both local and national evaluators. Local evaluators experienced certain difficulties collecting data on young people and projects due to confusion surrounding data protection legislation, project staff's ambivalence about evaluation, the lack of validated psychometric measures to assess attitudinal change, doubts about the validity and reliability of psychometric tests and questionnaires available to local evaluators, and the lack of consistent basic demographic data. Evaluation plans were further hindered by the substantial delays in the setting-up and implementation of projects.

THE PROFILE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL PROJECTS

Twenty-three diverse projects were categorised by the Board as 'cognitive behavioural'. In order to compare projects, we classified them into three groups according to the type of offenders they targeted and the extent to which they made use of cognitive behavioural principles:

- ❖ fifteen projects working with persistent young offenders, mostly to structured 'cognitive behavioural' programmes based on manuals;
- ❖ four projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers', dependent on a thorough assessment to structure a 'treatment' plan for each young person;

❖ four projects classified as 'outliers' - two 'educational' projects; one 'reparation' project; and one 'mental health' project - making only limited use of cognitive behavioural elements.

Projects working with persistent young offenders
Although not all these projects strictly followed the Board's definition of persistent young offenders, they certainly targeted young people at high risk of reoffending. The majority of those who started on one of these projects were white (91%); male (88%); aged between 15 and 17 (84%); sentenced to a Supervision or Probation Order (70%); and had more than four previous convictions (73%).

The stated aims and objectives of the 15 projects varied from simply 'to reduce offending' to a more complex attempt 'to reduce the likelihood of further offending by increasing the motivation to change and providing a foundation to achieving new skills'. Key issues addressed by the projects were: moral reasoning; problem-solving techniques; interaction skills; and self management.

By the end of the evaluation period, all but two of the persistent young offender projects had made use of structured 'cognitive behavioural' programmes, based on programme manuals and consisting of between 10 and 25 sessions. Five projects worked with young people on a one-to-one basis, nine on a group work basis, and one offered both one-to-one and group work programmes.

Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'
Four projects worked with young people who had behaved in a sexually abusive or inappropriate manner. The majority of these young people were male (96%), white (94%), and had been referred by agencies other than the Youth Offending Teams (72%). Half were aged between 15 and 17 and 12 per cent were under the age of 10.

The aims and objectives of these four projects focused on the prevention of sexual offending behaviour, secondary prevention of offending by adolescent sex offenders and, more importantly, primary prevention of offending by young people who had not yet come to the attention of the criminal justice system. In fact, only three per cent of the starters were known to have had previous convictions of any kind and 17 per cent were referred to the projects, following convictions for sexual offences.

All 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects worked with young people on an individual basis, and staff in two projects employed a gender-balanced co-working model. Staff were eclectic in the methods they used, adapting them to the individual needs of the young people. In all projects, a thorough assessment was made before a decision was reached whether 'treatment' of a young person was necessary.

'Outlier' projects
Two projects focussed on young people excluded or at risk of being excluded from school, working with them over the course of a school year. The projects aimed to reintegrate these young people into mainstream schooling or provide them with basic skills, but, additionally, to reduce criminal activity. Project staff concentrated on educational work, but also included sessions on motivational issues, problem-solving, self-assessment and social interaction skills.

The 'reparation' project offered a minimum of three and a maximum of six sessions of indirect reparation, including one session of 'cognitive behavioural' group work. It was aimed at a range of young offenders and, overall, those who attended had a less serious criminal history than the persistent young offenders. The project ran as a roll on/roll off programme and aimed to address the risks, implications, causes and consequences of offending behaviour.

The 'mental health' project targeted young people who were assessed as having mental health problems and offered direct work with young people, as well as advice and consultancy to Youth Offending Team (Yot) staff. It aimed to provide accessible and responsive mental health services to young offenders, and project workers used different 'therapies' in their direct work, following a thorough assessment of needs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

Problems in the implementation of projects, examples of how to overcome these problems, and examples of good practice were reported by local evaluators with respect to: the setting-up and structure of projects; the significance of communication; the motivation and commitment of staff; time management; supervision and support of project staff; the attendance and motivation of young people; programme integrity; the youth courts and the projects; and the role of the Board.

Overall, local evaluators reported many hindrances delaying the effective and speedy implementation of 'cognitive behavioural' projects, but in many cases project staff had found ways to overcome these obstacles or suggested how they could be avoided in future.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS COMPLETION AND REFERRAL RATES

The assessment of projects' effectiveness was severely limited by the partial data made available to the national evaluators. This was partly due to problems in data collection but was also caused by the low levels of referrals of young people to the projects. Overall 'cognitive behavioural' projects were in existence for an average of 17 months and received 1,446 referrals, with 1,111 young people starting on an intervention and 540 completing an intervention by 31 October 2001.

Referral rates were considerably lower - less than a third - than had been expected for persistent young offenders, and somewhat lower for the 'outlier' projects, which received about 60 per cent of the expected referrals. Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' received slightly more referrals than they had expected.

Completion rates also varied between the projects:

- ❖ 47% for persistent young offenders;
- ❖ 70% for 'adolescent sexual abusers';
- ❖ 61% for the two 'educational projects'; 59% for the 'reparation' project; and 86% for the mental health' project.

Local evaluators believed that the low completion rate for persistent young offender projects was explained by the particularly chaotic lifestyle of many of these young people, and the length, duration and intensity of the interventions offered. Most of the interventions offered by the 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects were reliant on voluntary

attendance, as even long court orders can expire before 'treatment' is completed. Thus, the high completion rate for these projects was particularly encouraging. Completion rates for the 'outlier' projects were also promising.

Project longevity
All but one of the projects that were independent of the Yot had secured future funding and will continue to operate.

By the time of writing their final reports, local evaluators stated that the future of most of the projects based in the Yots was still uncertain. One project had ceased operation as early as June 2001.

Did the projects achieve their aims and objectives and did the projects achieve the Board's objectives?
Local evaluators for half the projects felt that these questions were asked prematurely and thus did not comment. The other half stated that the projects had largely or partly achieved their own aims and objectives, and that the projects had addressed at least one of the Board's objectives. Evidence provided to support these assertions was, however, very limited.

Feedback from young people, carers, and stakeholders
Local evaluators interviewed a sample of young people, and carers. In addition, two local evaluators sent questionnaires to stakeholders to elicit their perception of the projects. It was not clear to national evaluators whether the samples selected for interviews were random samples, or whether a selection took place thus possibly skewing the interview results.

However, young people, carers and stakeholders were generally positive and complimentary about the projects. Young people valued the 'different' relationship they had with the project worker, their support and respect, and reported that they had changed their behaviour and desisted from crime. Similarly, parents reported that they had noted positive change in the young people's behaviour. However, these positive notes are not reflected in the reconviction rates recorded for this study and should therefore be treated with caution.

Reconviction study
Findings from the reconviction study were limited due to the small number involved (n=129), its timing and problems with methodology. In addition, the lack of matched comparison groups for the different types of projects and methodological difficulties in its set-up meant that reconviction could not be used as a reliable measure of effectiveness of 'cognitive behavioural' projects. Reconviction rates, based on a follow-up period of 12 months from the date of conviction, which eventually led to a referral to one of the projects, varied by project type and were:

❖ 80% for persistent young offenders;
❖ 25% for 'adolescent sexual abusers' - none of whom reoffended sexually;
❖ 56% for the 'outlier' projects.

The big variation in reconviction rates between the different project types can be explained largely by the differences in the criminal history of the young people targeted by the different projects.

For the persistent young offender projects, an attempt was made to compare reconviction rates for completers and non-completers. The findings showed that completers had a lower reconviction rate than non-completers. It was difficult to establish whether this was due to a 'treatment effect' or because completers were at lower risk of reconviction than those who did not complete. By one measure (whether they had served a previous custodial sentence) they were at lower risk; but by another (number of previous court appearances) the completers seemed to be a 'higher risk' group. The findings are not conclusive and severely limited by small numbers (n=49), but the indication that the young people's participation in 'cognitive behavioural' programmes might have an 'effect' on reconviction rates deserves further and methodologically rigorous exploration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The particular set-up and structure of this evaluation has not enabled us to assess the independent effectiveness of individual 'cognitive behavioural' projects in reducing offending behaviour by young people.

There were indications in the data collected for this national evaluation that the 'cognitive behavioural approach' was considered constructive by both the young people subject to it and by their carers. The interview data provided by local evaluators suggested, for example, that carers had seen improvements in their children's behaviour; and that young people reported that they were able to use what they had learnt on the project, and that they valued the fact they were listened to. This has to be placed in the context of rather low completion rates and high reconviction rates as far as the persistent young offenders were concerned. Further investigation is needed to identify the factors and processes that lead to non-completion and, if possible, the characteristics of those who are most likely to benefit from 'cognitive behavioural' programmes.

However, while we were not able to identify whether individual projects 'worked' in reducing offending behaviour by young people, the evaluation usefully discerned the following important lessons about the processes of planning, designing, implementing and evaluating cognitive behavioural programmes in the youth justice field.

- ❖ There is a need for more openness in the discussion of 'what works' and for information-sharing of the good and the bad news on a national level.
- ❖ Regular and good communication between all parties involved is key to any process of establishing new services, programmes and procedures.
- ❖ New projects need to be carefully planned and designed, with assessment, referral and evaluation tools in place.
- ❖ It is necessary to state clearly from very early on what the project is expected to achieve; whom it targets; whether there is demand for that type of project; and whether the Yot can facilitate the project in terms of staff qualifications and venue.
- ❖ Intensive projects such as those based on cognitive behavioural programmes need dedicated project time. Time is a valuable resource, not only in terms of staff time in stretched Yots, but also in terms of the time allocated to the pilot phase for the development of a project and an evaluation of a new project.

❖ 'Persistent young offenders' are a high-risk and high-need group of young people, who would benefit most from an integrated model of cognitive behavioural work and day-to-day life support.
❖ Reconviction studies need to be complemented by other measures of effectiveness, i.e. psychometric tests measuring attitudinal change, interview data, and/or self-reported offending data.

This evaluation has been concerned with projects that for most of the evaluation period were in a 'pilot' phase. In order to make further progress with the development and implementation of cognitive behavioural projects, it would be advantageous to further develop those 'cognitive behavioural' programmes which exhibited good practice to the point where they could be regarded as 'demonstration projects' fit for accreditation. They then should be subject to rigorous evaluation with well-matched control groups and an adequate period of time allowed for follow-up, including not only reconviction but also other measures of the impact of the programme on the processes that lead to desistance from crime.

1 SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Board was established as an executive non-departmental public body in September 1998 under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Shortly afterwards, it set up a development fund to support 270 intervention projects, which aimed to prevent offending by young people. These were split into seven categories: restorative justice; education, training and employment; parenting; mentoring; prevention; drug and alcohol; and cognitive behaviour. Each project appointed a local evaluator and all projects were evaluated nationally according to their category.

This report represents the conclusion of a two-and-a-half year evaluation and will describe and assess the implementation and development of 23 'cognitive behavioural projects'[1] in England and Wales, all of which were supported by the Board's development fund.[2] It will incorporate: an introduction to the principles of cognitive behaviourism; a description of the setting-up and scope of the national evaluation; a description of the projects and their evaluation by local evaluators; a discussion of the difficulties and challenges faced during the implementation of both projects and programmes; an examination of the 'results' of the reconviction and cost study; and the impact the work of individual projects has had on young people, the projects' own objectives and the Board's objectives.

The report hopes to provide insight into the processes of developing and implementing cognitive behavioural projects in the youth justice system at a time of multiple organisational and legislative changes. Furthermore, the report will provide a description of individual projects, intended for an audience of practitioners and managers considering cognitive behavioural programmes for their own Yots and projects.[3] We hope that we will be able to draw out constructive messages for taking forward practice and evaluation methodology.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURISM

Cognitive behavioural therapy follows a psychological model for change, and its adoption and implementation in the criminal justice and specifically the youth justice field deserves some explanation.

In the 1970s, 'behaviour therapy' was the treatment of choice for psychological disorders. It concentrated on the visible and verifiable actions of the individual, based on the premise

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[1] In this report the terms 'project' and 'programme' are not used interchangeably. The term 'project' refers to a team set up to achieve certain objectives, such as: developing a programme; offering reparative work; etc. The term 'programme' is used to describe a structured, planned series of interventions or 'treatment' often based on a manual or devised after a thorough assessment of young offender's individual needs.

[2] Following the convention adopted in previous reports, the projects have been anonymised by assigning each a code (C1 – 24).

[3] Anyone interested in more information on specific projects and their evaluation is advised to consult the more detailed reports compiled by local evaluators.

that behaviour is driven by external factors rather than by the individual's 'inner self'. Behaviourist theory perceives human behaviour as a product of learning.[4] This approach, strictly interpreted, was criticised by those engaged in the development of 'cognitive approaches' towards therapy, particularly for the treatment of depression, which focused on the contents and elements of conscious experience and on how different kinds of sensory and perceptual events were related to that experience.[5] In other words, it emphasised that before individuals could change their behavioural reactions, they needed to understand their thought processes and the factors that had affected their perceptions and emotions.

These two therapeutic models were subsequently integrated during the 1970s into a 'cognitive behavioural' approach by psychologists in Canada and the United States of America, which made use of elements of behaviourism and cognitivism. It was applied mainly to problems of mental health and incorporated into both psychotherapy and counselling.

The elements of behaviourism incorporated into the cognitive behavioural approach were those which emphasised the role of learning, broke complex behaviour into simple more observable units, and assumed that behavioural change can only take place in gradual, clearly defined steps. It also emphasised the importance of monitoring and evaluation, from the outset to the completion of the 'treatment' process, including a follow-up period. The elements of cognitivism were those that emphasised the value of self-reports, the crucial part played by language and self-referent 'inner speech' in the genesis, maintenance and reduction of disorder and distress, and the centrality of cognitive processes in self-regulation and self-perception.

These concepts were merged into a 'family' of cognitive behavioural approaches, each of which sought to explain how thoughts, feelings and behaviour are interrelated, and how functional as well as dysfunctional behaviour can be seen as a product of both personal/internal and situational/external factors.

An important issue in the use of therapies based on cognitive behaviourism is the question of whether or not motivation is a prerequisite for their effectiveness. A conceptual framework was developed to assess whether a person was likely to benefit from a cognitive behavioural programme,[6] because it was argued that 'treatment is based on a collaborative relationship and active participation' and the 'client's' willingness to engage in treatment is an essential factor to ensure effectiveness.[7] The assumption that a person has to be motivated to change – irrespective of how this level of motivation has been reached – may have a major impact on the potential effectiveness of cognitive behavioural programmes in

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[4] See Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall; and McGuire, J. (2000) *Cognitive-Behavioural Approaches: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office.

[5] Hawton, K. Salkovskis, P., Kirk, J. and Clark, D. 'The development and principles of cognitive-behavioural treatments', in Hawton, K. Salkovskis, P., Kirk, J. and Clark, D. (eds.) (2000) *Cognitive behaviour therapy for psychiatric problems: A practical guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-12.

[6] McGuire, J. (2000) *Cognitive-Behavioural Approaches: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office, at pp. 68-72.

[7] Salkovskis, P. and Kirk, J. ' Obsessional disorders', in Hawton, K. Salkovskis, P., Kirk, J. and Clark, D. (eds.) (2000) *Cognitive behaviour therapy for psychiatric problems: A practical guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp129-168, at p. 135.

the criminal justice system where requirement to attend is part of a court sentence, and the 'client' has been sentenced to change.

One of the projects we evaluated addressed this conceptual problem by preceding the cognitive-behavioural 'treatment' phase with sessions focusing on motivational interviewing - influencing the individual to move to a state where they accepted that they had a 'problem' and wanted to change. Other projects incorporated motivational interviewing as an interactional working style into their programmes to strategically influence the young people's motivation in the long term rather than to produce immediate results.[8]

Introducing cognitive behavioural approaches into the criminal justice system
A number of researchers challenged the notion, prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, that 'nothing works' in reducing reoffending. Their reviews of a number of studies and evaluations of criminal justice programmes, using the statistical technique of meta-analysis, concluded that there were measurable 'treatment effects' - that some approaches 'worked'. Although most of the studies were carried out in the USA and Canada, it became quite widely accepted that if such treatments were used in the UK, similar positive results could be achieved.[9] One of the significant conclusions drawn from these research reviews was that interventions based on cognitive behavioural approaches offered the most promising outcomes.[10] Even though meta-analyses have been criticised on a number of grounds, and researchers have described findings at best as 'positive but inconclusive',[11] the 'what works' movement has played a major role in the introduction and development of cognitive behavioural concepts in both probation and youth justice.

Nevertheless, the literature also suggests that 'a particular problem in evaluating cognitive behavioural programmes arises from the absence of consensus over what this approach actually encompasses and whether the types of intervention undertaken in the original studies can legitimately be entitled cognitive behavioural'.[12] Moreover, it should not be assumed that the appropriateness of cognitive behavioural programmes in addressing offending behaviour has remained uncontested. Programmes have been criticised for not taking sufficient account of wider social or environmental factors, and for being insensitive towards the special needs of women and ethnic minorities. Additionally, the actual

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[8] McGuire, J. (2000) *Cognitive-Behavioural Approaches: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office, at p. 71 and pp.115-116.
[9] See Friendship, C., Blud, L., Erikson, M., and Travers, R. (2002) *An evaluation of cognitive behavioural treatment for prisoners*, Home Office Research Findings 161, London: Home Office.
[10] See McGuire, J. and Priestley, P. (1995) 'Reviewing 'What works': Past, Present and Future' in McGuire, J. (ed.) *What works: reducing reoffending*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 3-34, at pp. 14-15. See also, Vennard, J., Sugg, D. and Hedderman, C. (1997) *Changing offenders' attitudes and behaviour: what works?*, HORS 171, London: Home Office; and Vennard, J. and Hedderman, C. (1998) 'Effective interventions with offenders' in Goldblatt, P. and Lewis, C. (eds.) *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, HORS 187, London: Home Office.
[11] Vennard, J., Sugg, D. and Hedderman, C (1997) *Changing offenders' attitudes and behaviour: what works?*, HORS 171, London: Home Office, at p. 35.
[12] Palmer (1994) cited in Vennard, J., Sugg, D. and Hedderman, C. (1997) *Changing offenders' attitudes and behaviour: what works?*, HORS 171, London: Home Office, at p. 11.

effectiveness of cognitive behavioural programmes in reducing offending behaviour has not yet been proven conclusively.[13]

As can be seen from the detailed description of the projects in Appendix 1 and the summary in section 2.1, the projects included in this evaluation varied considerably in the extent to which they used cognitive behavioural principles, the offenders they targeted, and other relevant factors. It seems that for the purpose of allocating projects to different national evaluators a number of projects were included in the 'cognitive behavioural' category, for administrative reasons perhaps, which had a very tenuous link to cognitive behavioural approaches.

1.3 EVALUATION IN CONTEXT

The demands of the national evaluation

The literature on evidence-based practice defines evaluation as 'finding out whether the programme is achieving its objectives'.[14] This involves the 'systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programmes to make judgements about the programme, improve programme effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming'.[15] On the other hand, evaluations have also been defined as being 'designed to identify problems about the introduction of new provisions'.[16]

The national evaluation for 'cognitive behavioural' projects was set up by the Board to draw together 23 evaluations carried out by 18 local evaluators who were appointed by the managers of the individual projects. The national evaluation teams for all seven categories of interventions were commissioned between August and September 1999 after most of the projects had already been accepted by the Board and after many local evaluators had been appointed. They were, therefore, unable to exert any influence on the scope and nature of the projects themselves, or on the research design or methodology local evaluators chose to employ. For example, none of the projects were set up with a control group and only five projects with a comparison group.

The national evaluators' task was to ensure that the data collection for each project was consistent and robust so that a comparative assessment could be made of the effect that the different 'cognitive behavioural' projects had on young people. There was not only great variation in the nature of the projects but also considerable variation in the way local evaluators got involved with their respective projects, their experience in carrying out evaluations, and the amount of resources made available to them. In some cases local evaluators were involved in the development or design of the programme, or in training staff and providing consultancy before or while evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention.[17] This situation was not ideal, given that local evaluators were supposed to

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[13] Rex, S. (2001) 'Beyond cognitive-behaviouralism? Reflections on the effectiveness literature', in Bottoms, A., Gelsthorpe, L. and Rex, S. (eds.) *Community Penalties: Change and challenges*, Cullompten: Willan, pp. 67-86, at p. 69. But see also Friendship, C., Blud, L., Erikson, M., and Travers, R. (2002) *An evaluation of cognitive behavioural treatment for prisoners*, Home Office Research Findings 161, London: Home Office.

[14] Chapman, T. and Hough, M. (1998) *Evidence Based Practice: A Guide to Effective Practice*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office, at p. 9.

[15] Patton (1997) quoted in Merrington, S. and Hine, S. (2001) *Evaluating Probation Work with Offenders: A Handbook*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office, at p. 2-1.

[16] Holdaway, S. et.al. (2001) *New strategies to address youth offending: the national evaluation of the pilot youth offending teams*, RDS Occasional Paper 69, London: Home Office, at p. 80.

[17] C6, C7, C8, C10a/b, C11, C14.

provide an entirely independent assessment of the project's qualities, effectiveness and impact.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the amount of money set aside for the local evaluations varied considerably from 1.2 per cent of a project's budget to 27.5 per cent - ranging from £2,000 for the whole evaluation period to £78,000.[18] This inevitably affected the extent to which local evaluators could rigorously evaluate the projects, and the comparisons that could be made between the local evaluations. Additionally, some projects commissioned local evaluators to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the Yots or agencies involved. All local evaluators continued their evaluations until March 2002 and at least five of them continued their work beyond March 2002 and reported on their projects in more detail at a later stage.[19]

Many local evaluators had agreed their contracts with the individual Yot or project managers before national evaluators were appointed and without having any knowledge of the need to report to a national evaluation team. Even when local evaluators were informed of the existence and role of national evaluators, it was not clear how that would impact on the local evaluation; as one evaluator explained *'not until the seminar* [held by national evaluators in January 2000] *did I realise how prescriptive it was, neither did the project'*. In addition, some local evaluators reported to more than one national evaluator,[20] which caused additional work and confusion about the requirements: '*We were appointed before national evaluators ... There is no common approach in the national evaluation of the schemes … Local evaluators are a bit frustrated that all national evaluators want something different from them.'*

It was hardly surprising, therefore, when some local evaluators criticised the impact that the imposition of the national evaluation had on the resources available to them: '*Local evaluations, which had already been approved during the bidding process, were budgeted for on the basis of local resources and the scale of the projects … The national evaluation imposed systems and structures which the project did not have the administrative or staffing resources to service.'* Overall, local evaluators for 12 of the projects stated that the resources for the local evaluation, either in terms of the time available to the individual researcher or the financial resources, were insufficient.

Moreover, while local evaluators representing a third of the projects believed that the national evaluation had benefited their evaluation by setting a framework and structure and by giving the local evaluation some authority and meaning, local evaluators for nine of the projects - slightly more than a third - stated that the national evaluation had hindered their local evaluation by undermining their authority and status. Furthermore, some evaluators stated that the requirements of national evaluators and the projects were so different that it was necessary to produce two separate evaluation reports. The three-way relationship between national evaluators, local evaluators and project staff was considered to be unnecessarily challenging and sometimes restrictive.

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[18] These are estimates based on the bids submitted to the Board. As described in section IV.8 below the amount of Board funding actually withdrawn has changed in some projects, thus the money set aside for the evaluation might also have changed. However, it is not expected that it will have done so significantly.
[19] C3, C6, C7, C8, C14.
[20] Ten local evaluators evaluated more than one project and thus, reported to more than one national evaluator.

In particular, it was commented - even by those who generally found the national evaluation to be useful - that the reconviction study carried out by national evaluators was inappropriately timed, so that the results would not be an accurate reflection of the projects' work. Some local evaluators argued persuasively that it takes time to develop, pilot and implement cognitive behavioural programmes and therefore that the evaluation was put in place too early, before project staff had managed to eradicate 'teething problems'.

All but one of the projects were expected to start between August and October 1999, providing 26 months for data collection. However, set-up difficulties meant that projects had only been in existence for an average of 17 months (by July 2000 only six schemes were fully operational and receiving referrals, a further 10 were operational but without any referrals). By October 2001, one project had still not received sufficient referrals to commence a group work programme, one had ceased operation, and various others were not receiving adequate referrals to keep their programmes running. Inevitably, the slow pace of project development severely delayed the evaluation locally and nationally.

Most evaluators expressed concern about the tension between the demands of a rigorous evaluation and those of the projects working within local structural constraints. As one put it: '… *there was a major gap between the expectation of a clearly structured research project with baseline and outcome measures, some process data and also a matching comparison group and the reality of practice driven projects by the demands of social services Departments and Yots to assess and treat the client group in question*'.

Data sources
The national evaluation team made efforts to facilitate the evaluation by maintaining contact with local evaluators and projects. We held a seminar for local evaluators in January 2000 to discuss the national evaluation requirements and establish relationships with local evaluators. A further joint seminar for local evaluators and project staff, organised by Nacro and ourselves, was held in June 2001 in order to discuss the final report template and facilitate contact between projects, local evaluators and national evaluators. This further promoted information sharing. The national evaluators also attended seven seminars organised by the national supporters,[21] and training sessions for project staff on three occasions. We joined other national evaluators in regular meetings with the Board.

For this final report we have drawn primarily on the reports provided by local evaluators but also on information provided in bids, and through feedback and information obtained from interviews with project staff as well as local evaluators.[22] We have also included information received during training sessions and conferences, from reports of national supporters and through personal communication with project staff, local evaluators and national supporters.[23]

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[21] National supporters were commissioned by the Board to advice on project implementation, to disseminate good practice and to convene seminars so that project staff can learn from each other.
[22] Between October 2000 and March 2001, we interviewed 24 members of project staff representing all but one project and the 18 local evaluators representing all 23 projects.
[23] Due to the diverse nature of the cognitive behavioural projects it was not possible to compile standardised process questionnaires or psychometric tests to suit all projects.

Gathering data for the evaluation

Overall, local evaluators for 19 of the 23 projects reported that they had experienced various difficulties in gathering data, either because of uncertainty about the interpretation of data protection legislation, difficulties in gaining access to data, or because data was only partially available or not available at all. For 14 of these projects, local evaluators reported that the confusion surrounding the implications of the Data Protection Act 1998 created problems for obtaining details about young offenders. These problems were exacerbated by the need to collect Police National Computer (PNC) identifiers for the reconviction study to be carried out by the national evaluators. Projects not based within a Yot rarely held PNC identifiers, as these have little relevance for their work - nor were they routinely collected by most Yots. Furthermore, Yot managers, and senior police personnel expressed concerns about possible breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998 if they made data available to local and national evaluators. The discussions surrounding this issue - taking place on a local and a national level - stretched local evaluators' scant resources.

All would have benefited if data protection issues had been addressed prior to the commission of the evaluation, or at least early on in its process. The failure to deal effectively with the emerging concerns about confidentiality and provision of PNC identifiers affected the extent to which data was available to local evaluators, and, in turn, to national evaluators.

In addition, some local evaluators experienced difficulties convincing project staff of the benefits of research. Staff questioned the value and applicability of questionnaires to measure change in young people's behaviour, cognitions and approaches to offending, and asked whether the results were likely to have any impact or benefit. Organisational issues around the question of who would carry out the tests and the implications for staff training or buying in expertise were raised, as well as questions about the 'right time' to carry out the tests. Moreover, some staff expressed concern about the danger of 'losing' the young person if they were forced to administer questionnaires which asked very sensitive questions. The language used in a number of psychometric tests was criticised by local evaluators, project staff, and the young people as being inappropriate, unfamiliar and overly difficult. One evaluator reported that some young people felt that the questionnaires were intended *'to trick people into saying things that showed they had mental or emotional problems'*.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that a number of evaluators who intended to administer psychometric tests and use questionnaires to measure young people's attitudinal change did not ultimately do so. Doubts were raised specifically about the reliability of self-reported offending when the local evaluator for two projects found that the young people had not even reported all their official convictions. Additionally, it was stated that there was a general lack of validated psychometric measures of attitudinal change in relation to young people's offending behaviour.

The Board put a great deal of emphasis on the use of Asset, not only as an offender assessment tool for Yot practitioners, but also as a means of aiding evaluation.[24] However,

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[24] Asset is a structured assessment profile for young offenders. It was developed by the Oxford Centre for Criminological Research to assist practitioners in identifying the risks and needs of young people. Asset was introduced by the Board in April 2000 and is currently in use in all Yots in England and Wales.

local evaluators reported that the importance of Asset for the evaluation was not effectively communicated by the Board to either Yots or the projects and, due to various problems, Asset was not completed or available for the majority of Yot referrals and for any of the young people referred from other agencies. Further, the validation of Asset was still in progress during the evaluation of the projects, and a number of evaluators expressed doubts about its integrity and reliability. There seems to have been confusion about the use of Asset and what is was designed to measure. The accuracy and suitability of Asset scores to assess change was questioned by some project workers and evaluators. They pointed out that it was obvious that staff would know the young person much better at the end of an intervention so that more details about drug use or family circumstances might have been disclosed than at the outset, thus potentially pushing scores up or down (disclosure effect), even though there had been no real change. A detailed discussion and analysis of Asset, its design, validity and reliability will be provided in the forthcoming validation report prepared for the Board.[25]

A number of local evaluators provided some evidence which, regrettably, cast doubt on the reliability of data we have been able to collate for the purpose of the final national evaluation report. In particular, they reported that Yot and project staff were not always clear about why they were asked to record certain data, especially those requested specifically for the evaluation. Thus, they did not feel the need to adhere rigorously to data collection procedures. Resource restraints also hindered the aim of consistent and accurate data collection. Staff in many projects and Yots had little time to spare and their priorities lay naturally with the provision of services to, and the work with, the young people rather than 'filling in forms'.

Many local evaluators set out with very ambitious evaluation plans, which were based on the bids to the Board, specifying the number of young people expected to be participating in the projects. The expectations were largely unmet due to severe delays in the establishment of projects, and lower numbers of referrals than anticipated. Altogether, the 23 projects originally expected their staff to be working with 3,800 young people[26] in the two-and-a-half year period funded by the Board. As of October 2001, the projects had received 1,446 referrals, with 1,111 young people starting and 540 completing an intervention. The impact of such 'underachievement' on local evaluation plans is evident.

Local evaluators collated data (although they did not always present them) through:

- ❖ interviews with project staff (22 projects);
- ❖ interviews with young people (14 projects);
- ❖ interviews with family members or carers of young people (5 projects);
- ❖ the monitoring of reoffending (10 projects);
- ❖ collation of self-reported offending (3 projects);
- ❖ a comparison group to assess the 'additional' impact of the project's work on the young people as compared to normal casework (5 projects).

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[25] Roberts, C., Baker, K., Merrington, S., and Jones, S. (2002) *The Validity and Reliability of Asset*, forthcoming.
[26] Conservatively estimated using figures provided in the bids to the Board.

2 THE PROFILE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL PROJECTS

2.1 CATEGORISING AND DESCRIBING THE PROJECTS

Twenty-three diverse projects were categorised as 'cognitive behavioural' by the Board. A detailed description of each (see Appendix 1) is necessary to appreciate their scope and variety, and the problems this variety created for the national evaluation.

Projects varied in the extent to which they made use of cognitive behavioural principles and in the type of young offenders they targeted. We classified projects in a way that made it possible to compare them according to their target group, which incidentally also highlighted the main differences in the projects' 'working styles':

❖ fifteen projects working with persistent young offenders, mostly to structured 'cognitive behavioural' programmes based on manuals;
❖ four projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers', dependent on a thorough assessment to structure a 'treatment' plan for each young person;
❖ and four projects classified as 'outliers' - two 'educational' projects; one 'reparation' project; and one 'mental health' project - making only limited use of cognitive behavioural elements.

It should be noted that most of the bids to the Board were not particularly clear on the shape and structure the projects were to take. A comparison of the information contained in the bid, regarding the costs, staffing, project work, programme content or the expected number of referrals often bore little relation to the work of the projects at the end of the evaluation period. A number of projects were set up as 'developmental projects' and it is not surprising that they underwent various changes. It goes without saying that this increased difficulties for local and national evaluators as they tried to assess 'moving targets'.

The work carried out with young people in the 23 'cognitive behavioural' projects covered a wide range of issues, not all of which were based solely on cognitive behavioural concepts. The models used to engage the young people also varied but included role play, interactive and experiential exercises, and interactive computer programmes. A number of programmes had a built-in review structure where time was set aside to review the young person's progress, their understanding of previous work, and what has happened since in their life. A number of projects found it helpful to provide young people with 'certificates' or other 'sweeteners' acknowledging the completion of certain stages of the programme, or the whole programme, in order to maintain their motivation.

Projects working with persistent young offenders

Within the category of 'cognitive behavioural' projects, the largest number (15) were working with young people who can broadly be described as persistent young offenders.[27] Most of the projects had set out to target serious or persistent young offenders according to the Board's definition,[28] but due to the low numbers of referrals many had to widen their referral criteria. As can be seen from the description of the projects' participants below, the vast majority of young people targeted fulfilled the criteria of being at high risk of reoffending, even if they were not persistent young offenders according to the Board's definition. One of the group work projects offered programmes to three different target groups: persistent young offenders, violent offenders, and adolescent sexual abusers. This will be grouped with the persistent young offender projects for the purpose of this report. All but one of the 15 projects were based in Yots.

The aims and objectives of the persistent young offender projects varied from a simple 'to reduce reoffending', through to 'designing a specific cognitive behavioural programme to be used to target persistent young offenders in order to reduce the level and seriousness of [future] offending by these people', to 'reduce the likelihood of further offending by increasing the motivation to change and providing a foundation to achieving new skills'. All aims and objectives centred on the reduction of offending behaviour by this most entrenched group of offenders.

Overall, the key issues covered by those projects working with persistent young offenders were:

❖ moral reasoning;
❖ problem solving techniques;
❖ interaction skills;
❖ self-management;
❖ self-esteem;
❖ pro-social modelling;
❖ victim empathy;
❖ patterns and consequences of offending behaviour;
❖ values, beliefs and thinking patterns;
❖ peers and assertion;
❖ relapse prevention.

In one project, the structured intervention started with 6-8 sessions of motivational interviewing in order to move the young people to a stage where they were 'ready' and willing to change and thus would be able to take full advantage of the subsequent sessions of cognitive behavioural 'therapy'.

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[27] We are using the term persistent young offenders loosely, not following the Board's definition but describing the broad notion that the majority of cognitive behavioural projects are aimed at young people at high risk of reoffending. This group includes: C5, C6, C7, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C19, C20, C21, C22, C23, C24.

[28] The National Standards of April 2000 define a persistent young offenders as 'a young person who has been dealt with by the courts on three or more occasions, and commits another offence within three years of last appearing before a court'. National Standards for Youth Justice, April 2000, Youth Justice Board, at p. 16, http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/National_Standards.pdf.

The structured 'cognitive behavioural' programmes consisted of between 10 and 25 sessions, lasting between 45 minutes and three-and-a-half hours. Five projects worked with young people one-to-one, nine in groups, and one project offered both a group work and an individual programme. All but two[29] of the 15 projects based their structured 'cognitive behavioural' work on programme manuals bought in or specifically designed for their use. Programme designers had different views on the cognitive behavioural approach most appropriate to addressing offending behaviour by young people. One designer based his programme manual on a developmental model of offending, another on a psycho-social model of 'persistent' offending. Many programme designers built in reviews and assessments to monitor the young people's progress and change through the programme.

One of the projects working with young people in groups was set up to run as a rolling programme where young people could join the group at any stage. Missing one session did not cause severe disruptions to the young person's progress; sessions built on each other but could also stand alone. Another project ran groups in a prison setting, with prisoners facilitating the intervention.

The following two case studies are examples of the 'cognitive behavioural' work undertaken with persistent young offenders.[30]

One-to-one work

Robert (17) had committed a host of offences relating to theft, shoplifting, and taking cars. He had spent four weeks on remand at a Young Offender Institution (YOI), and had been sentenced to a four-month curfew order. He had started on the programme and participated in a number of sessions. Robert thought his offending started when his parents split up. He drank heavily and got 'stoned' and he described a regular routine of committing offences, often not knowing what he had done ('blanking out' after more than seven pints).

Robert thought that the one-to-one programme was different to his previous experience of 'probation', which he saw as 'just popping in, saying hello for 10 minutes and then leaving'. He enjoyed the sessions that looked at how he felt before, during and after offending. However, he felt that some things did not ring true or make sense to him. His relationship with the project worker was important to him and he felt she had helped him through difficult times by talking things through with him and offering practical support.

Robert had realised in the YOI that his drinking was linked to his offending behaviour, and wanted to find out how he could stop himself (he had attended a drug misuse project with his mother). He stopped taking drugs, apart from cannabis. He stated that a number of factors would stop him from offending, especially his girlfriend as he did not want to go to prison and miss her. He felt that she had done a lot for him and he did not want to let her down.

Furthermore, his time on remand made him realise that custody was a waste of time, and

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[29] C9, C19.

[30] Overall, local evaluators provided us with 21 case studies and we have selected six representing the various types of projects discussed in the report. These case studies are snapshots and serve to illustrate the problems young people face and some of the work undertaken by project staff. Names for the case studies were changed.

prisons were full of 'nutters', where you had nothing to do. His electronic tag had stopped him going out at night and he had to think of different ways of spending his time. The support of his mum helped him to stay focused; he did not want to let her down. He had gained employment for the first time and was bored of the way of life he had before, getting 'wrecked' night after night. Robert had also signed up to go to college. It seemed that Robert had realised that there was a future for him, and that this had made a difference.

Group work

Graham (15) had been convicted of four offences of burglary of a dwelling. He had previously been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder for which he had been prescribed medication. Graham had refused to take it as it had made him "feel strange". Project staff described him as "having a problem with authority". Graham described his experience of the group as 'all right - it helped a bit', adding that the most 'all-right' bit had been 'hearing other people's stories' and the role plays. Explaining this, he said that an important element for him had been the opportunities to relate to what he perceived as similarities to how he experienced events in his life. Asked what he had experienced as worst about the group, Graham replied 'the questions'. Explaining this, he said: '… sometimes like they just got you thinking about stuff and when I got home I'd be like really pissed off with you lot because like I was trying to get to sleep and I was still thinking about it.'

Although very clear that he had not enjoyed some of the questions, Graham also seemed to indicate that they had nonetheless been useful to him, in that they had helped him to think about things: '… they just made you think and sometimes I was like thinking that if I carried on with stuff and that then I would like end up in shit … And it helped me think about what I was doing before … But it pissed me off.'

At the beginning of the group, Graham had rated the likelihood of him reoffending as being about five out of 10. At the end of the group, he rated this likelihood as being 'about three'. Asked how he accounted for this reduction, he said that the group had helped him to 'think about stuff more'.

Asked what he had noticed about how the group had been run, Graham stated that he had experienced the group as being run in a collaborative fashion, that the facilitators 'weren't trying to tell us what to do or that we shouldn't do stuff'. He added that this had been useful because otherwise he would not have felt able to participate. Graham emphasised the importance to him and the novelty of feeling the facilitators were listening to him: 'It was new … it was good … it made you feel like that you could say stuff and that …'.

Asked about his experiences of talking in the group, Graham seemed to suggest that while it was sometimes difficult for him, it could be very rewarding too.

'Normally when you're in court and that they don't really listen to you at all, you know, so that's different. It's just knowing that someone is listening to what I've said and taken notice of what I've done. It was good, it was like people cared.'

Graham stated at the end of the interview how important it was for him to feel that people cared about what he had to say and what was happening in his life, adding that talking in the group was not the same as when he talked with his 'mates', as they 'never talk about

stuff like that'.

Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'

Four projects targeted young people who had behaved in a sexually abusive or inappropriate manner. [31] In all projects, staff worked with the young people on an individual basis and three of them were based in charitable organisations independent of the Yot. Local evaluators for those four projects emphasised that the projects were not working with adolescent sex offenders exclusively but also with young people who had behaved inappropriately but had not yet come to the attention of the criminal justice system. Thus, they stressed the preventative aims of the projects. For the purpose of this report, we will refer to these projects as working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'.

The projects were more eclectic in their working methods and adapted their treatment programmes to the needs identified by the assessment of the young people. Usually the treatment covered issues such as:

❖ sex education and sexual knowledge;
❖ attitudes to women and children;
❖ self-esteem;
❖ anger management;
❖ cognitive distortions.

All 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects consisted of assessments lasting between four and six sessions, and subsequently, if the need for a longer term intervention had been identified, treatment programmes that could last for up to 18 months. One project made use of an assessment manual to guide project staff through this process and a treatment manual was also in preparation. All projects delivered sessions on an individual basis, with two projects using a gender-balanced co-working model.

The following case study is an example of the assessment and 'treatment' work undertaken with 'adolescent sexual abusers':

Michael (14) was referred to the project by his local Yot, following an allegation that he indecently assaulted the 12-year-old daughter of his next door neighbours. The offence had been accompanied by actual bodily harm as Michael had attempted to tie and blindfold the young girl.

During the course of the assessment, Michael engaged with project workers extremely well. His reading and comprehension were found to be of a high enough standard to allow psychometric tests to be administered. He was asked to provide project staff with an account of the offence, which was then challenged and added to, using the victim's statement. Michael was also asked about his previous sexual experiences and his sexual attitudes and beliefs were explored. He relayed the kinds of fantasies that he used as well as the nature and frequency of his use of pornography. During the course of the assessment, he said that it had been his intention to rape but he had been disturbed. Michael disclosed this information knowing how it would impact upon his forthcoming sentence. He was found to have major distortions around children and sex and high degrees of usage of abusive

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[31] C2, C3, C4, C8.

sexual fantasy. The assessment identified that there was a lack of sexual boundaries within the home and that Michael had access to much illegal and overt pornography.

Michael was sentenced to three years in custody to be served in a secure unit, and this had enabled the project to continue working with him. He continued to engage extremely well in areas of treatment designed to address victim empathy, cognitive distortions and sexual fantasy. Michael was given a number of psychometric tests and his responses were 'typical' of adolescent rapists. Michael showed globalised problems, particularly in the area of his sexual beliefs, children and adolescent girls. His belief that females around him were as sexually pre-occupied as he was, combined with his use of hardcore pornography and his own lack of sexual relationships, contributed to him developing a desire to rape girls in order to satisfy his sexual desires. These fantasies were acted out in his offence and indeed previously when he had entered the girl's bedroom to plan his offence. During the course of treatment, Michael was re-tested periodically on the psychometrics in order to help judge his treatment progress. The 'post-treatment' results show that he had improved considerably in victim empathy, but particularly in his cognitive distortions score which now falls within the non-offending adolescent range. With regards to his scores on the Empathy for Girls Questionnaire, while his sexualised errors score had dropped, he still showed a somewhat greater tendency than most adolescent boys of his age to perceive girls' behaviour towards boys as purely sexually motivated.

In all areas, Michael had demonstrated positive change evaluated through further psychometric assessment and direct observation by the project and secure unit staff. His maintenance of a fantasy log as part of a programme of covert sensitisation overseen by the project's casework consultant apparently demonstrated a significant decrease in his use of abusive sexual fantasy. Michael was asked to write two letters of apology to his victim, one at an early stage of the 'treatment' programme and one towards the end.[32] A comparison of the two letters showed a marked increase in his level of empathy with the victim, a greater willingness to take responsibility for his actions and, conversely, a discontinuance of victim blaming. Following work with the project during the full eighteen months of his sentence, Michael had subsequently been released and was living with his parents. Project staff continued to see Michael on a weekly basis in order to reinforce the work done in respect of relapse prevention and to offer support and advice to him and his family. Below are some of the comments made by Michael about his work with the project:

'[They are] helpful, they listen, people you can trust. Someone who helps you learn from your mistakes.'

'It has helped me by showing me the bad side of my offence - what the victim feels.'

'I hope I can go out and learn from my mistakes by not doing this again or even thinking about it.'

'Outlier' projects

❖ 'Educational' projects

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[32] These letters were not sent to the national evaluators.

Two projects worked with young people who had been excluded from school or were at risk of being excluded from school.[33] Both were based in the same charitable organisation and set up with the same rationale and structure. Nevertheless, they developed differently, adapting to the needs of the young people they worked with.

Staff in the two 'educational' projects wanted to reintegrate young people into mainstream schooling if possible or otherwise provide them with basic skills in order to prepare them for employment. But they also aimed to reduce future offending and criminal activity, to change thinking and behaviour, to enhance independent living skills and ensure that participants were able to access 'post-16' opportunities.

Obviously the main factors addressed by the projects were educational deficits and the preparation for employment. However, project staff additionally covered motivational issues and delivered special sessions on problem-solving, self-assessment and social interaction skills. The two 'educational' projects worked with young people over the course of a school year.

The following case study is an example of the work undertaken on the 'educational projects':

John had been excluded from both his school and the local pupil referral unit because of his abusive and threatening behaviour before attending the project in September 2000. His earlier school career had been good and he had gained excellent grades in all his subjects but it was felt that he had, 'fallen in with the wrong crowd' at both educational establishments.

John's home background had been problematic. His parents had split up because his mother was a drug addict. John was left with his mother but he could not cope with the situation and moved to his grandparents. The project had a good relationship with the grandparents and John seemed to be happy there.

At the project John initially displayed his 'horrific temper' and it took intensive work with his key worker to address his self-esteem, anger management, sexist attitudes, and drug and alcohol habit. Eventually his attendance rose to 100 per cent and, once the major problems had been addressed, the staff considered him to be, 'a very nice young man'. In May 2001, he passed all of his examinations and continued to participate in the 'Learning Gateway' programme, which he completed. He also participated in a lifeguard course and numerous residential team-building exercises with the local youth service. John took several college 'tasters' and a three year bricklaying, plastering, stone masonry and sandblasting apprenticeship with Heritage training (even though it meant getting up at 5am, six days a week). At first he found this very hard and returned to see his key worker at the project who pointed out that it would be difficult to get a better opportunity than the apprenticeship. Since that time John has worked very hard and has been featured in the local paper for his good work. He was trained to work with other young people who have experienced social exclusion. He loved his work and was gaining experience working with a well-known building firm on site. At one point, he returned to the project to see the staff. During the visit he thanked the project workers and commented:

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[33] C16, C17.

> *'Looking back at what I used to be and what I used to do, you know getting nicked and that, taking drugs and drinking a lot. I'm now working and I do not need that any more. I've got loads of money ... I love it. All I need now is a good girl to settle down with, oh and also pay my Nan back for all my bad behaviour.'*

❖ 'Reparation' project

This project worked with a diverse group of young offenders ordered to undertake indirect reparation by the courts.[34] The 'reparation' project offered a minimum intervention of three sessions and a maximum intervention of six sessions of indirect reparation in groups, with one session of 'cognitive behavioural' group work. The intervention was set up as a roll on/roll off programme.

The 'reparation' project was run by youth services and independent of the Yot. It aimed to address the risks, implications, causes and consequences of offending and the effects of offending behaviour on self and significant others.

The following case study is an example of the work undertaken on the 'reparation' project:

William (17) was referred to the project for an offence of criminal damage against his parents' home. William had two previous convictions for criminal damage and previous disposals were a supervision order and an attendance centre order. At the time of referral, the Yot worker identified a number of other factors impacting on William's life, such as family disruption and truancy from school. William was sentenced to a supervision order and ordered to undertake 24 hours' voluntary indirect reparation work.

At the 'entrance' interview, William was perceived as being motivated to remain out of trouble and expressed concern that if he continued offending his next sentence would be custodial. By his mid-term interview it appeared that he had become more aware of the consequences of his offending. This progress continued up to the exit interview and, by this time, he had taken part in two cognitive behavioural group sessions around offending behaviour and victim awareness. It appeared that William fully participated in both groups and that in one group he took on the role of peer facilitator and helped deliver the workshop to younger offenders. His supervision order was revoked early on the grounds of good progress.

❖ 'Mental health' project

The fourth 'outlier' project focused on the mental health needs of young offenders.[35] Primary Mental Health Workers (PMHWs) were based in two neighbouring Yots to assess young people suspected of having mental health problems, and to carry out direct work with them. They also co-worked with, provided consultation to, and trained Yot core staff.

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[34] C1.
[35] C15.

Project staff aimed to provide appropriate, accessible and responsive mental health services to young offenders. The project workers, all PMHWs, made use of cognitive behavioural therapy; family therapy; art therapy; counselling and psychotherapeutic interventions; anger management or other methods depending on what had been assessed as suitable for use with the individual young person. Programmes were based on individual work and could last up to 19 sessions.

The following case study exemplifies the work undertaken on the 'mental health' project:

Jane (17) was referred to the Yot after receiving a final warning for the offence of taking a vehicle without the owner's consent. Several attempts were made by the Yot worker to contact Jane at home without success. Later Jane telephoned the Yot explaining that she had been in hospital due to self-inflicted injuries. The Yot worker referred Jane to the PMHW. The PMHW went on the initial assessment with the Yot worker, due to the officer's concerns and further information that Jane was living independently. During the assessment Jane presented with very low mood; evidence of self-injury (her arms had several cuts including both old and current wounds); general appearance indicative of poor self-care; suicidal feelings; and sleep difficulties. Her flat was quite sparsely furnished and very cold, there was evidence of drug and alcohol use, and there were signs that Jane had only few social support networks.

Jane reported that she often felt suicidal, was not coping well while living independently, had anger outbursts and assaulted friends or her partner and sometimes strangers, and that she smashed up her flat regularly. The mental health assessment was undertaken, while the Yot worker observed. The Yot worker reported that she found the opportunity to observe particularly helpful and said she would be likely to use this technique in her future assessments.

Work was undertaken to improve and increase Jane's social support networks, to improve coping skills, and to liaise with the Careers Centre. Basic cognitive behavioural therapy was carried out to improve Jane's interpersonal effectiveness, and to regulate her emotions and distress tolerance. Jane was placed on a skills placement and in liaison with the City Council Housing Department she was allocated a flat. Jane received support with her community grant application to furnish her flat and communication with her gas supplier resulted in reinstatement of Jane's gas supply. In addition, she was referred to a drug worker from the Yot and provided with information from the gay and lesbian centre.

The PMHW regularly communicated and worked jointly with the Yot worker and Jane's case was eventually reviewed. Following the review, where Jane was praised for her co-operation and non-offending, it was recognised that social support networks had been identified and that sufficient individual work had been undertaken and that there was no need for further PMHW intervention. Jane appeared happy with the decision. The Yot worker closed the case, as she considered that Jane would benefit more from a mentor, as most of the work she required concerned her welfare needs. Jane was enthusiastic about receiving a mentor. An application was made, but she never came back for appointments; it also emerged that Jane received her community care grant money, but did not take up the tenancy on her flat. Jane had not come to the attention of the Yot for offending again.

2.2 THE 'TARGET' GROUPS

We asked the evaluators to provide demographic data on young people referred to, starting and completing the projects. The following descriptions are based on the data received on those who started on the projects.[36] Until October 2001, a total of 1,111 young people had started on 23 'cognitive behavioural' projects.

'Persistent young offenders'

The vast majority of the young people participating in projects targeting persistent young offenders were male (88%), and white (91%). Six per cent were black, three per cent of mixed race and less than one per cent Asian. Only 12 per cent of the young people who started were under the age of 15, with 84 per cent aged between 15 and 17. The majority (70%) had been sentenced to Supervision/Probation Orders and a further 10 per cent had been sentenced to Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) or were on DTO licence. In addition, 73 per cent of those young people starting a persistent young offender intervention had four or more previous convictions, with 28 per cent having more than 10 previous convictions. Most of the starters had been convicted of violent offences (27%), burglary (19%), or theft (15%).[37] Virtually all young people attending persistent young offender projects were referred by Yot practitioners, sometimes attendance of the project was a requirement of the court order.

The data provided on other problematic factors in the lives of persistent young offenders indicated that 34 per cent were identified as having school attendance problems, and 10 per cent as having difficulties in gaining employment. A quarter of these young people had drug or alcohol misuse problems, but only four per cent were identified as having a mental health problem, 13 per cent had ever been in care and 11 per cent had previously been homeless (see Table 2.4 below).

'Adolescent sexual abusers'

None of the 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects excluded females but, unsurprisingly, only four per cent of those who started were young women. Four per cent were black, one per cent of mixed race and less than one per cent Asian. The age range of those starting on a project targeting 'adolescent sexual abusers' was widely spread with 17 per cent aged 10 to 12 years, 21 per cent aged 13 to 14 years and 49 per cent aged 15 to 17 years. A substantial minority (12%) of young people participating in the projects were under 10 years old. Remarkably, the vast majority (72%) of those enrolled in the projects were not convicted offenders but young people who had behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner and were referred by agencies other than the Yot.

It seemed from the data received that 'adolescent sexual abusers' did not display many other problems, except for seven per cent with identified mental health needs. This might in part be explained through the particularity and severity of sexually abusive behaviour and the assumption that risk factors associated with sexual offending behaviour are different from those associated with other forms of offending behaviour. However, one local

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[36] Percentages are referring to those young people where data were available. Tables on referrals, starters and completers can be found in Appendix 2.

[37] Data on the age at first conviction were provided only for 56 per cent of cases, and in 52 per cent of those cases young people were 14 or 15 years old when first cautioned, reprimanded or convicted (a further 15% were 11 or 12 years old, 16% were 14 and 10% were 16, see Table 1.7 in Appendix 2).

evaluator reported on the finding that about half of the young people referred to the project for a sexual offence or sexually inappropriate behaviour had learning difficulties.

'Outlier' projects

❖ 'Educational' projects

In the two 'educational' projects more than 20 per cent of starters were girls, a higher proportion of females than on any of the other 21 projects. All young people were 14 to 16 years old, and all but three were white. All had educational and employment problems, and 42 per cent had identified drug problems. Ninety-four per cent of the young people participating in the projects were referred by local education authorities (LEAs), schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), and thus no data were available on offending behaviour.

❖ 'Reparation' project

Nineteen per cent of the starters on the 'reparation' project were young women, and all but nine of them were aged 13 to 17 years, with 50 per cent being 15 to 16 years old. Data on the ethnicity of the young people was not available for this project. Only 18 per cent had been sentenced to Supervision Orders and 47 per cent had no previous convictions. Indeed, less than eight per cent had more than four previous convictions.

❖ 'Mental health' project

The number of young people who participated in the 'mental health' project was not known precisely. The local evaluator provided data on 21 starters in the final report, nineteen of whom were male and 20 white. The project worked mostly with the older age group, 13 of the young people were 16 to 17 years old.

However, the local evaluator also provided a separate report on 40 young people seen for direct work by the PMHW, 24 (60%) of whom were classified as persistent young offenders. These young people were assessed through a specifically developed mental health screening tool and 38 per cent of them displayed oppositional/aggressive behaviour, 33 per cent self harm, 15 per cent depression, and 13 per cent drug/alcohol misuse. The assessment based on the 'HoNOSCA'[38] showed that 39/40 had clinically significant scores on aggressive, anti-social, and disruptive behaviour; 16/40 engaged in clinically significant self-harm behaviour; seven reported syndromes such as hallucinations, delusions, and abnormal perceptions; eight reported clinically significant non-organic somatic symptoms; and 29 presented with significant emotional and related problems.

❖ To summarise

The most significant differences between the characteristics of those who started on the different types of projects are summarised in Tables 2.1-2.4. They are:

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[38] Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents, see Gowers et al (1999) 'Brief Scale for measuring the outcomes of emotional and behavioural disorders on children: Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA)' *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, pp. 413-416.

- age;
- stage in the youth justice system;
- criminal history;
- range of identified problems.

Tables 2.1 to 2.3 follow the same format. The percentages in the shaded cells of the tables refer to the "Data available" where data were provided by local evaluators. Due to rounding, the shaded cells do not always add up to one hundred. Percentages in the white cells indicate the amount of missing data.

Gender	N	%	
Male	418	90	→ 90% of 467 cases are male.
Female	49	10	
Data available	467	88	→ Data available for 88% of the sample of 531 cases.
Missing data	64	12	
Total	531	100	→ 12% missing data (64 cases) of the total sample of 531.

Table 2.1: Age

Age	'Persistent young offenders'		'Adolescent sexual abusers'		'Outliers'	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 10	0	0	26	12	0	0
10-12	1	0.4	37	17	6	2
13-14	30	11	64	29	64	22
15-17	224	84	91	41	220	75
Other	12	5	3	1	5	2
Data available	267	81	221	71	295	99
Missing data	63	19	90	29	3	1
Total	330	100	311	100	298	100

Table 2.2: Distribution of orders

Order	'Persistent young offenders'		'Adolescent sexual abusers'		'Outliers'	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reprimand/Final Warning	0	0	31	16	0	0
Referral/Reparation Order	1	0.4	0	0	88	32
Action Plan Order	13	5	1	0.5	65	24
Probation/Supervision Order	177	70	2	1	33	12
DTO/Licence	26	10	0	0	0	0
Voluntary attendance	15	6	139	72	1	0.3
Other	15	8	21	11	83	31
Data available	253	77	194	62	271	91
Missing data	77	23	117	38	27	9
Total	330	100	311	100	298	100

Table 2.3: Offending history

Number of previous convictions	'Persistent young offenders'		'Adolescent sexual abusers'		'Outliers'	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	13	8	45	24	67	29
1-3	28	18	4	2	68	29
4-5	34	22	0	0	6	3
6-10	38	24	2	1	7	3
More than 10	44	28	0	0	1	0.4
Not applicable	1	0.6	139	73	83	36
Data available	158	48	190	61	232	78
Missing data	172	52	121	39	66	22
Total	330	100	311	100	298	100

In addition to the factors identified in Table 2.4, some local evaluators reported on difficulties caused for the programme delivery because a significant minority of young people had a lack of basic skills and learning difficulties. Exact data on the extent of that problem could not be obtained.

Table 2.4: Range of identified problems

Range of problems*	'Persistent young offenders'		'Adolescent sexual abusers'		'Outliers'	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
School attendance problems	113	34	16	5	88	30
Employment problems	33	10	1	0.3	88	30
Drug/Alcohol abuse problems	87	26	2	0.6	47	16
Mental health problems	14	4	21	7	24	8
Ever been in care	42	13	13	4	7	2
Ever been homeless	35	11	0	0	1	0.3

* These factors were identified by project staff or local evaluators and might be associated with offending and other problematic behaviour. Young people could have been identified with more than one of these problems and thus figures are not cumulative.

The description of the young people targeted by the different types of projects shows clearly that they varied considerably in their composition of age, type of offences committed, criminal history and the kind of problems identified to be prevalent in their lives. These differences had a major impact on the type of work carried out with the young people and the opportunity of comparing the 23 projects. Thus, national evaluators attempted to compare projects which were essentially different.

3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

In the evaluation of particular outcomes, 'it is important to have some understanding of the context of the outcome and of why that particular outcome occurred'.[39] The delivery of 'specialist' or additional projects, whether incorporated within the Yot or independent of it, has to be assessed in the organisational, managerial, local, and historical culture in which they were implemented. It was not possible to collect information on all contextual aspects for the national evaluation. However, local evaluators brought to our notice some issues which had a considerable impact on the implementation and operation of 'cognitive behavioural' projects. Some of these problems applied only to specific localities or particular areas of work, whereas evidence provided to us by other national evaluators has suggested that the more systemic problems were also experienced by project staff and local evaluators in other fields.[40]

In order to discuss 'problems' constructively we asked local evaluators to comment not only on problems but also on what could or should have been done by the various agencies involved in the implementation of cognitive behavioural projects - the Board, Yot management, project staff, national and local evaluators, national supporters or others - in response to such problems. In addition, nearly all of the local evaluators identified some good practices in the setting-up, implementation or delivery of the project(s) they evaluated.

We hope the discussion of set-up and implementation problems, combined with good practices on how to overcome these difficulties so as to advance projects and programmes, will benefit future project development.

3.1 THE STRUCTURE AND SET-UP OF PROJECTS

The evaluators of cognitive behavioural projects agreed that before accepting referrals, the project needed to be carefully planned and designed, with assessment, referral and evaluation tools already developed. The availability of 'experts', such as trained clinical psychologists, to research and develop effective cognitive behavioural programmes, increased the likelihood of successful design and implementation, although a few project staff felt that such 'experts' had hindered team building and communication within projects.

Local evaluators also reported that those projects that had been designed according to research evidence, which were based on a clear rationale, and which had involved discussions with Yot practitioners during the development, were better understood and supported by project staff and other stakeholders. As one project worker said, '*If the programme is to succeed, it needs 100% commitment from Yots*'; meaning both Yot practitioners as well as Yot managers.

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[39] Merrington, S. and Hine, J (2001) *Evaluating Probation Work with Offenders: A Handbook*, HM Inspectorate of Probation, London: Home Office, at p. 2-2.

[40] A table indicating the prevalence of problems is included in Appendix 4 and details on the context of and specific problems for individual projects can be found in Appendix 1.

While some local evaluators felt that 'specialist' staff were best placed to deliver cognitive behavioural programmes, all agreed that project staff needed to be provided with dedicated 'project time' built in at the planning and set-up stage. The dedication of whole days to the delivery of structured cognitive behavioural programmes, including time for supervision, debriefing, delivery and preparation was identified as very helpful to effective project implementation.

Furthermore, it was commented that, in order to ensure an appropriate and sufficient number of referrals, it was necessary to develop standardised yet flexible referral criteria, based on clear procedural guidelines available to all referring agencies. Following on from that, it was essential to assess thoroughly all young people before accepting them onto the programme in order to gauge whether the referral criteria had been met and the young people were really suitable for the programme.

It was found to be essential for staff to be thoroughly trained in the theory and practice of delivering cognitive behavioural programmes to make sure programmes are delivered as intended. It was also assessed as being helpful if more than one member of staff had been trained in the programme delivery, so as to provide mutual support to workers and to enable the discussions of ideas or concerns. In addition, evaluators commented that regular refresher training should be provided. Further, the training of project managers was deemed important because once they were familiar with the programme and its delivery they could provide 'expert' supervision. They also might have understood more clearly what the implications were for programmes to be delivered effectively.

Programme manuals with clear guidance on the content of each session and its aims and objectives, as well as 'offence-focused' programmes tailored to different types of offending behaviour, were described as valuable. Programmes were found to be especially useful when they allowed the project workers to discuss situations that related to the young person's life at the present time, rather than talking about hypothetical scenarios or the past.

Local evaluators and project staff argued that there needs to be an integrated model of cognitive behavioural work and practical support. As one project worker put it: *'There's no way I think that you can just tackle the cognitive behaviour* [the cognitions and the behaviour of young people], *and not address the other problems … it would be pointless for me to do a three-hour session with someone twice a week, and then the person's going to go back home and have no money, and want to go and steal for money.'* This more 'holistic' approach involves practical support as well as regular communication with family members, carers or other people who are 'significant others' in the young people's lives.

Finally, in order to ensure the projects' longevity and continuity, evidence from evaluators suggests that project managers needed to plan exit strategies early on. In this planning process, regular meetings with representatives of all stakeholders might have helped to maintain local authorities' support and ease discussions about future funding.

3.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Effective communication proved to be an issue especially in the context of the many changes introduced in the first half of 2000. New Yots had to be established and staff from

various agencies had to be merged into one team with common aims and objectives. Communication was important for the projects' development, implementation and day-to-day work, and had a major impact on the level of referrals received either from internal or external 'stakeholders'. Further, internal communication, especially relevant in projects based in Yots, between project worker and the young person's case-holder - so establishing a two-way flow of information - was essential to ensure information held on the young person was up-to-date, as well as to enable the case-holder to consolidate the work carried out in the project. External communication, i.e. with the courts or referring agencies, was also of prime importance if the projects wanted to gain credibility and the recognition of external bodies.

Local evaluators reported on internal communication problems in seven projects; on external communication problems in nine projects; and stated that the number of referrals received by the projects was lower than expected in 14 projects. Low levels of referrals might have been a reflection of difficulties in communicating the projects' use and worth effectively to those with the power to refer young people, either internally or from outside agencies.

The introduction of psychologists and mental health experts into the Yots might have added to internal communication difficulties. Local evaluators from a number of projects where the programme development was allocated to psychologists reported on the 'culture clash' resulting from the different backgrounds, qualifications, languages used and working styles. Naturally, psychologists approached the development of cognitive behavioural programmes from a theory base and with the conviction that if the young people were thoroughly assessed, participated in and completed structured programmes, and were constantly monitored for attitudinal change, the programme ought to have an impact on certain 'criminogenic factors'[41] and offending behaviour. This often clashed with the expectations of Yot staff, whose experience of working with young people with often very chaotic lifestyles and complex problems led some of them to believe that structured programmes would not 'work' with these 'kids'. Furthermore, they felt that a thorough assessment before writing a pre-sentence report (PSR) in order to include the requirement of programme attendance in the court order was not practically feasible. Some of the difficulties in integrating cognitive behavioural projects in the Yots may have mirrored wider difficulties experienced in integrating the seconded officers within the Yots.

Some of these problems might have been avoided if there had been an early communication of expectations, roles and tasks of those involved in the design and implementation of cognitive behavioural projects. Where this early communication took place - i.e. through the dissemination of information leaflets - it had led to a demystification of 'cognitive behavioural' principles and allayed staff fears and worries about psychological work with some difficult and disaffected young people. It might also have ensured that staff received the team support needed to carry out programme sessions.

Local evaluators reported on a theme that was common to those projects which had to liaise regularly with agencies other than their own in order to receive sufficient referrals or

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[41] Criminogenic factors are those assumed to have an impact on offending behaviour. They include, for example: cognitive skills deficits; cognitive errors and biases; moral reasoning deficits and developmental delay; social skills and cognition deficits.

to access specialist services - namely, that the priorities and working ethos of other agencies often clashed with those of the Board. Young people displaying deviant behaviour might have been perceived primarily as 'in need of help' rather than in need of 'punishment' by staff of other agencies. How projects were perceived by other agencies involved in youth justice depended to some extent on the organisation they were based in. Local evaluators for the projects which worked with 'adolescent sexual abusers' stated that projects benefited from being based in charitable organisations with a reputation for being child-centred.

Another factor that created tensions and caused difficulties in inter-agency liaison was the attempt to shift responsibility from one agency to another and to 'get rid' of difficult and disruptive young people. It was reported that clear protocols and the communication of roles, responsibilities and the aims and objectives of the agencies' or projects' - as was done by all projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' - could go someway towards addressing these difficulties.

Many projects experienced low levels of referrals and took steps to encourage referrals through regular liaison with referral order panel members, magistrates, and other agencies involved with youth justice or the particular project, such as child protection teams, schools and health services. This might not only have secured more referrals, but also developed links with external agencies that could have helped support the young people. According to evaluators, regular feedback should also be provided to magistrates. Indeed, at least two projects had invited magistrates to attend the last programme session where young people made a presentation or summarised what their main experiences have been from the projects. Local evaluators reported that magistrates appreciated this form of feedback and found it useful.

Staff of projects that had provided a 'specialist' service, such as the projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers', were involved in the training of magistrates' or other agency staff. Not only had that improved the knowledge of the trainees and added to the skills of the trainers, but it had also raised the trainees' awareness of the projects and thus contributed to a flow of referrals to them.

3.3 THE MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT OF PROJECT STAFF

Yots and projects in general suffered from high staff turnover, which meant that new staff had to be trained and introduced to the Yot's and project's working practices; this took time. Low levels of staff additionally put a strain on resources. This necessarily impacted on priorities for work, which, according to evaluators, resulted in inadequate attention to communication and data-recording. High staff turnover also meant that staff expertise, gained through training and work experience was lost, and this obviously had substantial resource implications for Yots and projects.

Local evaluators stated that staff recruitment had been a problem for 11 projects and expressed concerns about staff retention in 13 projects. In addition, in 15 projects, either inadequate training or supervision of staff, or a general lack of resources available for project staff, were criticised for creating problems for project implementation.

There were a number of reasons why projects and Yots experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. First, there seemed to be a general shortage of suitable staff which was

exacerbated by competition from other agencies for the expertise and skills gained by youth justice staff. Secondly, some of the practitioners working in the Yot were dissatisfied with the 'new' working ethos. Most of them had previously been employed in the youth justice section of social services departments. A number of voices emphasised that, even though a young person had offended, he/she was often also 'a child in need', and therefore those involved in youth justice needed to have the resources and support necessary to help young people with these needs. A few practitioners had left the Yot disillusioned and alienated by the new legislative framework, although others were still working in the system, trying to influence working practices according to their own ethos. Moreover, some practitioners felt that they 'seem to be pulled away from engaging with young people, just paperwork is left', and this caused them some concern.

Difficulties with the retention of staff were not helped by the financial arrangements for development fund projects. The Board agreed to provide tapered funding to the projects for three years, and anxieties about the continuation of funds created tensions between different projects and between projects and Yot managers. This also made some project staff feel insecure about their positions which, in a few cases, resulted in their resignation.

3.4 TIME MANAGEMENT AND TIME AS A RESOURCE

Time management was a very important issue in effectively implementing cognitive behavioural programmes. It was very easy to underestimate the time needed to carry out group or individual work with young people, according to a set and structured programme manual. Project staff found that structured programmes with a set time frame - i.e. 18 sessions to be delivered twice a week - were difficult to deliver in that time. Day-to-day problems faced by the young people took priority over work on the programme and caused delays. The time needed to prepare for sessions, to debrief after sessions, to complete evaluation forms - either for in-built assessment and evaluation, or for the purposes of the local or national evaluation - and to consolidate programme practice, was severely underestimated in the original bid and project planning. Time management proved particularly difficult in cases where Yot practitioners delivered a structured cognitive behavioural programme to young people in custody or secure accommodation. The practitioner was sometimes the only contact 'from the outside world' for the young person and a lot of time was taken up dealing with other important issues, or just catching up with 'news from home'.

Additionally, workers appeared to find it hard to comply with statutory obligations (including national standards) while at the same time putting aside the time to run the 'new' interventions. Understaffing in some Yots led to groups being run in addition to the normal caseload of a supervising officer. Hence practitioners found it difficult to incorporate intensive structured programmes into the day-to-day work of the Yots.

Moreover, time as a resource was in short supply both in regard to the time allowed for project development, pilot phase and implementation, and in regard to project evaluation. An understanding needs to be reached whereby the time spent on the phase of 'developing, implementing a particular intervention and finding out whether this intervention 'works'' is seen to be time wisely spent. Rushing the development or implementation phase of projects and rushing the evaluation can result in measuring unsatisfactory and ill-developed projects, with little or no research findings as to their effectiveness.

3.5 SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF PROJECT STAFF

Local evaluators for nine projects became aware that some project staff were dissatisfied with the supervision and support they received within the projects and the parent agency. There was a demand for expert supervision for cognitive behavioural work or group work, but often managers could not provide this because they had not been adequately trained. Managers sometimes did not fully understand the requirements of evidence-based programmes and thus were not prepared to support complex and resource intensive cognitive behavioural programmes. The experience of the evaluation showed that project managers seriously underestimated the amount of time that needed to be set aside for cognitive behavioural projects, their development and implementation.

3.6 THE ATTENDANCE AND MOTIVATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Among practitioners, programme designers and project managers, discussions are ongoing as to which is the most effective in gaining and retaining young people's motivation and influencing their behaviour: one-to-one or group work. The evidence provided by local evaluators was too limited for us to be able to assess the relative advantage of one approach over the other. However, it seems to the national evaluators that one-to-one and group work are not competing concepts but rather complement each other. Thus, practical considerations as to the practicality and suitability of both approaches for the individual project and its target group should be of primary concern for staff and management, at least as long as conclusive research evidence is not available to establish the approaches respective effectiveness.[42]

Local evaluators for eight projects, all of which were working with persistent young offenders, reported problems with high drop-out rates. The retention of participants was particularly important for group work projects so as to avoid the collapse of the whole group. Naturally, not all the drop-outs were young people who did not comply with the project's requirements; some young people moved out of the area, and some gained employment and thus could not attend the programme any longer. The majority, however, appeared unwilling to comply with the demands that the project placed on them, or failed to attend for other reasons.

The reason most commonly given by local evaluators for the high number of drop-outs was the chaotic lifestyle of many of the young people referred to persistent young offender projects. This might be related to drug or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, their home life, homelessness, or other issues (see above in Table 2.4). Clear and standardised referral criteria and a thorough assessment were critical in determining whether an individual young person was likely to complete an intensive intervention. If young people who started on the programme were not suitable for it, either because other factors in their life distracted them, or they were not motivated or incapable of following the programme, they were likely to fail.

Local evaluators therefore believed that as much support as possible had to be provided to young people, especially in rural areas, to enable them to attend and to enhance their

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[42] For a detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of both one-to-one and group work see Brown, A. and Caddick, B. (1993) *Groupwork with offenders*, London: Whiting & Birch.

motivation. One method used to increase motivation to attend the programme and to comply with its requirements was the two-phase approach. This employed motivational interviewing techniques as a preparation for the cognitive behavioural therapy phase. Measuring whether the young person was at the right motivational stage for the cognitive behavioural phase built in a framework for progression, and provided a means of assessing whether the more intensive work was likely to be 'profitably' invested in the young people. Programme content and language also had to be suitable for the age, maturity and cultural background of the young people who participated. As discussed above, some project staff reported difficulties caused by questionnaires and psychometric tests where the young people felt bored and thought that the language used was difficult and inappropriate. Thus, various changes were made to programmes in the development phase to make them more 'user-friendly'.

Another important factor in the delivery of the programme was the interaction between project worker and young people. The workers needed to be adaptable to the young people's needs and give them a choice in decisions that affected them. It was reported that this might have improved the quality of the relationship with the young people and built up trust. It was also deemed to be essential for project staff to be able to 'think on their feet', to adapt to the changing needs of the young people, while, at the same time, complying with the aims and objectives of the project.

Furthermore, local evaluators and project staff commented that who delivered the programme was an important factor in engaging the young people and enhancing their 'responsivity'.[43] It was argued that obtaining the 'right' staff with 'right' skills and personality is a key factor in effective programme delivery. For example, one project used prisoners as facilitators of the programme and the local evaluator believed that because the prisoners had more credibility in the young people's eyes, they positively affected their chance of programme completion, and brought about change.

Projects which monitored attitudinal change, through entrance and exit interviews by project staff, were commended by local evaluators. Where project staff made use of standard tools for measuring progress, this allowed the project team to map changes and share evidence of the changes with the young people, thus providing further motivation to change.

Practitioners were also very creative in developing 'sweeteners' to motivate young people to attend and encourage the completion of the programme. These included: taking young people on day trips; presenting certificates to those who had successfully completed the programme; and sending letters in between sessions to the young people (with copies to their caseworker) acknowledging their attendance or non-attendance and encouraging them to attend the next session.

Attendance rates were believed to be influenced by the way project staff reacted to non-attendance. Most projects based in the Yot followed national standards, and it was regarded as good practice to adhere to these standards consistently and stringently, because

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[43] The responsivity principle is referring to the need to deliver programmes in a style that will engage the offender. See Hollin, C. 'Treatment Programs for Offenders: Meta-Analysis, "What Works", and Beyond' in *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, Vol. 22, Issues 3-4, May 1999, pp. 361-372.

this emphasized the significance attached to full engagement with the project. Another model of good practice was the custom of immediately addressing non-attendance through phone calls and, if necessary, home visits by project workers.

3.7 PROGRAMME INTEGRITY

According to the 'what works' literature, programme integrity is an essential element of effective programmes.[44] Programme integrity 'simply means that the intervention is conducted in practice as intended in theory and design and therefore must be monitored while in progress'.[45] Local evaluators for six projects reported on problems in maintaining programme integrity. However, it has to be noted that other evaluators felt unable to comment on this issue as they had not monitored programme integrity because their programmes were still in a developmental stage.

Sometimes programme designer's insistence on the maintenance of programme integrity and the project staff's perceived need to maintain the young people's motivation clashed and caused tension. Some local evaluators felt that there needed to be a balance between the needs to maintain programme integrity and the need to adhere to the responsivity principle in maintaining the motivation and interest of the young people.

3.8 THE YOUTH COURTS AND THE PROJECTS

Working relationships between the projects and the courts were reported to be relatively well established. However, local evaluators representing seven projects commented that reluctance of magistrates to offer flexible orders, or tension between fast-tracking and quality work, had caused problems for the implementation of their project. Further, a few local evaluators noticed an increased use of custodial sentences for persistent and serious young offenders and believed that this had impacted on the number of project starters. Some of the young people referred to the projects and assessed as being suitable were sentenced to detention and training orders (DTOs) or to attend secure training centres by the courts, despite a recommendation in the PSR that the requirement to attend a cognitive behavioural project would be an appropriate disposal.

3.9 THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD

Local evaluators commented on a number of more general measures that could have been taken, especially by the Board, to avoid some of the problems staff faced when developing and implementing cognitive behavioural projects.

Local evaluators perceived *'the sheer extent of change over the first half of 2000'* as hindering and delaying the implementation of projects. At that stage, the priority was to get the Yots established. It was argued that *'the Board should have sought to develop policy and practice at a more staggered pace'*. In addition, the number of different projects initiated through development-fund money in individual Yots raised questions of how to disentangle the effects that participation in more than one of the different projects might have had on young people. These questions had not been addressed at either national or local level and are still perceived to be unresolved.

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[44] Goldblatt, P; Lewis, C. (1998) *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, HORS 187, London: Home Office; and Hollin, C.; Epps, K.; Kendrick, D. (1995) *Managing behavioural treatment*, London: Routledge.
[45] Hollin, C.; Epps, K.; Kendrick, D. (1995) *Managing behavioural treatment*, at p. 172 London: Routledge.

A further criticism directed at the Board and national supporters was the general lack of guidance on development and implementation of cognitive behavioural projects and group work, as well as a lack of specific training on how to engage effectively with disaffected young people. It was also remarked that the Board did not clearly express what they required from the projects at the outset and thus Yot managers who had to prepare the bids felt unsure what they were planning for.

The Board also produced a 'blanket' definition of persistent young offenders that some of the project staff did not find useful, because they assessed persistent young offenders as having various levels of risk or probability of reoffending and so felt more guidance on these levels should have been provided. As with the national evaluation, the role of national supporters was not made clear at the beginning, and that left project staff and project managers unsure of what to expect from them.

In general terms, referring to both the evaluation and the project implementation, it was felt that '*the Board funding did not provide a clear structure and reasonable time perspective to study successful interventions and risk factors for relapse prevention*'. This was experienced most acutely in the context of projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' (it is well accepted for adult sex offenders that in order to measure 'treatment effect' a longitudinal design is necessary, requiring at least four to five years to generate reliable results when using reconviction as an outcome measures).[46]

It was felt that the expectations of the Board were unrealistic in terms of how quickly projects could be implemented and how accurately the effects of the project could be measured in two-and-a-half years. One local evaluator suggested that a better way to assess 'what works' would have been to set up a project (controlled trial) from a research perspective or to monitor what a particular project was actually doing before setting clear goals and objectives for the evaluation.
Another comment valid for all 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects centred on the lack of evidence available as to what the risk factors were and what treatment methods were appropriate to address sexual deviance adequately. It was commented that a consensus between practitioners and researchers has yet to emerge on how to treat female adolescent abusers and young people with significant learning disabilities. One local evaluator informed us that it took 15 years of intensive development work and research before an assessment and treatment manual was available for structured work to be carried out with adult sex offenders.

Some practitioners and local evaluators agreed that '*the Board hasn't fed back from practice*', and learnt the lessons drawn out by the evaluation of the pilot Yots. It had not included practitioners sufficiently in the process of setting up the 'new youth justice system' to make them feel valued and to gain their full support. The perception is that the Board had not communicated effectively with the projects and that information flow between Yots and external projects had been thin. Project staff and volunteers in external projects

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[46] See Lloyd, C., Mair, G. and Hough, M. (1994), *Explaining Reconviction Rates: A Critical Analysis*, HORS 136, London: HMSO; and Hanson, R. K. (1998), 'Predicting Relapse: a Meta-analysis of Sexual Offender Recidivism Studies', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology,* 6, pp. 348-362; and Hood, R., Shute, S., Feilzer, M., and Wilcox, A. (2002) 'Sex Offenders Emerging from Long-Term Imprisonment. A Study of their Long-Term Reconviction Rates and of Parole Board Members Judgements of their Risk' in *British Journal of Criminology*, 42, pp. 371-394.

felt that they should have been included in initial youth justice training and ongoing training, because this would have enhanced partnership working and mutual understanding between Yot and project staff.

4 ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECTS

This section explores whether the projects 'worked' in engaging young offenders, in reducing offending and in bringing about other changes in their behaviour.

Data on behavioural change was limited by the severe delays in project development and implementation, the limited resources available to some of the local evaluators, low referrals, and by the fact that 'baseline research' on adolescent offending behaviour, reconviction rates, reasons for desistance from, or continuation of, offending behaviour is limited. However, the findings presented here suggest that some projects had an effect on young people and point to the need for more rigorous research to assess the extent to which the kind of projects evaluated here impact on desistance, when controlling for other structural and lifestyle factors.

It is essential to find out whether changes noted in young people were, as one project worker put it, '*a magical combination of what is going on the inside (the project) and what happens to them on the outside*' or whether it was the projects and programmes that actually induced desistance from criminal behaviour.

4.1 REFERRAL AND COMPLETION RATES

Referral rates to a project are an important indicator of the need and demand for a particular project. They are also a sign of the extent to which projects were successfully implemented and promoted. Another indication of a project's success is the completion rate. Overall, the 23 'cognitive behavioural' projects received 1,446 referrals by 31 October 2001: 1,111 young people had started on 23 projects, and of the 913 that could have completed an intervention by October 2001, 540 (59%) had done so. Completion rates varied considerably across the types of projects, ranging from 0 to 100 per cent (for completion rates of the individual projects see Table 3 in Appendix 2).

We asked local evaluators to provide demographic data on young people referred to, starting and completing the projects, excluding cases that were still ongoing as of 31 October 2001. Asking for data in this particular way was an attempt to identify the characteristics of young people who were referred to the projects but did not progress, or who started on the projects but did not complete the intervention. Data was not always provided in this format and sometimes data relating to as many as 50 per cent of cases were missing. In addition, the extent of missing data was not constant through referral, start and completion stage.[47] Thus, it was difficult to assess and analyse with confidence whether young people with certain characteristics were more likely to be referred, start, or complete than others.

However, from the data we received, no substantial differences between those young people referred and those starting could be discerned. Conversely, there were some interesting findings as to what the characteristics were of young people who were more likely to

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[47] For example, Table 1.7 in Appendix 2 shows that at referral stage the age at 1st conviction was unknown for 48% of cases, for starters missing data amounted to 52% of cases and for completers for 61% of cases.

complete an intervention. Numbers were small, and as stated above we cannot be entirely confident that these differences were due to real variations in completion rates or occurred due to missing data. However, according to the data available, 63 per cent of those aged 15 completed a persistent young offender intervention compared to 48 per cent of those aged 16 and 41 per cent of those aged 17. There also seemed to be differences in completion rates by ethnicity, but numbers were too small to be statistically valid.

Projects working with persistent young offenders
The 15 projects targeting persistent young offenders received a total of 621 referrals, 420 young people started on an intervention and 152 completed it, while 96 cases were still ongoing in October 2001. This meant that projects received an average of 35 referrals between start of the projects and October 2001 (see Table 3 in Appendix 2). The number of referrals received was equivalent to less than a third of what was anticipated in the bids for this type of project. The average completion rate for projects working with persistent young offenders was 47 per cent and varied from 0 to 100 per cent. Local evaluators have argued that the relatively low completion rate was due to the nature of the target group of these projects (see Tables 2.1 to 2.4 above) and was to be expected; it was not a reflection of the 'failure' of projects as such.

Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'
The four projects working with young people behaving sexually inappropriately have received a total of 482 referrals with 356 young people starting and 204 completing an intervention; 65 cases were ongoing as of 31 October 2001. On average, the four 'adolescent sexual abuser' projects received 121 referrals. The number of referrals actually received was more than was expected in the bids. Seventy per cent of those who started on projects targeting 'adolescent sexual abusers' had completed it by the end of the data collection period.[48] Completion rates ranged from 66 per cent to 77 per cent. However, it is important to remember that most young people participating in the projects had not been convicted and attended voluntarily, and very few other problems had been identified for this particular group of young people (see Tables 2.1 to 2.4 above).

'Outlier' projects
The 'outlier' projects received a total of 343 referrals, 335 young people started on the four interventions, 184 completed them and 37 young people's cases were still ongoing as of October 2001. Thus, projects received 86 referrals on average, which was equivalent to 60 per cent of the expected referral rate. The highest completion rate (86%) was achieved by the project working with young people with identified mental health problems; young people starting on the 'reparation' project had a completion rate of 59 per cent; and in the two educational projects 61 per cent of the young people completed. As described in section 2.2 above, these projects worked with young people who had a less serious criminal history and whose criminal behaviour was less entrenched than those of the persistent young offenders.

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[48] This is likely to be an underestimate. It was sometimes difficult to assess whether or not young people had been assessed as in need of a short-term intervention or a long-term intervention and who had subsequently completed the projects.

Table 4.1: Completion rates

Attendance status	'Persistent young offenders'	'Adolescent sexual abusers'	'Outliers'	Total
Starters*	324	291	298	913
Completers	152	204	184	540
Completion Rate	47%	70%	62%	59%

*Includes only those young people who could have completed an intervention by October 2001. Data provided in Appendix 2 includes slightly more cases in the group of starters as not all local evaluators followed our format.

4.2 PROJECT LONGEVITY

Another indicator of a project's success was whether it managed to secure funding for its future operation. While this question was still under discussion for many projects based in the Yots, all but one of the independent projects will continue to operate beyond March 2002, having secured funding from different agencies.

By October 2001, decisions had not been made about the continuation of most projects based in the Yots. The establishment of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSPs) in a number of the Yots that were running cognitive behavioural projects resulted in the availability of two different services aimed at the same client group. A number of Yots are considering incorporating cognitive behavioural programmes into ISSP provisions, but in others the future of the projects is unclear. One project ceased operation in June 2001.[49]

4.3 DID THE PROJECTS ACHIEVE THEIR OWN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES?

Naturally, the precise aims and objectives of a number of cognitive behavioural projects developed and changed in the process of design and implementation. Therefore 'achievement' was measured against the projects' revised and final aims and objectives rather than the initial aims and objectives as set out in the initial bids.

Local evaluators for seven of the 23 projects stated that staff had met their projects' aims and objectives fully or to a large extent. It was reported for another five projects that staff had partly achieved the projects' aims and objectives.[50]

None of the local evaluators claimed that the aims and objectives were *not* achieved, but local evaluators for eleven projects did not comment on this issue because they felt it was far too early in the projects' development to assess this.

Local evaluators provided some evidence to support their claims that projects were successful in achieving their aims and objectives. This ranged from feedback received from project staff, young people, parents and carers (see section 4.5 below), and assessment measures built into the programme, to psychometric tests which showed behavioural changes in clients, and reconviction data available locally.

4.4 DID THE PROJECTS ACHIEVE THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD'S OBJECTIVES?

The Board was set up with the purpose of preventing offending by young people. In order to achieve this, it has developed a number of aims and objectives that all contributors to the youth justice system, which obviously includes the development fund projects, are expected to meet. These are to:

- ❖ address risk factors;
- ❖ ensure young people face up to the consequences of their offending behaviour;
- ❖ ensure that the intervention/punishment is proportionate to the seriousness/persistence of offending;
- ❖ promote good parenting;
- ❖ encourage reparation.
- ❖ speed up the administration of justice.

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[49] C24.
[50] C1, C2, C4, C8, C10, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C21, C24.

Local evaluators for 12 projects stated that they were unable to comment on the achievement of these aims and objectives either: because it was far too early in the projects' progress to comment; the project was not set up to achieve the Board's objectives; it was not felt to be the project's responsibility to achieve the Board's objectives; or the evaluation was not designed to assess this question.[51]

Local evaluators for 11 projects responded to this question and stated that their projects had addressed or met at least one of the Board's objectives.[52] Sometimes these claims were not supported by evidence, and, overall, the amount of evidence provided was limited. It ranged from analysis of psychometric tests, showing statistically significant levels of change to simple statements that *'evidence suggests that the project is effectively meeting the Board's first three objectives'*.

Address risk factors
The local evaluators for all 11 projects stated that project staff had addressed risk factors related to the young people's offending behaviour. In relation to the projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' this was complicated by the fact that *'risk factors for adolescent sexual offending have yet to be empirically determined'*. While it was stated that the projects were addressing risk factors, evaluators cautioned that to establish whether the projects effectively did so was a different matter. Overall, evidence as to the extent of the projects' effectiveness in addressing risk factors was limited.

Ensure young people face up to the consequences of their offending behaviour
According to their evaluators 10 projects were able to ensure that the young people participating in the projects faced up to the consequences of their offending behaviour. In some projects that would take the form of 'a declaration of personal responsibility' and sometimes this potentially 'confrontational' element of the project would cause young people to drop out. Other evidence to support the claim that the project was successful in ensuring that the young people would take responsibility for their actions was a statistically significant change in levels of victim empathy. For other projects *'to consider the impact of one's behaviour'* was central to their day-to-day practice.

Ensure intervention/punishment is proportionate to seriousness/persistence of offending
The projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' assessed the risk posed by the young people and the seriousness of the 'offence' committed carefully, in order to inform the decisions made by social services and the processes of the youth justice system. The interventions were tailored to the individual needs of, and the risks posed by, a young person and local evaluators argued that it was therefore proportionate to the seriousness of the offence committed and the risk of further offending.

Local evaluators representing seven of the 11 projects for which there have been reports, (three projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' and the remainder working with persistent young offenders) stated that the intervention offered by their projects were proportionate to the seriousness or persistence of the young people's offending.

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[51] C1, C3, C5, C9, C11, C12, C13, C19, C20, C22, C23, C24.
[52] C2, C4, C6, C7, C8, C10a/b, C14, C15, C16, C17, C21.

Promote good parenting

Local evaluators for two projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers' felt that their projects promoted good parenting and so did the local evaluator for the two 'educational' projects. Local evaluators for the remaining seven projects thought this particular Board objective was not applicable to their intervention.

Encourage reparation

The majority of the local evaluators felt that this objective was not applicable to their projects. Local evaluators for only two projects felt that reparation had been encouraged and the evidence provided suggested that this had been done through victim empathy work rather than direct or indirect reparation.

Speed up the administration of justice

None of the local evaluations specifically addressed this objective, but local evaluators for two projects targeting 'adolescent sexual abusers' thought that their projects had helped to speed up the administration of justice. Unfortunately, both local evaluators made rather sweeping statements *'that all the Board's objectives were addressed'* and did not provide specific evidence or details of how this was achieved.

4.5 FEEDBACK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE, CARERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Local evaluators for 22 of the 23 projects interviewed project staff to explore various issues such as the satisfaction with the programme's objectives and delivery, perceived impact of the project on the young people, and many others. Data were not provided from all these interviews, mostly because they had not been analysed by October 2001. However, at least 77 members of staff were interviewed or information from informal contacts was elicited. Selected responses from these interviews were built into the individual final reports and informed the section on the difficulties experienced by project staff, the description of the projects, and the report overall.[53]

Local evaluators for 14 of the 23 projects also interviewed or received feedback from at least 73 young people and in five projects 14 carers were interviewed. The responses elicited are provided below according to type of project and method for working with young people. Local evaluators representing three projects additionally provided data collated from questionnaires sent to magistrates and other stakeholders.

It should be noted, however, that the extent to which the interview data are representative of young people's, carers', and stakeholders' views of the projects is limited by two factors. Local evaluators did not always provide details on how they selected their interview sample and thus we cannot assess whether the views of young people represented here are those of a random sample of those who took part in a project or a selected sample of those who completed their intervention. Further, for most projects we did not receive the whole interview data but a selected sample of quotations and feedback. Thus, two selection processes took place which might have impacted on the representativeness of the data provided below, and we cannot assess the extent of any bias so introduced. Moreover, as one local evaluator commented more generally, 'it is not safe to generalise too much from a small number of interviews'. Nevertheless, read with this 'health warning' in mind, the responses were on the whole positive.

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[53] Unfortunately, the national evaluators did not have access to the interviews themselves.

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Projects working with persistent young offenders: one-to-one
Local evaluators for two projects working with persistent young offenders on a one-to-one basis reported on interviews with a total of 15 young people.

Even though a small number of young people reported communication problems with their project worker, all 15 young people were relatively positive about the projects and the relationship they had with the project workers. Most young people appreciated the fact that the intensity of the interventions had enabled them to build a close relationship with the project worker, which facilitated communication and mutual respect.

'… if I hadn't talked to her about it then I wouldn't have talked to anyone … so it did help having someone to talk to about the offences and why I did the offences and talking about the victims and how they might feel, because I hadn't thought about that before.'

Some made clear that their motivation to change was influenced by the way project workers treated and interacted with them, as well as the practical support they provided. As one young person put it, his project worker had:

'sorted out my accommodation, my benefits and everything, just before I came out … Someone who came out of prison and didn't have a probation like this … I don't know how they would cope, that's probably why they go back to prison because as soon as they come out they got no money, nothing. And I don't think other probation officers do that, but this lot did and they sorted me out…'.

The perception that project workers respected them and cared for them seemed to be important to young people:

'I think it's because of the effort they're putting in … it shows me they've got respect for me … so I respect them back by staying out of trouble.'

All 15 young people had stated that their offending behaviour had decreased or stopped due to the projects and they were convinced that they would succeed in 'staying out of trouble in future:

'Now I don't even want to be the lookout. I just don't want to do it. If I ain't got no money, I ain't got no money … They [friends] say "Oh, what can we nick" … I say "well I ain't got no money and I ain't planning on getting any till tomorrow". Gives me like, makes me feel quite happy, sitting there thinking " I used to be like one of them …" And they just think "Hey, what's he up to? He's changed a bit".'

Young people also referred to other material changes in their life, such as a new partner, a child, a new job, etc. as explanations of why they wanted to stay out of trouble.

'No, I have done [kept out of trouble] for ages already … I've got everything I want within reason. I've got a job and I've got a [partner] now, so…'
One local evaluator analysed 200 contact sheets[54] in relation to the needs of nine young people participating in the project. She assessed whether needs identified during the

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[54] Forms recording details of every contact project staff have had with the young people.

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intervention (31 in total) had been resolved by the end of it. The most common need had been an accommodation problem (33%), followed by budgets and benefits (28%), and education and training (22%). She found that at the end of the intervention 77 per cent of needs had been completely resolved, another 16 per cent were partially resolved, none were worse and only 6.5 per cent had remained the same. This exemplified the amount of practical support provided to young people attending this programme.

Projects working with persistent young offenders: group work
Local evaluators representing six projects reported on interviews with 36 young people and one local evaluator made use of the speeches young people presented at the end of the programme. In addition, local evaluators provided feedback from stakeholders, and an analysis of Asset data.

A substantial number of the 36 young people stated that they were able to use what they had learnt from the project in their everyday lives, although most were unable to recall all that they had done on the programme. Most agreed that they had learnt something from the intervention, however, they were well aware that whether they benefited from the programme and changed their (offending) behaviour depended on their own motivation. As one young person astutely commented:

'*Well, it depends on whether they want to, you know. Whether they want to stop crime and then they'll listen and things like that. Listen to what's got to be said. If they didn't then, they'll just sit there and not do nowt [nothing]. Just wait till they get out and they can do whatever.*'

Another, who had not found the intervention particularly helpful, stated that:

'*It was all right. I didn't really feel like there was any use to it like. But I'd been told like most of it before.*'

This was also reflected by a group of young people who had reported at the end of every session, that they found the programme '*boring and useless*'. Practitioners questioned the motivation of this particular group and found that insufficient motivational work had been carried out with them.

In addition to the feedback received from interviews with young people, local evaluators for two projects had requested feedback from magistrates and other stakeholders. Most stakeholders were knowledgeable about the project, although there was some confusion what exactly it entailed. About half the stakeholders responding to the questionnaires in both projects had supported referrals to the projects.

One local evaluator provided an analysis of Asset forms and scores for 15 young people who started on the programme. A third of the assessments rated the section on 'Thinking and Behaviour' as very strongly associated with reoffending, a third as fairly strong, and another third as moderate. Six post intervention Assets were located and these were analysed for changes in the assessment of cognitive skills as well as changes in the overall scoring. No change in the assessment of cognitive skills was found in three of them, and in the other three the Asset authors thought that 'Thinking and Behaviour' was more of a

problem. The overall scores of two post-intervention assessments did not change, the scoring of two increased and the remaining two decreased. The assessments also showed that the young people were facing substantial other problems, with 11 out of 15 having accommodation problems; 11 out of 15 abusing drug or alcohol; and 5 out of 15 experiencing abuse or violence at home.

Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'
Local evaluators for two of the four projects reported on interviews with 21 young people covering questions on what they had done on the programme, what influence it had on them, and whether they had enjoyed participating in the programme. A summary of data collated through interviews with nine carers of young people was also provided.

Most of the 21 young people had liked the friendly staff and appreciated that they had been able to talk about their offences, to learn about potential consequences of future offending and techniques to stop offending, and to learn about consent/informed consent issues. When asked what they found difficult about the programme they responded that it was hard to give an initial offence account, to talk about their own victimisation, and to talk about relationships and sexual experiences.

Young people described how the project impacted on their behaviour; how they had learned to avoid potentially abusive situations; how they were able to solve problems and consider consequences; and that they were better at anger management.

'*… before I went I was messed up in the head really … it sorted me out and made me see things a lot clearer - the reasons I had to leave home and go into care … they were really helpful. We'd do the sessions and we'd always have the next one booked … always the same day and the same time - always - it was that day and that time was my time.*'

'*… it was telling me how to get rid of all the feelings and things … things to do if … I have used [some of the techniques] since I've finished going - it has worked.*'

However, a few young people felt that the sessions were '*boring*' and should be made more interesting and flexible and recommended that they should be given time to 'unwind' after sessions.

Feedback from carers varied between the two projects. For one project it was stated that carers felt that the aims and objectives of the project were made clear to them, and all described themselves as being satisfied with the level of assistance provided by the project. In the other project, both negative and positive feedback was received ranging from one parent stating: '*I was treated as an outsider*'; to another parent who commented: '*I do feel consulted*'

Carers interviewed made particular reference to their children being better able to cope and develop anger management skills since their involvement with the project, but again feedback for the two projects was mixed. Some carers commented on what they saw as measurable improvements in their child's ability to control anger, but one carer was unable to see marked differences. '*X has not reoffended but there is no difference in his attitude - he just won't accept that he has done anything wrong.*'

'Outlier' projects

The local evaluator for the two educational projects interviewed young people, project staff and carers and provided data on these interviews. The exact number of people interviewed was unknown. In addition, she provided information on the 'educational achievement' of the young people.

Over the two years that both 'educational' projects had operated, 54 young people completed the programmes and gained a total of 122 qualifications. Six took GCSEs and others gained qualifications in Maths, English, Word and Number Power, Health and Hygiene, Food and Hygiene, Life Skills, etc.

The young people were overwhelmingly positive and praised the two projects.

'I've just come in to tell you how good it is here. It's my day off today!'

'It's a better environment and you don't have to call them [the facilitators] "Sir and Miss". They treat you like little kids at school but here you are treated just like everyone else. You show them respect and they'll show you respect.'

'They are very easy to talk to. I did not really talk to the teachers at school.'

'It's different here. They explain something and put it on the board and then come round and you can ask.'

Despite the praise, 'several' young people wished that they had stayed in mainstream schooling and were concerned that they would not be able to take GCSEs, which they perceived as a gateway to employment. The students saw the need for specialist teachers to enable them to take GCSEs, but also stated that the teachers would need to have some of the characteristics of the project workers.

The young people stated that attending the project had impacted on their offending behaviour.

'If we are here then we are not out and about doing stuff and getting nicked, because you always get nicked.'

Most were also aware that project attendance had changed their perspectives and opportunities for future employment and their whole life. They noted that project staff seemed to care about them and they felt supported and valued.

'I did not think that I would leave with any qualification whatsoever. If I'd still been at school I don't think I would have got any qualifications. But I've come here and got my Word Power, Number Power and Bronze Youth Achievement Award. I think I've done pretty good compared to what I would have done at school. I'm pretty proud actually and I'm going to college to do hairdressing.'

'I'd like to take my Record of Achievement to my old school and shove it under their nose and say, "Look at this. You said I'd never get any qualification." Well, I proved them wrong.'

'You know that there is someone there who cares about you and that you can talk to. The staff make you believe that you can do anything you want to do if you put your mind to it.'

Carers of some of the young people were also interviewed and none had anything negative to say. Their feedback emphasised that the projects had an impact on young people's lives, and carers expressed surprise at the extent of change the projects had effected. Although carers had initially been concerned that their children would attend 'a ghetto of offending and failed children' these concerns had been alleviated in the course of the young people's attendance in the 'educational' projects.

4.6 RECONVICTION STUDY

All national evaluators of development fund projects were contractually obliged to carry out a reconviction study. The sampling period was the same for all national evaluations, including those young people referred to a development intervention between July and September 2000.[55] This sample was followed up for 12 months. The timing of the reconviction study was problematic as projects were at very early stages of the implementation process. This was the case especially for 'cognitive behavioural' projects because most were very late to start (see also p.6 above). Virtually all young people included in the reconviction study had participated in projects that had just been set up, had been piloting their programmes or were facing the 'teething problems' of early project development and implementation. In other words staff involved would not have rated the projects as yet operating at maximum effectiveness.

It is important to note that we included only those young people in this study who had been convicted of an offence, which limited the number of people who could be included, especially for the 'adolescent sexual abuser' and the two 'educational' projects.

Numbers available for inclusion in this reconviction study were small. Overall, young people participating in only 17 of the 23 projects could be included and for 14 of the projects only five young people or fewer could be included. Comparison between the projects on the basis of these numbers, therefore, was not meaningful.

Identification details of 171 young people were sent to the Home Office in September 2001. PNC identifiers were available in 50 per cent of the cases, and data on the date of sentence or the date of offence were available in 70 per cent of the cases, as was information on whether the young person had actually completed a 'cognitive behavioural' intervention.

When the data returned by the Home Office were analysed, 14 young people could not be traced and a further 17 (10%) had to be excluded because we were not confident that they had been correctly matched. Moreover, 11 young people who had been sentenced to custody could not be followed up for a 12-month period and they also had to be excluded

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[55] A further reconviction study, with a longer sampling period (July to December 2000) and follow-up time (18 months), will be carried out for the Board by December 2002, by the Oxford Centre for Criminological Research.

from the study. Thus, this reconviction study reports on 129 young people referred to or participating in 17 projects between July and September 2000.

Typically reconviction rates are assessed within a fixed time period as standardised reconviction rates permit direct comparison between studies.[56] This method gives every young person the same chance of being reconvicted within 12 months from the time of their relevant court appearance. The process of standardising the follow-up period for 12 months from the date of the conviction leading to referral to the project proved to be difficult. National evaluators had asked for a sample of young people who were referred to the projects between July and September 2000. The sampling method led to inclusion of young people whose target conviction for the order that eventually led to referral to the project was a long before the time of referral. Sometimes referral to the project occurred many months after target conviction and this made it difficult to assume a link between the participation in a 'cognitive behavioural' project and a reduction in reconviction rates.

We have calculated rates of reconviction where young people could be followed up for at least 12 months, including all offences accumulated after the target conviction regardless of the follow-up period. However, differences between standardised and non-standardised reconviction rates were not significant (the overall reconviction rate rose from 61.2% to 64.3%) and thus we have based our analysis on standardised reconviction rates only.

The standardised reconviction rate was calculated excluding pseudo-reconvictions (offence was committed before the target conviction but conviction occurred after target conviction within the follow-up period) and including those offences committed within the follow-up period where a conviction was secured afterwards.[57] It is hoped that the method used gives a reasonably accurate rate of conviction within a follow-up period of 12 months.

Table 4.2: Reconviction rates

Reconviction rates	'Persistent Young Offenders'; n=49		'Adolescent Sexual Abusers'; n=16*		'Outliers'; n=64		Total; n=129	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Standardised Reconviction Rate	39	79.6	4	25	36	56.2	79	61.2

*It should be noted that of the four young people reconvicted none was reconvicted of a sexual offence.

In this study, overall, 79 young people were reconvicted (39 were persistent young offenders; 36 were targeted by the 'outlier' projects; and four were 'adolescent sexual abusers' - none of whom was reconvicted of a sexual offence), including all 19 young people who had previously served a custodial sentence.[58]

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[56] Standardised reconviction rates measure reconviction over a fixed time period, for example, 12 months from date of target conviction, ignoring offences and reconvictions occurring after 12 months, whereas non-standardised reconviction rates measure reconviction over varying periods of time, for example, from a minimum of 12 months, including offences and reconvictions occurring after 12 months. For a detailed discussion of reconviction studies, see, Friendship, C., Beech, A. and Browne, K. 'Reconviction as an Outcome Measure in Research: A methodological note' in *British Journal of Criminology*, 42, pp. 442-444.

[57] The inclusion of pseudo-reconvictions would lead to an overestimate of reconvictions, but on the other hand reconvictions would be underestimated if offences leading to convictions after the follow-up period were excluded.

[58] In a meeting with Home Office representatives of the Offenders and Corrections Unit, the Board and other national evaluators it was agreed that we should follow the format of a study recently carried out by the RDS, reporting on all young offenders' 12-month reconviction rates, sampled in the first half of 1997 (Jennings, D and Howard, P. (2002) *Report*

The big variation in reconviction rates between the different project types can be explained largely through the differences in the criminal history of the young people targeted by the different projects (see Table 4.3). This variable is widely accepted to be associated with risk of reoffending.[59] Jennings and Howard (2002) reported on reconviction rates of 90 per cent for young people with 10 or more previous court appearances and 72 per cent for those with four to nine previous court appearances. They also found that reconviction rates were as high as 72 per cent when young people had served custodial sentences prior to their index offence.[60]

As Table 4.3 shows, 58 per cent of persistent young offenders had four or more previous convictions, and 38 per cent six or more. This compared to 41 per cent of young people attending 'outlier' projects with four or more previous convictions and 11 per cent with six or more. None of the 'adolescent sexual abusers' had four or more previous convictions. Additionally, 19 of the 129 young people had served at least one custodial sentence prior to referral to the project, and 12 of these young people were persistent young offenders (39%), whereas the other seven had participated in 'outlier' projects (11%).

Another factor that may have played a role was a significant difference in the age distribution of the three groups of offenders. Eighty-two per cent of the persistent young offenders were aged 15 to 17 years whereas only 64 per cent of the 'outliers' and 63 per cent of the 'adolescent sexual abusers' were in that age range. In both the persistent young offender and the 'outlier' group, young people of that age range were more likely to be reconvicted of an offence than in the other age groups. Only in the 'adolescent sexual abusers' group were they less likely to be reconvicted than the younger age range; but this finding has to be treated with caution due to the very small numbers involved (n=16).

It is not surprising therefore that the reconviction rate for persistent young offenders was considerably higher than those for the other groups of offenders.

Table 4.3: Offending history

Number of previous 'convictions'*	'Persistent Young Offenders'		'Adolescent Sexual Abusers'		'Outliers'	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	2	4	9	56	6	9
1-3	18	37	7	44	32	50
4-5	10	20	0	0	19	30
6-10	12	24	0	0	5	8
More than 10	7	14	0	0	2	3
Total	49	100	16	100	64	100

*This includes cautions, final warnings, reprimands and court appearances.

on all young offenders' 12-month reconviction rates, Home Office, unpublished). Reconviction rates for variables such as, current offence type, age at current conviction, gender, number of offences at current appearance, number of previous appearances, number of previous custodial sentences, and type of current disposal were provided. The numbers of this reconvictions study were too small to be meaningfully analysed in that detail.
[59] Lloyd, C., Mair, G., and Hough, M. (1994) *Explaining reconviction rates: a critical analysis*, HORS 136, London: Home Office, at p. viii.
[60] Jennings, D and Howard, P. (2002) *Report on all young offenders' 12-month reconviction rates*, Home Office, unpublished, at p.7.

Additionally, sentences received for the target offences indicated that the group of persistent young offenders was perceived as a 'high-risk group' by youth courts. Overall, nearly three-quarters of them had been sentenced to a Supervision/Probation Order or to custody. This compares to nine of the 16 adolescent sexual abusers (56%), where the high rate of Supervision/Probation Order exemplifies the seriousness of their offending behaviour, and a quarter of young people participating in 'outlier' projects.

'Persistent young offenders' and the young people participating in the 'outlier' projects were not significantly different when compared by the index offence they had committed. Slightly less than a quarter of 'persistent young offenders and 'outliers' had committed offences of violence, and 47 per cent of persistent young offenders and 44 per cent of 'outliers' had committed offences of theft or burglary. All young people targeted by the 'adolescent sexual abusers' projects were convicted of offences of a sexual nature.

In order to make sense of reconviction rates as a measure of the effectiveness of a particular intervention or a particular sentence, it has been argued that it is also necessary to look at the seriousness and frequency of reconviction.[61] Even though a very rough measure of the seriousness of the offence(s) committed, national evaluators of all development-fund interventions agreed to use offence gravity scores as an indication of the seriousness of the offences committed.[62] Furthermore, so as to assess changes in the 'pattern of offending behaviour', especially for 'persistent offenders', it was argued that the frequency of offending prior to the index offence and in the follow-up period also needed to be measured.[63]

We have carried out analyses to explore changes in frequency and seriousness of offending behaviour, but the findings were inconclusive. Due to the small numbers involved, in combination with the shortcomings of the reconviction study discussed above, we are not confident that these changes are a measure of the effectiveness of the 'cognitive behavioural' projects we evaluated and thus have not included them in the main text of the report. Tables detailing the analyses can be found in Appendix 3.

Effect of project completion

This reconviction study could not accurately assess the effectiveness of the programmes through a 12-month reconviction study, because sampling took place too soon after the commencement of projects, no matched control group was available for the different types of projects, numbers were small and, in some cases, target conviction and date of referral to the project were months apart.

Nevertheless, we analysed the reconviction data to gauge whether project completion had any effect on reconviction rates. The sample of young people attending 'adolescent sexual abusers' projects was too small for an analysis. But there were differences in the reconviction rates for the other two groups of projects, persistent young offender and 'outlier' projects. Young people completing an intervention targeted at persistent young

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[61] Lloyd, C., Mair, G. and Hough, M. (1994), *Explaining Reconviction Rates: A Critical Analysis*, HORS 136, London: HMSO, at p. xii.

[62] It was agreed with the Board and other national evaluators to use the Board's gravity scores; see Youth Justice Board (2001) *Counting Rules for the Youth Justice Board Quarterly Returns and Annual Plan*, London: Youth Justice Board.

[63] Lloyd, C., Mair, G. and Hough, M. (1994), *Explaining Reconviction Rates: A Critical Analysis*, HORS 136, London: HMSO, at p. xii.

offenders had a reconviction rate of 71 per cent, compared to 85 per cent for non-completers. Young people completing an 'outlier' project had a reconviction rate of 52 per cent, compared to 60 per cent for non-completers. These differences were not statistically significant.

However, we also analysed a number of relevant demographic variables (such as age and previous offending history) for the 49 persistent young offenders in order to account for differences in reconviction rates.[64] Completers and non-completers were comparable in their mean age and age composition, as well as the disposal they had received from the courts for their index offence. In the analysis of the criminal history of the young people, contradictory findings emerged. Forty-three per cent of those who completed an intervention had more than six previous court appearances, compared to 33 per cent of those who did not complete.

This indicated that completers were actually at higher risk of reconviction than non-completers. However, only three of the 21 (14%) persistent young offenders who completed an intervention had served previous custodial sentences, compared to nine of the 27 (33%) persistent young offenders who did not complete. The higher proportion of young people with previous custodial sentences in the sample of 'non-completers' might account for most of the difference in reconviction rates, as all young people who had served previous custodial sentences were reconvicted. Unfortunately, numbers were far too small to explore these factors further, and to assess whether the differences in reconviction rates were accounted for by differences in the criminal history or other lifestyle factors of completers and non-completers or a 'treatment effect'.

This reconviction study has produced findings worthy of further investigation. However, reconviction data on their own cannot explain why some people appear to benefit from certain interventions and others do not. Home Office researchers and academics investigating the impact of offending behaviour programmes have questioned the reliance on reconviction data as the sole or primary measure of the effectiveness of specific interventions to initiate behavioural change.[65] It has been argued that the long-term measure of reconviction needs to be complemented with measures of short-term impact in order to measure the true impact of the intervention. Psychometrics tests administered pre- and post-intervention can measure the change in those criminogenic needs targeted by the intervention. Measuring these immediate effects of programme effectiveness has been argued to be a more accurate reflection of the benefit an individual intervention will have on a particular 'type' of offender.

4.7 COSTS OF THE PROJECTS

Part of the remit of the national evaluation was to provide details on the economic efficiency of the projects and to measure the costs of the projects against their benefits. A cost-benefit analysis sets out to answer the question whether a specific intervention delivers value for money, taking into account the costs and benefits (in monetary terms) of the specific intervention for all members of society, including the offender(s).

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[64] We analysed data on the 'persistent young offender group', as we had data on completion for all but one case, and the difference in reconviction rates between completers and non-completers was greatest. It was unknown for a third of the young people attending an 'outlier' project whether or not they had completed it.
[65] For example, see, Friendship, C., Falshaw, L., and Beech, A. (2002) 'Measuring the real impact of accredited offending behaviour programmes' in *Criminological and Legal Psychology*, forthcoming.

From the outset, discussions arose between national evaluators and the Board on how to measure the costs of the projects. Guidelines changed a number of times, but in the end it was agreed that the Board would send out a template to all projects, collecting information on basic costs (staff, training, running costs, and equipment), which was to be filled out quarterly and then sent back to national evaluators. In total, we received 15 templates (8%) from four of the 23 projects out of the 184 templates we should have received by the end of October 2001.

Two different problems emerged in the process of analysing the costs and the benefits of the projects. First, as described in section 4.6 above, we cannot comment conclusively on the benefits of the projects in terms of a reduction in reoffending and therefore no monetary value can be attached. Other potential benefits of the projects, such as increased employability of young people, or increased earnings, were not measured consistently by evaluators. Secondly, the template provided by the Board was only an estimate measure of costs and it was not filled in consistently. Given that less than 10 per cent of templates were received from the projects, it was impossible to assess accurately the costs incurred by them.

One of the aims of a cost-benefit analysis is to 'allow choices to be made between alternative uses of resources or alternative distributions of services'.[66] This should serve to replicate projects in different organisations and settings with managers having a clear idea of the costs that would be incurred by the implementation of a particular project. Thus, one needs to differentiate between different 'types' of costs. A distinction has to be made between 'running costs' - what would the project typically cost when up and running regularly and 'normally' - and 'set-up costs' - costs for initial staff training, the initial employment of people, purchase of new equipment, and the costs of finding a new venue.

Running costs are typically assessed six months after a project has started delivering its 'new' provisions, in order to exclude hitches and additional or lower costs in the initial phase of providing a new service. Set-up costs are all those costs incurred by planning and setting-up a new intervention, employing new staff, providing training for staff and management, and finding a new venue.[67] In addition, projects sometimes incur 'sunk costs', spending in the expectation to benefit the project that are not in fact used for the project, e.g. training for an anticipated aspect of the intervention that later on is not included in the intervention.

Costs that need to be taken into account:

❖ staff time - including the time managers spend on supervision of project staff, the hours staff have worked on the specific intervention and rank of the workers to assess wages;
❖ venue/accommodation - often hidden costs: size and type of venue needs to be specified if the project 'gets it for free';
❖ equipment;

[66] Welsh, B. and Farrington, D. P. (2001) 'Evaluating the economic efficiency of correctional intervention programs' in Bernfeld, G. A., Farrington, D. P. and Leschied, A. W. *Offender Rehabilitation in Practice*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 45-65 at p.48.
[67] Personal communication with Rosa Fernandez, Research Fellow, SKOPE, Department of Economics, Oxford University.

❖ training - could be both set-up and running costs;
❖ volunteer work - often hidden costs; need to be assessed by type of work.

In order to gather some information on the costs incurred by the projects, we collated data from the Board's finance section on the amount of money that projects had spent during the time they had been funded by the Board. We have estimated the costs incurred as of 31 October 2001, basing the estimate on the proportionate contribution - 100 per cent in Year One, 60 per cent in Year Two, 30 per cent in Year Three - made by the Board. Data were not available on all the costs listed above, essential to carry out a reliable cost analysis.

Given these limitations we cannot carry out a sound cost-benefit analysis, and have only been able to provide some limited descriptive data on the costs incurred by the 23 'cognitive behavioural' projects.

Project managers did provide anticipated project costs in their bid to the Board. On average, it was anticipated to spend £267,063 on the projects, with a minimum of £22,100 and a maximum of £487,400. The actual expenditure as of 31 October 2001 was less, with a minimum expenditure of £16,369 and a maximum expenditure of £354,897. The average expenditure per project was £174,435, nearly £100,000 less than expected.

Overall, the anticipated costs were revised in 14 of the 21 projects where both data on anticipated costs and actual costs were available. Managers for 10 projects agreed to an under-spend on their anticipated costs by a total of £229,972; managers for four projects changed their grants to receive more funding from the Board, an increase of £49,915. However, until October 2001, project managers only claimed 82 per cent of the revised and agreed funding. Thus the actual costs of the Board-funded projects reflect the developmental delays of the projects.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide unit costs - costs incurred per young offender starting on the project - for a number of reasons. First and most importantly we were unable to differentiate between running costs and set-up costs. Secondly, we only had basic data on the costs claimed from the Board and other partner agencies. We could not assess to what extent the project has been supported through other facilities provided by its parent agency, such as accommodation, equipment, etc, which means we did not know how many 'hidden costs' the projects have incurred.

5   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The particular set-up and structure of this evaluation has not enabled us to assess the independent effectiveness of individual 'cognitive behavioural' projects in reducing offending behaviour by young people. This was due to:

- ❖ the poor quality of the data available to the national evaluation team;
- ❖ big variations in the scope and nature of the 23 projects we evaluated;
- ❖ a very tight schedule for project development, implementation and evaluation;
- ❖ the complexity of the three-way relationship between national evaluators, local evaluators, and projects;
- ❖ methodological shortcomings of both the reconviction and the cost study;
- ❖ the lack of a consistent research methodology employed by local evaluators (in particular there were no control groups and only a few comparison groups).

Section 1.3 of this report referred to different definitions of evaluation. These reflect distinctions between outcome evaluation - evaluation should 'find out whether the programme is achieving its objectives' - and process evaluation - evaluation 'designed to identify problems about the introduction of new provisions'. The present evaluation aimed to provide an outcome evaluation, while looking at the processes of implementing cognitive behavioural projects. However, due to the difficulties described above, the evaluation turned out to be almost solely a process evaluation.

There were indications in the data collected for this national evaluation that the 'cognitive behavioural approach' was considered constructive by both the young people subjected to it and by their carers. The interview data provided by local evaluators suggested, for example, that carers had seen improvements in their children's behaviour; and that young people reported that they were able to use what they had learnt on the project, and that they valued the fact they were listened to. This has to be placed in the context of rather low completion rates and high reconviction rates as far as the persistent young offenders were concerned. Further investigation is needed to identify the factors and processes that lead to non-completion and, if possible, the characteristics of those who are most likely to benefit from 'cognitive behavioural' programmes.

However, while we were not yet able to identify whether individual projects 'worked' in reducing offending behaviour by young people, the evaluation usefully discerned the following important lessons about the processes of planning, designing, implementing and evaluating cognitive behavioural programmes in the youth justice field.

There is a need for more openness in the discussion of 'evidence-based practice' between Yot practitioners and evaluators; and for information sharing of the good and the bad news on a national level.[68] It was unfortunate to come across project staff who were suspicious of the evaluation, regarding it as the work of 'predatory academia' that had little interest in

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[68] See also Holdaway, S. et.al. (2001) *New strategies to address youth offending: the national evaluation of the pilot youth offending teams*, at p. 1, RDS Occasional Paper 69, London: Home Office.

practical issues. There is, therefore, a need to communicate to projects from the beginning the value of research for academia as well as Yot practice, and for the researchers to pay attention to, and take into account, the concerns of practitioners.

❖ Regular and good communication between all parties involved is key to any process of establishing new services, programmes and procedures. Communication and liaison is of major importance at all stages and levels of the design, referral, implementation and consolidation process of the establishment of new and innovative programmes.

❖ In order to effectively and successfully implement new projects, they need to be carefully planned and designed, with assessment, referral and evaluation tools already in place. This initial design process should take place in consultation with practitioners to allay fears and induce a feeling of ownership of the project and the process of developing and implementing it.

❖ It is necessary to state clearly from very early on what the project is expected to achieve; whom it targets; whether there is demand for that type of project; and whether the Yot can facilitate the project in terms of staff qualifications, venue, etc. It appeared from our research that sometimes projects were set up simply to secure additional funding without thorough consideration of whether the particular approach chosen was suitable for the Yot's client group, Yot staff and the Yot's overall resources.

❖ Managers should be aware that intensive projects such as those based on cognitive behavioural programmes need dedicated project time; they should not be planned as additional work on top of practitioners 'normal' caseload. Time is a valuable resource, not only in terms of staff time in under-resourced Yots, but also in terms of the time allocated to the pilot phase and the evaluation of a new project.

❖ There were strong feelings among local evaluators and project staff that it was of great importance who delivered the 'cognitive behavioural' intervention, irrespective of the strength of the programme. In planning future projects and evaluations, the factor of who delivers the programme therefore needs to be considered in the staff selection process; and its impact on programme effectiveness needs to be researched thoroughly.

❖ Given the range of problems in persistent young offenders' lives commonly identified in research[69] and replicated in this study, further consideration should be given to the suggestion that cognitive behavioural programmes need to be supplemented by practical support for the young people. The evidence from this evaluation suggests that persistent young offenders are a high-risk and high-need group of young people who would benefit most from an integrated model of cognitive behavioural work and day-to-day life support. To repeat a conclusion drawn by David Utting in 1996, '…multiple problems demand multiple solutions'.[70]

❖ Reconviction studies need to be complemented by other measures of effectiveness, i.e. psychometric tests measuring attitudinal change, interview data, and/or self-reported offending data. This evaluation highlights the serious shortfalls

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[69] See, for example, Flood-Page, C., Campbell, S., Harrington, V., and Miller, J. (2000) *Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyle Survey*, HORS 209, London: Home Office, pp. 43; also Rutter, M., Giller, H. and Hagell, A. (1998) *Anti-Social Behaviour by Young People*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 58.

[70] David Utting (1996) *Reducing criminality among young people: a sample of relevant programmes in the United Kingdom*, HORS 161, London: Home Office, at p. 86.

reconviction studies can have, and that a reliance on results from such studies can oversimplify the complex processes related to the process of desistance from crime.

This evaluation has been concerned with projects that for most of the evaluation period were in a 'pilot' phase. In order to make further progress with the development and implementation of cognitive behavioural projects, it would be advantageous to further develop those 'cognitive behavioural' programmes which exhibited good practice to the point where they could be regarded as 'demonstration projects' fit for accreditation. They then should be subject to rigorous evaluation, with well matched control groups and an adequate period of time allowed for follow-up, including not only reconviction but also other measures of the impact of the programme on the processes that lead to desistance from crime.

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS

The description of the individual projects will follow the same format and include the aims and objectives of the project; the project's development; the target group; the nature and scope of the evaluation; and problems and advantages specific to the individual projects.

C18
Please note that C18 has ceased to exist. We contacted the local evaluator of C18 to establish what has been achieved by the project and were informed that various meetings involving the Yot manager, the local evaluator and an outside expert on cognitive behaviour had taken place from October 1999 to March 2000. Shortly after the last meeting in March 2000 the Yot decided that they were unable to pursue the cognitive behaviour project due to numerous difficulties they were experiencing.

PROJECTS WORKING WITH PERSISTENT YOUNG OFFENDERS: ONE-TO-ONE

C5
Aims and objectives of the project: were to reduce offending by impacting upon the thinking and reasoning skills of young people and in doing so to provide them with alternative ways of reacting to certain situations.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project started off with an 18-session programme that was thought to be appropriate for every young person on an Action Plan or higher tariff order, as it was expected to be delivered in nine weeks. It was soon recognised that it was hardly possible to deliver the programme in the anticipated nine- week period. The reasons given for being unable to complete the programme in that time were the multiplicity of issues impacting on young people's life and taking priority over issues of programme integrity.

The target group has also changed from persistent young offenders on an Action Plan or higher tariff order who had particularly high Asset scores in the categories of 'emotional and mental health', 'perception of others', 'thinking and behaviour' and 'attitudes to offending', to every young person assessed as suitable. Due to very low numbers of referrals and a perception in the team that parts of the programme would also be useful to lower level offenders, this was changed and the programme can be offered to every young person who is assessed as being suitable.

The project is based in a very rural part of Wales and there are no public transport facilities for young people to get to the Yot. This has implications for the delivery of the programme and the search for adequate venues in the community. The Yot is considering developing group work for some aspects of the programme but it is still struggling with a lower number of referrals than was envisaged.

Main themes of the programme: The main themes covered in the programme are moral reasoning, problem-solving techniques, pro-social identification, self-talk and self-

management. These issues are related to offending behaviour in the last 2-3 sessions. Every session contains approximately 10 minutes to review previous sessions.

❖ Sessions:

The typical intervention consists of 12 to 14 sessions lasting 45 minutes. The frequency of sessions is dependent on the young person's assessed needs, and the length of the order and can vary between twice per week and once fortnightly.

❖ Target group:

Ten to 17-year-olds on all orders. It has been recognised that the programme is more appropriate for +13s and referrals are reflecting this. Referral decisions are made following an individual assessment of the young person.

The programme is based on a manual provided by an outside agency but has been adapted to suit the needs of the practitioner team.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluator has analysed the Asset forms filled in by the project staff, but felt that numbers were too low to justify inclusion of the analysis and also expressed doubts about the accuracy and suitability of using Asset scores as a measure of change. She suggests that workers would know the young person much better at the end of an intervention, more details about drug use or family circumstances might have been revealed and therefore scores might go up. The local evaluator also expressed concern that scores might be held artificially low, as expectancy has been raised that Asset scores should be lower after an intervention has been completed to reflect its impact.

Three members of project staff, including the operational manager, were interviewed. The operational manager expressed disappointment about the low number of referrals, but also about the inability of the young people to work through the programme smoothly. Resources, in terms of the time available for the evaluation, were not sufficient for the local evaluator to research the programme as thoroughly as she would have liked, and the local evaluator was concerned about the ease/possibility of disentangling the effects of different interventions imposed on young people.

Initially, it was thought that the impact of the project would be measured by a reconviction study, but that has not happened and the local evaluator has commented that the timescale is too tight to draw any major conclusions regarding the impact of the programme.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The programme enabled staff to be more focused and prepared for the intervention, and it was reported that the programme had been beneficial in terms of staff development and in spreading a greater level of skill throughout the team. The project was set up on a 'no-additional-resource' basis, except for the costs of buying in training, buying the programme manual and consultancy time for programme development. The programme will continue

to be offered in the Yot, and the only concerns are the availability of further training on programme delivery if and when necessary.

C10a
Aims and objectives of the project: were to reduce offending.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The programme used in the project was adapted from a one-to-one programme for adult probationers - which produced significant pre-post test changes - by an outside agency in collaboration with Yot practitioners. It is based on a developmental model of offending in which a number of criminogenic factors produce delinquent outcomes - impulsiveness or hyperactivity; inadequate, inconsistent, or abusive parenting; poor school attendance and performance; association with delinquent peers; distorted thinking; anti-social attitudes; cognitive skill deficits in problem-solving, empathy, self-regulation, interaction skills; substance abuse.

The programme has been implemented across a large geographical area, which includes 10 Yots and one secure unit. The training and development phase of this programme commenced in early 2000, and the first young person started on the programme after the first block of training was completed in June 2000. It was expected that all partnership Yots would have line managers trained on the programme to provide knowledgeable supervision and support to programme deliverers, but for a number of reasons that has not happened.

The training for the programme is a 9-day event, split 5-3-1 consisting of an introduction to theory and evidence, a familiarisation with the assessment, and the 'treatment' manuals available (offending behaviour, drug use, and violence); sessions to practice the delivery of the material and how to use the CD-Rom; emphasising the importance of parallel sessions; and a review and evaluation day, approximately 6 months after the initial training. Since June 2000 45 practitioners in the 10 Yots have been trained in the delivery of the programme; however, due to high staff turnover, 23 are still available to deliver the programme and only 10 are actively engaged in the delivery.

It has been difficult for project staff to gain dedicated time for the programme, and staff had to implement the programme on top of their normal workload. Overall supervision and support for project staff have been poor, teams are overstretched and under-resourced, and managers tend to see the programme as 'traditional' one-to-one work that does not need dedicated time or additional supervisory support.

The programme designer has recently started to rewrite the programme to restructure it and include practitioners' feedback as to simplifying some of the contents and shortening the programme. The programme will be structured in more manageable blocks of 4 sessions, each of the 3 blocks ending with a session reviewing the previous 4, and that would shorten the programme to 15 sessions. In addition, some of the assessment psychometric tests will be withdrawn.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The main themes covered in the programme are: in the general offending module - problem-solving, role-rotation, moral reasoning and interaction skills; in the substance use module - self-management, self monitoring, stress reduction, refusal skills and positive health; and in the violence module - self-control, cognitive restructuring, self-talk and social skills. There is an emphasis on purposeful repetition to ensure 'over-learning' of skills and procedures and the setting of 'self-help' tasks in the 'real life' of the participants. Every session starts with a review period looking back over the time since the last meeting and discussing any difficulties the young person is facing. The actual 'solving' of any important problems is left to the 'parallel' sessions accompanying each of the programme sessions. These parallel sessions will deal with the social circumstances of the young person, discuss urgent problems and offer direct help or advice on other services to be contacted for immediate help.

❖ Sessions:

The first 4 sessions of the programme, lasting 90 minutes each and taking place twice weekly, focus on the assessment of the young people, including the discussion of the offence, and the young person's attitudes and learning ability. Young people undergo a number of psychometric tests - including alternative thinking (Spivak), The kind of person I am (Schneider), Cage - alcohol test (Mayfield et al.), It's all right - attitude test (Agnew), skills survey (Goldstein) - which will be repeated in the last session of the programme. The young people are informed of the results of the tests in order to enhance their motivation to change. The test results will also be used to indicate special areas of need and thus contribute to the individualisation of the programme.

Sessions 5 to 11 review sessions 1 to 4 and subsequently focus on skills training. Sessions take place once a week for approximately 60 minutes. Session 5 also sets targets and goals for achievement in the later parts of the programme. Three different modules are available for use: general offending, violent offending and substance misuse. Sessions 12 to 17 then apply and practice the skills learnt in the previous modules after the young person's progress has been reviewed in session 13 and new learning goals have been set for the third stage of the programme. These sessions take place once a fortnight and last for 45 minutes. Finally, session 18 is taken up by post intervention tests and can last for up to two hours.

Project delivery is complemented by multi-media materials to help engage and maintain the interest and attention of participants. An interactive, non-literacy based CD-Rom programme has been developed to help carry out assessments, provide information and teach skills.

❖ Target group:

The programme targets young people from the age of 12 to 17 who are serious or persistent young offenders. They are assessed on their ability to understand learning and on their needs in order to establish whether the programme meets the 'offending needs' of the young person. Young people are not suitable for the programme if they have only committed offences of a sexual nature. If the sexual offence is one among many, exclusion is not

necessary, but the programme designer advises that focus of the programme should be the other offences and not the sex offence.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluator is currently using Asset and nine different psychometric tests to measure the changes in young people's attitudes and the effect of the programme. Only two people had completed the programme by October 2001 and thus the analysis of the psychometrics has not been included. Three young people have been interviewed and the views of 14 practitioners on the programme and the management support available were assessed through semi-structured interviews. If the evaluation continues, more interviews with young people will be carried out.

Specific positives or problems: In the secure unit one day of the week has been allocated as the 'programme day' with all project staff being off the normal rota to work solely on the programme. Two young people in the secure unit were the first in any of the partnership teams to complete the programme.

An agreement had been reached between the steering committee and the partnership agencies to continue work and evaluation of the project for a further year, this agreement broke down at the beginning of 2002 and new negotiations are in place to ensure continuity of the evaluation and training arrangements.

Drop out rates have been high for this programme, which reflects both the intensive nature of the programme and that the target group lead chaotic lives. Maintaining programme integrity is a problem, due to the highly structured nature of the programme. This means it is difficult to keep within the session timeframe, and practitioners were unable to run two assessment sessions per week as requested by the programme design.

C11

The project is using the same programme as C10a above, for information on aims and objectives, themes, etc, please refer to C10a.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The Yot implementing the programme is based in a very rural location and is split into two units. The main issues impacting on the implementation of the project mentioned by the local evaluator were the late appointment of the Yot manager, which had delayed the initial staff training; the low number of people trained in the programme, only three in the Yot and that no manager has been trained on the programme which reduces the level of support for programme delivery; the low number of referrals and the fact that no time allowances were made for the intensity of the programme. More members of staff will be trained in 2002 and it is hoped that this will provide more mutual support within the Yot and that a larger number of young people will start on the programme. However, one of the projects workers has made progress despite an environment of misunderstanding and a low level of support for the programme and a lack of the resources needed for its implementation.

C13

The project aimed to assist young people to stabilise their life, obtain self support skills, to live independently, realise the consequences of their behaviour and stop offending to move on to less support.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

There are two elements to this project. The bid to the Board proposed to develop a cognitive behavioural programme and provide intensive support to stabilise young people's lifestyles. The cognitive behavioural package used in two of the three units of the Yot is the 18-session programme used in C10a and C11. The implementation of the cognitive behavioural element of the project was delayed due to a lack of communication between the Yot manager, project co-ordinators and project workers who had not seen the bid and were unaware of the requirement to implement a cognitive behavioural element. They were also very unclear about the concept of cognitive behaviour and the role it should play in the project. The intensive supervision and support element was developed in the Yot and its length and intensiveness varies, as it is individually tailored. It can last from 8 weeks to 12 months and embraces the provision of information and help around life and social skills, as well as addressing offending behaviour.

Throughout the evaluation, the different units developed at a different pace. One of the units has developed a 'community development model', a holistic approach believed to be particularly relevant to the rural community and underpinning the work of the entire unit.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

As far as the structured cognitive behavioural programme is concerned two of the Yot units use the programme implemented by C10a and C11 (for reference on main themes, etc., see above) and the third unit has not implemented a structured cognitive behavioural element.

❖ Target group:

These are persistent young offenders and those who were sentenced to custody and are subject to post-release supervision. The targeted age range varies between the intensive support element, where it is 12 to 17-year-olds, and the cognitive behavioural package where it is mainly 16 to 17-year-olds and occasionally 13 years upwards.

❖ Evaluation:

The Yot in which this project is running is divided into three units, which caused problems for the evaluation, as only two of the three regions are using a strictly cognitive behavioural element in the intensive supervision of persistent young offenders and the project does not have a clear identity across the county. Due to the small numbers involved, a qualitative approach has been adopted by local evaluators. They have carried out interviews with 11 young people and two rounds of interviews with three project staff. A monitoring pack has been made available for each worker, which includes a referral log, the collection of Asset and core data forms, a start and end of the intervention summary, a log of all intensive supervision contacts, and a modified self-reported offending questionnaire applied before

and after the intervention in order to compare rates of offending. The questionnaire collating self-reported reoffending has only been returned for one young person.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

Particular difficulty for the project and the Yot in general is the large geographical area covered by the Yot with an urban and rural mixture. Travelling to deliver the cognitive behavioural package to a young person in a secure estate or YOI could take up a whole day's work.

C19
The project aimed to offer young people a community-based intensive supervision programme which addresses and challenges their offending behaviour.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project went live in April 2000, but by October 2000 had only received13 referrals of which three had resulted in an order including the project. A number of the young people assessed as suitable for the project had been sentenced to custody by the courts and this has had an impact on the level of programme starters throughout the project's lifetime. The project is independent from the Yot, but is run by Yot staff seconded to the project. The programme is supplemented and supported by a specified activities project, which is open to a wider range of young people - young people whose offending is less serious and are already subject to a supervision order can be included without a pre-court assessment and also young people referred by schools and a parenting programme 'at risk' of offending can take part in relevant elements of the specified activities project. This project can be used as a support group providing young people with a wider range of activities addressing offending behaviour and other problems. Moreover, the cognitive behavioural element of the intensive supervision informs the work of the specified activities programme.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

These are offending behaviour work, problem-solving, work to enhance basic social and other skills, specific work on drugs and health education. The project was developed by the project worker and is based on cognitive behavioural methodologies. Use is made of the cycle of change and motivational interviewing to help young people identify areas in which their behaviour might need to be changed.

❖ Sessions:

There will be between 10 and 30 sessions, each lasting one hour and taking place two or three times a week. The majority of sessions are on a one-to-one basis, but some group work is carried out, if appropriate.

❖ Target group:

This project is aimed at serious and persistent young offenders between the ages of 11 and 16. Only 60% of referrals to the project were received from the Yot. Project workers carry out a thorough pre-court assessment of the young people and expect the young people to

have a 'reasonable chance of success', which means they should live in stable accommodation and be free from serious drug abuse problems.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluator has interviewed three members of the project, one manager and one young person. Reoffending of the young people is monitored by the project on an ongoing basis. Confusion about the remit of the local evaluation, whether it included the evaluation of the specified activities element of the project or only the cognitive behavioural element was resolved very late in the evaluation process.

Project staff did not feel that the evaluation was an integral part of the project - they felt it has been about 'reporting on' rather than evaluating the project.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

In addition to the fact that a number of young people suitable for inclusion in the project were sentenced to custody by the courts, a major problem for the project has been that referrals are recruited from an area of high social deprivation, with a high level of drug abuse and homelessness among young people who are offending.

Project staff recognise the need for a more holistic approach and to support the young people in a variety of other ways if they are to maintain the 'programme integrity' of the cognitive behavioural element of the intensive supervision. The organisation the project is based in has a variety of resources and approaches which can contribute to this process.

The intensive supervision part of the project is being phased out as referrals continue to decline. Funding has been made available by the Yot to enable the project to work with up to 15 young people on ISSP orders and the work on the specified activities part of the project will continue and be complemented by using cognitive behavioural methods and elements of the intensive supervision programme.

C21
The project's aims and objectives were to reduce reoffending, primarily in persistent young offenders and those who have committed serious offences, using motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy; to initiate workshops to enhance the motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy skills of Yot practitioners.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project co-ordinator and programme developer, a clinical psychologist took up a part-time post in February 2000 and the project was scheduled to start in June 2000. The project co-ordinator was joined in April 2000 by a probation officer working part-time on the project and the first referral was received in July 2000. The different background and expertise of the two project workers have facilitated the exchange of ideas and strengthened the project. Most Yot staff have attended a day of training in what cognitive behavioural concepts constitute and what the project work hopes to achieve. The project incorporates a systematic and ongoing evaluation of the young people, including a thorough assessment, administering psychometric tests - cycle of change scale, a self-esteem index, and the

'strengths and difficulties' questionnaires - and retests after the first phase of 'motivational interviewing' has been completed, after which a written review is prepared. At the end of the programme, a written exit evaluation is carried out, including brief interviews with the young people.

In March 2001, the clinical psychologist left the Yot and the project was run by the probation officer, who had to carry the full caseload until a new member of staff had been trained by July 2001. The new project co-ordinator allows for more flexibility in the order and number of sessions delivered to the individual young person to cater for unplanned events in the young people's lives. The specific needs and risks to be addressed by the programme are decided in agreement with the individual young person. The project is promoted as an alternative to custody and thus will not be officially recommended for use in DTOs but will nevertheless be offered once a young person has been sentenced to custody. The project is seen as the rural alternative to ISSPs, and is expected to continue, but a definite funding decision is yet outstanding.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The project has two phases, starting with motivational interviewing, to help young people towards a desire to change, and progressing to a second phase where cognitive behavioural methods are used to facilitate change. Motivational interviewing can take six to eight sessions and if the project worker feels that the young person is not sufficiently motivated to continue the programme, the motivational interviewing phase will be repeated. Phase two of the programme, the cognitive behavioural element can then take up to 10 sessions and focuses on values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings of the young people in order to gain a better understanding of the pattern of their thinking and behaviour. This understanding is needed in order to effectively challenge ways of thinking as well as behaving.

❖ Sessions:

There are 16-30 sessions comprising six to eight of motivational interviewing and 10 of cognitive behavioural work. Each session will last for an average 45 minutes and take place weekly.

❖ Target group:

Persistent and serious young offenders are the project's target group. The programme does not address sexual offending but works with young people who have sexually offended on other offences they have committed. Young people who are assessed as being unable to keep appointments - young people with severe drug problems - or unlikely to benefit from the programme - young people with severe mental health problems - are not accepted onto the programme.

❖ Evaluation:

The project design incorporates its own integral evaluation system and the external evaluation has been experienced as an 'inappropriate constraint', placing disproportionate demands on a relatively small-scale focused project with a limited staff group. All staff

members (2) of the project and the previous project co-ordinator have been interviewed and so have four young people who have completed the programme.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The Yot and thus the project are based in a very rural area and transport to attend appointments has been a problem for both project staff and the young people. The programme is delivered in any venue that is accessible to project staff and young people and can include social services offices, youth clubs and other premises, not all of which might be ideal for the kind of work carried out by the project.

PROJECTS WORKING WITH PERSISTENT YOUNG OFFENDERS: GROUP WORK

C6

The project aimed: to reduce reoffending and to achieve change in five areas of the young people's lives: anti-social attitudes and beliefs; thinking skills; self-management skills; social skills; develop a pro-social identity.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project is designed to offer the courts an alternative to custody and thus is classified as a specified activity within a Supervision Order. It was developed by the Yot psychologist and is facilitated by the Yot in conjunction with a neighbouring prison. Groups are taking place inside the prison establishment and are co-worked by Yot practitioners and prisoners trained and experienced in youth work. The delivery of the programme in the prison setting and co-facilitated by prisoners has had wide implications for the planning and time needed to supervise and prepare for the programme. Yot staff have mentioned problems of supervising prisoners but prisoners have not identified this as a problem. The use of prisoners has been assessed as having a positive impact on responsivity of the young people, and a positive impact on prisoners themselves and the local evaluator described the project to be well supported programme at all levels of the Yot. The programme is a development of the prison's crime diversion scheme for young people at risk of offending.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The programme is co-facilitated by two Yot workers (gender-balanced) and a group of six prisoners, and covers issues such as the consequences of offending behaviour; collaborative problem-solving; pro-social modelling; thinking skills; and social skills. The programme is based on cognitive behaviour methods, uses role play and drama to engage the young people to facilitate perspective taking, emphasises victim awareness and discusses moral dilemmas. The programme is completed with a session of presentations given by the young people.

❖ Sessions:

This project is an intensive 12-session, group-work programme taking place twice a week for three-and-a-half hours. Additional one-to-one sessions with the group work facilitators are taking place before and after the group work in order to prepare the young people for the programme. Furthermore, the supervising officer provides ongoing support and addresses issues raised in the groups.

❖ Target group:

The project targets 15 to 17-year-old persistent young offenders at high risk of reoffending and at risk of receiving a custodial sentence. This target group comprises a very chaotic and difficult group and caused difficulties in recruitment and retention. Thus the tariff has now been slightly reduced.

❖ Evaluation:

Participants of the first group have been fully assessed at the beginning of the programme and reassessed after completion of the programme using the 'Level of Service-Inventory-revised (LSI-R)', CrimePics and Asset. Due to the loss of a member of staff responsible for the application of the assessment tools, the second group has been assessed using Asset only. The local evaluator is seeking to resolve this problem and, in addition, is planning to use a comparison group. The local evaluator stated that the final report for the national evaluation comes far too early for this project and should be seen to provide information to 'enable the Board to have some understanding of the potential of the programme'. The local evaluation will continue for a further two years. A number of staff have been interviewed who seem to feel that the programme is well supported in the organisation. More data on feedback on other outcome measures was not available at this time but will be provided later on in the evaluation. Nevertheless, the local evaluator has interviewed two chairs of local youth panels who were highly supportive of the project and stressed the importance of presentations and feedback made to sentencers in order for them to be able to follow cases through.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The use of the prison as a venue and the use of prisoners as co-workers have caused some managerial problems. The organisational culture of the Yot and the prison are very different and can clash, Yot staff are very aware that they need to keep the prison and the prison governor 'onside'. The fact that prisoners are moved through the system can also cause problems as an individual group needs consistent group leaders. It has also been difficult to gain sufficient access to prisoners for supervision and consolidation of group sessions. On the other hand, the use of prisoners as co-workers was seen as an aid to improving the responsivity of the young people and additionally would have a positive impact on the prisoners themselves. Drop-out rates for the project are high for the first number of sessions, once the young people start attending, drop-out rates fall significantly.

C7
The objectives of the project differ according to the type of programme. All programmes aimed to: reduce reoffending; encourage young people to take responsibility for their offending behaviour; and to facilitate young people's reintegration into the wider community; to encourage young offenders to practice cognitive and behavioural interventions to prevent further offending; and to improve the quality of relationships with family and peers.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

Pilot groups started as early as February 2000, but groups for violent and persistent young offenders had to be suspended because of problems with low levels of referrals and non-attendance. It is the stated policy of the Yot that group work is a standard way of working with young people and that all young people are eligible for group work unless they are assessed by group work staff as being unsuitable. The programmes for the violent and the persistent offender group were developed by an outside agency specialising on drama work in conjunction with Yot workers; the sex offender programme was developed jointly by a probation officer with experience on running adult sex offender groups and the drama company. In the development phase of the project, group leaders received two days behaviour management training, plus a further four days training in group work and drama-based skills for work with young offenders. Additionally, staff - including all ISSP staff - have received a further seven days refresher training and development training in group- and drama-based skills.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The theoretical basis of the project is cognitive behaviour, and methods used are interactive and primarily based on drama and experiential exercises. According to the local evaluator, the use of drama in cognitive behavioural therapy has been supported by Canadian literature on drama as a vehicle for learning.

All three programmes cover: patterns of offending; victim empathy; and relapse prevention. Both the violent and persistent offender programmes explore the consequences of participants' offending behaviour. The persistent young offender programme also works on problem-solving skills; the violent young offender group on anger management and assertiveness skills; and the programme for young sex offenders delivers sex education. Participants will receive regular written feedback on their progress. A particular feature of this project (similar to C6) is that, at the end of each of the programmes, the young people have to make a 'declaration of personal responsibility', where they will stand up in front of an invited audience and accept full responsibility for what they have done.

❖ Sessions:

The number and length of sessions (20 two-hour group sessions) are the same for all three programmes. The groups for violent and persistent young offenders are facilitated entirely by Yot staff, whereas the sex offender group is co-run by staff from the Yot, a probation officer and a social worker from the former social service's child protection team. Sessions for violent and persistent young offenders take place twice a week, sessions for young sex offenders only once a week.

❖ Target group:

The project is aimed at young people between the ages of 12 and 18, and, although it appears that groups function better with 15 to 18 year olds, younger people can still be referred, but will be subjected to a more thorough assessment to establish whether they are able to function in a group. The project targets three different groups of young offenders: sex, violent and persistent young offenders. All groups are for males only. In the case of the sex offender group, referrals are accepted from social services and the Yot for young people on all orders if they have committed at least one offence of a sexual nature or are displaying

inappropriate sexual behaviour. The participants of the violent young offender group will normally be subject to a Supervision Order with a 'condition of specified activity', a Probation Order or on a DTO licence and have committed at least one offence involving violence or have a history of aggressive and violent behaviour. If a young person has committed three or more recorded offences on separate occasion in the preceding six months he will be referred to the persistent young offenders group. Selection criteria for all three programmes are: the willingness of the young person to attend the programme; an assessment of suitability by group-work staff to assess issues such as serious drug or alcohol addictions, learning abilities, and whether young people are vulnerable to harm from other potential group members; and basic literacy skills.

Initially, it was planned to have a parent/carer group running alongside the group for juvenile sex offenders but at the time of the first group none of the parents or carer of the young people attending was able to commit themselves to a group programme.

❖ Evaluation:

It was intended to measure participants' progress and change through the application of a number of psychometric tests adapted to the specific objectives for each group, e.g. Locus of Control Scale, Impulse Questionnaire. The local evaluator could only report on the outcomes of one group for each of the three programmes, so data collection has been very limited. Furthermore, he could not report on the analysis of the questionnaires/psychometrics as he intended to, since he has only received three complete sets instead of the 21 he expected. He will now attempt to get some more data on current and future group participants and has reiterated the importance of the questionnaires. Ten members of staff running the groups have been interviewed and reconviction has been monitored for the course of the local evaluation. The evaluation is expected to continue.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

A key learning experience identified by the local evaluator was the amount of staff time needed to set up and run a group-work programme. It was found that the allocation of one hour preparation time and one hour debriefing time for each two-hour session, and an additional two hours every fortnight for the preparation of written feedback was not sufficient. Staff have suggested another half day per week per staff would be necessary to assess new referrals and write up and follow up the group running at the time. The local evaluator also reported on his impression that enthusiastic staff are taking on most work in the Yot, and therefore workload relief for them is paramount. The Yot is currently planning to introduce a new management post with responsibility for restorative work and group work programmes. It is hoped that this will enhance the profile of group work offered in the Yot.

The low number of referrals was a major problem in this project for both the persistent and the violent offender group. After the first groups had run from September 2000 onwards no new groups started until October 2001. Initially, this was due to reluctance by case workers to refer, but this was remedied by the implementation of an automatic referral process and monitoring procedures to account for referrals and non-referrals. Also, courts seemed reluctant to follow PSR recommendations and to make use of the programmes as an alternative to custody and the number of DTOs passed by the courts was consequently a

big concern for the project. It is hoped that has been resolved through liaison with and presentation of the project to sentencers and the incorporation of the persistent and violent offender group into the provisions for young people on ISSPs.

A further problem for the persistent and the violent group was to find a suitable venue - this had only been resolved in February 2001 when a permanent room for group work was secured and the situation was further improved with the incorporation of the two groups into the ISSP provisions, which opened access to a more central venue. The implementation of the ISSP in the Yot has encouraged referrals to the persistent and violent offender groups, has solved staffing problems, as all ISSP staff members have been trained on drama-based work, and the problem of access to a suitable venue. Partial Assets were a problem in the early stages of the local evaluation, but the Yot has now introduced a system where everybody scoring more than two on any Asset section will automatically be referred for specialist assessment. As a result of this new procedure, Asset forms are now available for all new referrals.

The violent and the persistent offender group had very high drop-out rates, between 50-75% and although some drop-outs can be accounted for by gaining employment and other 'legitimate reasons', the rate is still very high. However, the local evaluator suggests that the drop-out rates are a direct result of targeting, high-risk, persistent young offenders and that this factor needs to be taken into account when planning group work. It is necessary to make sure that groups start with large numbers so that even when non-attendance rises group work remains feasible.

C9
The project aimed to reduce the likelihood of further offending by increasing the motivation to change and providing a foundation for achieving new skills.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The Yot originally intended to develop a group-work programme jointly with a psychology team from the local health trust. Two psychologists (one clinical, one an assistant) were to be employed in the Yot, plus a part-time Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN). An existing programme targeting social-skills deficits was bought in and adapted to the needs of the Yot and two pilot groups commenced in spring and summer of 2000. None of the pilots were completed due to the poor attendance of the young people in one case and the lack of available facilitators in the other. The difficulties in implementing a cognitive behavioural group-work programme were partly explained by a 'culture clash' between the psychologists and Yot staff, and a general staffing shortage in both the psychology team and the Yot in general. The psychologists' insistence on using psychometric tests and strictly following cognitive behavioural principles has met with some resistance from Yot staff and consequently a low number of referrals. There seemed to be a misunderstanding at the level of mutual needs and expectations between the teams. In February 2001, no group work was being carried out and the project was on hold. Group work within the Yot was being reviewed with the aim of developing an in-house programme. Since then there have been major developments. The joint work between the Yot and the psychology team has been suspended and the Yot decided to develop an in-house programme. Pilots for the new programme started in April 2001 and two pilot groups have been completed.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The main themes are motivation, problem orientation; identity, friends and assertiveness; values and beliefs; egocentricity; rigid thinking, stereotyping and authority; impulse control; problem-solving; and goal setting.

❖ Sessions:

The format of the pilots for this project has been 10 weekly group-work sessions, each lasting one-and-half hours. The project has not yet completed the pilot phase, and all details on the programme are preliminary and subject to change. The programme was developed in the Yot and is delivered by Yot practitioners, two of whom are social workers and one a psychologist.

❖ Target group:

This pilot project targets young people aged 14 to 17 who are subject to all types of community sentence.

❖ Evaluation:

Local evaluators report that 'to evaluate this programme has been a major challenge'. As problems emerged with regard to the evaluation of a programme implemented and delivered in the Yot, the local evaluators suggested assessment of process issues around the introduction of cognitive behaviour approaches using semi-structured interviews with project staff. This approach was rejected by the Yot manager. With the new programme being piloted the local evaluation team devised a pre- and a post-questionnaire for young people; 13 questionnaires were returned to the local evaluator. In addition interviews were carried out with three groups of young people immediately after the completion of the programme.

C10b
The aim of the project was to reduce offending.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The programme was adapted, with the help of Yot practitioners, from a programme developed for adult offenders by the programme designer. One of the Yots involved in this partnership project was running an all-black group to test the suitability of the programme for different ethnic groups. The programme is based on a psycho-social model of the factors known to contribute towards persistent patterns of offending among young people. The training and development phase of the project started early in 2000, but group work with young people only started in early 2001. Training of staff and operational management was thought to be completed by September 2000, but was delayed by the Yots being unable to release core staff for a four-day training event. The whole training for this project consists of seven days - four days for theory and evidence, familiarisation with programme content, practice delivery and implementation issues, and a further three days for group-work theory, delivery issues and skills, practice delivery and motivational interviewing. It has

been estimated that each project worker needs an additional two hours preparation and debriefing time for the delivery of one programme session of the same length.

The local evaluator and incidentally the trainer for programme delivery report that the programme and training allow for the 'creative delivery of exercises' provided that the programme designer and research staff have an informed understanding of the programme.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The programme concentrates on problem-solving, social-skills training, self-control training, offending behaviour and self-risk management. It has been implemented across a large geographical area, which includes 10 Yots.

❖ Sessions:

The programme consists of 20 sessions, each lasting two hours. The frequency of the sessions is decided by the Yot, and can vary between Yots from once weekly to four sessions in one day. Young people undergo a number of psychometric tests - adolescent problem inventory, self-control scale, Baratt Impulsivity Scale-II, Norwicki-Stricland Internal External Control Scale for Children, alternative thinking, estimated self-efficacy in avoiding crime - at the beginning of the programme. These are repeated at the end.

❖ Target group:

It targets serious and persistent young offenders within the age range 12 to 17. They are assessed by the referrer and the programme deliverer on their ability to understand learning, and their ability to operate in a group situation. Young people are not suitable for the programme if they have only committed offences of a sexual nature, if the sexual offence is one among many, exclusion is not necessary but disclosure of that offence in the group should be avoided.

❖ Evaluation:

Local evaluators are using Asset and are measuring the changes in young people's attitudes by administering seven different psychometric tests. Return of the tests has been patchy, especially post tests have not been filled in consistently, thus there were too few tests returned for analysis. The local evaluator has tape-recorded sessions in order to assess the quality of the delivery of the programme and programme integrity. Although the local evaluator has not formally interviewed staff or young people, he has talked at length with seven members of staff and 10 young people who were close to completion of the programme. Structured interviews with project staff and young people will be carried out for a further evaluation report due by September 2002. In addition, it is planned to administer psychometric tests to more than 30 school children for comparative purposes.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

Due to a lack of sufficient suitable referrals, two of the Yots in this area formed a partnership in order to make group work feasible, and, according to the local evaluator, this has proven to be a very successful use of scarce resources. More training has been

provided and a large number of ISSP staff have been trained on the programme. An agreement had been reached between the steering committee and the partnership agencies to continue work and evaluation of the project for a further year, this agreement broke down at the beginning of 2002 and new negotiations are in place to ensure continuity of the evaluation and training arrangements. Drop-out rates are high (up to 50 per cent), but it seems that once the young people have stayed on the first couple of sessions they can be expected to complete the programme. The impact of the ISSP projects on the implementation and delivery of the programme is not yet clear - ISSP staff have been trained on the programme and some of the partnership Yots are considering the use of the programme for ISSP clients only while others are looking at a 'mixed' model.

C12

The: main goal of the project was to design and implement a cognitive behavioural intervention.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

This project was a developmental project researching and developing cognitive behavioural materials suitable for use by Yot officers in either a group or an individual setting. Early on in the evaluation of this project, the local evaluator stated that the Yot manager had not expected all his bids to be successful and was struggling to take all the projects forward due to recruitment and staffing problems. The psychologist employed to develop a cognitive behavioural programme in the Yot came into post in June 2000. By October 2000, the idea of a group-work programme had been abandoned due to a shortage of suitable referrals, but this was reconsidered and a first pilot group started in April 2001. The local evaluator has warned not to assess the pilot programme as a typical programme since it is still in a developmental phase and another pilot took place in November 2001. After the pilot stage, a reassessment of staff requirements will be carried out to inform the decision regarding the mainstreaming of cognitive behavioural work. All staff involved in programme work received a three-day training course provided by an independent consultancy. The project included an exercise whereby young people were filmed at the end of every session giving accounts of the experiences and relating messages on offending. Young people are given the tapes of their 'testimonies' and the opportunity to edit them into a 'story of the attitudes towards offending behaviour'. Design and realisation of this video component was carried out in collaboration with a drama company. In addition to the programme, young people attend four workshops on employment and careers, the reality of custody, drugs and alcohol, and victim awareness.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The pilot group covered the following themes: thoughts and feelings related to offending; victim awareness; social perspective-taking; challenging anti-social attitudes and behaviour; addressing beliefs leading to offending; and problem-solving.

❖ Sessions:

A 20-session programme was initially envisaged, targeting persistent young offenders, but this was scaled down when it was realised that the 'court timing demands pose serious challenges to cognitive behavioural work'. Of particular importance was the expected

waiting period until young people could get a place on a new programme. The programme currently implemented and tested in April to May 2001 with a pilot group of six males is six sessions long, each lasting two hours and taking place weekly. In addition to the group work, young people take part in one-to-one work. The project is based in the Yot and the programme is currently being developed by a psychologist in conjunction with a group worker.

❖ Target group:

The pilot group was run with young people aged 13 to 17 and the programme generally aimed at young people on final warnings, and community and custodial sentences - again scaling down the initially envisaged programme targeting persistent young offenders only. This was due to very low numbers of potential referrals. Young people will be individually assessed on risk, learning needs, motivation, social skills and availability for the group.

❖ Evaluation:

The resources for the evaluation were limited and it was decided by the Yot and the local evaluator to concentrate on process and practice issues around introducing cognitive behavioural approaches into a multi-agency youth justice setting. The evaluation is monitoring the development of the cognitive behavioural project and its implementation within the Yot by two rounds of semi-structured interviews with eight Yot workers to examine their understanding of cognitive behaviour as an approach, their beliefs about its usefulness in the youth justice setting and their perceptions of the project's development and implementation. The analysis of these interviews was not completed in time for the inclusion into this final report, but the local evaluator has given some indication of the issues emerging from the interviews.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The psychologist posing as the project co-ordinator was only filling a part-time post. This caused problems of access to her services but also difficulties in attending Yot team meetings in order to brief the team on the progress of the project's work.

At the time of writing the report, it was not clear whether cognitive behavioural work would continue beyond March 2002 but the developmental work of the project co-ordinator will, in any case support, the future supervisory work of Yot staff.

C14
The project's aims are to stop young people from offending and improve their lifestyle.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

Staff were trained in the programme in July 2000 and, as a result of their input, the programme was modified and improved. The Yot is divided into three units. Referrals to the project have been low and according to the local evaluator, this is partly due to local sentencing patterns. Often, young people suitable for the programme are sentenced to DTOs. The local evaluators recorded an increase of 50 per cent in custodial sentencing in 2000.

The local evaluator suggests that the project was highly reliant on the enthusiasm of the project leader who has experienced a lack of management support. A high level of training input - in this case that translated into one week of full-time training plus follow-up contacts through meetings and phone discussions - and a high level of group and interpersonal skill are demanded from this programme.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The programme covers issues around problem-solving, moral reasoning, self-management, self-control, self-esteem, consequences of offending behaviour, and thinking patterns.

❖ Sessions:

It is a structured programme of 25 one-and-a-half-hour sessions taking place twice a week, developed by an outside agency in conjunction with the group-work co-ordinator in the Yot. Promotion of pro-social attitudes, values and beliefs is central to the programme. Other issues covered include problem-solving moral dilemmas, self-talk, and assertiveness and communication skills.

❖ Target group:

This project targets persistent and serious young offenders between the ages of 14 and 17. Sex offenders are not accepted on the project.

❖ Evaluation:

Information to assess the impact of the programme on the young people is collated from Asset and the young person's questionnaire and other data. The young people fill in evaluation sheets at the end of each session, have opportunities to summarise their progress and behaviour verbally, and talk about their reduction in offending or their difficulties in stopping offending in order to measure changes in behaviour, co-operation levels, reoffending, frequency of reoffending and lifestyle changes. In addition, the local evaluator has collated data on a comparison group. No analysis of the data has been provided for the purpose of this report, as 'more time is needed to develop projects before they are evaluated'. The evaluation of this project will continue for up to two more years to allow a sufficient number of young people to complete the programme.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

'The programme designers aimed to address responsivity issues, while providing a framework that ensured programme integrity. The excessively proscriptive nature of some programmes available 'off the shelf' was viewed as ignoring what is believed to be a critical factor for this age group - responsivity. The result is a programme that is well designed, with built-in flexibility, but with objectives clearly identified'.

The referral criteria and the group of young people initially targeted are in the process of being changed to adapt to the impact of implementation of the ISSP into the Yot.

The programme employed in this project can be delivered either via one-to-one work or as a group-work programme, and here it has been applied as a group-work programme in the community.

C20
The project aimed: to challenge attitudes about offending; encourage young offenders to think about the victims of crime; encourage personal responsibility; and to develop assertiveness skills in saying no to crime.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

Three probation officers were seconded to the Yot in November 1999. One of these posts was funded through Board development-fund money. In February, all Yot staff attended cognitive behavioural training and subsequently a rolling programme was developed and adapted to meet the needs of young people from a programme run by the Probation Service. The cognitive behavioural programme was expected to start in April 2000 but due to staff shortages only started running in September 2000. The group workers have developed their own referral form and the young people are assessed at the beginning and the end of the programme. When appropriate, follow-up work is recommended for the remainder of the order. However, Yot practitioners had not been given any work relief and therefore did not have sufficient time to complete the paperwork, which posed a problem for the evaluation. Thus, the local evaluator has decided to focus on collecting the basic, core data to enable at least a limited evaluation. Evaluation has been viewed by staff as yet another (administrative) external demand on precious time and resources rather than a means of learning and of developing the project. Group work might be incorporated into ISSP provisions.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The programme is based on a personal development approach challenging offending choices through social and moral education. It promotes responsible opportunities supported by other Yot resources targeted on resolving family, community and social needs. The main themes covered are the consequences of offending behaviour for victims, society and the young people themselves; personal responsibility; the development of assertiveness, and life and social skills to help young people to maintain a non-offending lifestyle.

❖ Sessions:

Group sizes range from three to six young people, the maximum capacity being eight. This is a rolling programme consisting of twelve one-and-a-half-hour weekly sessions. Each session builds upon the previous session but can also stand alone. The programme manual sets out objectives, methods, and resources for each session.

❖ Target group:

The programme is for 16 and 17-year olds at high risk of reoffending, but excludes females, schedule one offenders and vulnerable young people - those with severe learning difficulties.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluator intended to follow up offenders who attended the group and those who dropped out (using them as a comparison group). The 'readiness to change' questionnaire before and after the programme, plus Asset, was to be used to assess attitudinal change. None of the required forms, including Asset and core data, was available. The local evaluator has accessed the Yot database in order to check for incidences of reoffending, but numbers attending the programme have been too small for analysis.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The implementation of the ISSP targeting a similar group of young people raised questions as to whether the cognitive behavioural group work programme should be incorporated into the ISSP or remain an independent project. A decision had not been made at the time of writing this report.

The project seemed to be poorly integrated within the Yot team and referrals were mainly received from the caseload of the two project workers themselves. There have also been reports of a lack of support for young people to attend the group, once they have been referred by another Yot worker.

C22
The project aimed to help young people develop their skills for thinking about problems and for solving them in real-life circumstances; to apply young people's skills to the problem of offending behaviour and help reduce the risk of future offending.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

A group worker, a clinical psychologist based within the Yot mental health team, was appointed in November 2000 after severe delays due to major recruitment problems. Since her appointment, the group worker has been in contact with several programme designers, involved in a number of the projects funded by the Board in order to obtain programme and evaluation material. Considerable planning time was spent on programme development including considerations of needs of the Yot and the target group, assessment and evaluation procedures and the appropriate theoretical base for the programme. It was hoped to pilot the first group in June 2001. In June 2001, two Yot staff interested in running the group and the clinical psychologist were trained on the theoretical underpinnings for cognitive behavioural work and the delivery of the programme run by project C10b. Until October 2001, no group work had started due to very few appropriate referrals having been received despite great efforts to promote and encourage referrals. The project co-ordinator and another member of Yot staff trained in the group work programme left the Yot in December 2001. The deputy Yot manager has been in negotiations on how to take the group-work project forward and plans to build it into a 'much more coherent risk management programme' which is being developed in the Yot. These discussions are still taking place and the future of the project has not yet been determined. More detail on the Yot this project is based in and other group-work programmes implemented with a loosely cognitive behavioural base can be gathered from the report local evaluators are preparing for the Yot due by March 2002.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The programme contains elements of problem-solving, social-skills training, self-control training, cognitive restructuring and offending behaviour and self-risk management. The programme used in C10b has been adapted and modified to include more work on identifying risky thoughts, feelings and behaviour and the link between these. It makes use of updated cognitive techniques and instead of self-instructional training it employs cognitive restructuring. The precise content of the project is flexible, however, and determined by the young people - but it will involve structured learning with active participation by the young people, rehearsal, role plays and written exercises. Before the programme begins, the project worker, the young person, his/her family and any significant parties will meet to plan and agree on goals; they will hold a review meeting halfway through the programme to reiterate these goals and have a final meeting at the end of the programme to review progress and discuss any future work that might be necessary.

❖ Sessions:

There are 20 two-hour sessions, taking place twice weekly.

❖ Target group:

The target group consists of persistent young offenders aged between 14 and 17 on a Supervision Order running for at least another four months, including those whose DTO element is in the community phase and young people on ISSPs. The young people should have committed a wide range of offences and been assessed as having thinking skills problems, being somehow motivated for change, and are able to work in a group. These criteria serve as guidance only and each case has to be assessed individually for its suitability for the group. Young people who have committed predominantly sexual or violent offences, those who are deemed to be too disruptive for a group setting and those meeting the criteria for psychopathy are excluded from the group.

❖ Evaluation:

The project makes use of a built-in evaluation process, assessing problem-solving, social skills, self-control, criminal thoughts and what the young people think of the programme before and after attending. The measures and questionnaires - including Barrett's Impulsivity Scale; 'How I think' questionnaire; Norwicki-Strickland Internal-External Control Scale for Children; Self-Control Scale; and estimated Self-Efficacy in Avoiding Crime - are set up on an animated computer programme which is not literacy based. Local evaluators have interviewed three members of staff involved in the project and, as part of the comprehensive evaluation of the Yot, they have interviewed 94 young people, some of whom have been interviewed three times. However, how many of these young people have been referred to the project is not clear at this stage. They have further interviewed family members and again whether it involved family members of young people referred to the project is unknown. Analysis of the interviews is not available for the purpose of this report, but will be included in the final report to the Yot.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

Late recruitment caused severe delays to the development and implementation of this project and the low number of referrals received over a five-month period prevented the actual start of any group work.

C23

The project aimed to provide a specialist service within the Yot to develop innovative and effective practice with young people identified as persistent young offenders, thereby reducing offending by this group and creating a greater sense of protection for the public.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

Projects C23 and C24 are based in two Yots forming part of a pathway initiative and the two persistent young offender projects are, although not identical, fraternal projects. A development officer was employed to be working with both Yots and both projects. Attempts to implement the programme have not been successful. Groups have started on three or four occasions - the first started in September 2000 - but due to various difficulties they have not been sustained beyond the first two meetings. One difficulty was that two of the three persistent offenders officer employed to run the groups had competing work commitments effectively limiting the amount of time they spent on the planning of the programme; the third officer employed for persistent offender group work, worked instead as a DTO case manager and was not involved in the project. Furthermore, one of the posts finished in March 2001. Another problem identified was the lack of planning of programme delivery and encouragement of young people to participate. Case workers were not given enough information or notification of the planned date of the first course and thus could not identify suitable referrals, and young people approached 'at the last minute' refused to participate in the programme.

Five members of staff were trained in the delivery of the programme in July 2000. The vast majority of work has been carried out on a one-to-one basis and the cognitive behavioural manual has not been used consistently. However four young people have completed the programme on a one-to-one basis. After initial problems in deciding how to select young people suitable for the programme, staff have decided to use 'CrimePics' but as a discussion tool only.

The project will not continue in the same way after March 2002, the Yot is moving towards a lead case manager with responsibility for persistent young offenders and trained sessional or part-time staff capable of delivering systematic cognitive behavioural group work. Group work could also be integrated into ISSP provisions and other persistent young offenders and thus overcome the problem of low numbers of referrals. Funding has been secured for four full-time posts within the Yot, but how this will impact on the project progress is not clear at this stage.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

These are consequences of offending; thinking processes that lead to offending - twisted thinking; value judgements as to the seriousness of different types of offending; relapse prevention; risk behaviour that leads to offending behaviour; coping strategies to deal with the identified risky behaviour; and alternative decision-making. The methods used include role play and group discussion around crime scenarios.

❖ Sessions:

The programme manual, developed by an independent organisation advises 10 sessions, taking place twice weekly and lasting for approximately two hours.

❖ Target group:

This project is aimed at persistent young offenders between the ages of 10 and 17. There is no particular referral procedure in place; project workers rather actively target young people for inclusion in the programme, selecting young people who are persistent offenders - this criterion has been dropped to encourage more referrals - and who are assessed to potentially benefit from the programme. The project workers assess every young person individually and look out for issues such as alcohol and drug problems, homelessness or serious mental health issues which would make a successful completion of the programme very unlikely. A database of persistent young offenders has been established so that project workers 'know' the young people who might be suitable referrals for the group.

❖ Evaluation:

Tension arose early on between the intentions of the programme designers to monitor and evaluate the programme themselves for validation purposes, and local evaluators. The initial evaluation plan was to administer psychometric measures before and after the programme, but after piloting these measures the evaluation team had doubts about their reliability in establishing programme impact on the risk of reoffending. Local evaluators have used in-depth interviews with the four young people who completed the programme and they interviewed the one member of staff remaining the sole worker on the project. Data on self-report offending was collected in C24 where young people reported less offending than they were actually convicted of, despite knowing that local evaluators had access to their files and could check their offending history. Local evaluators found this tool unreliable, and, in addition, unsuitable for the group of persistent young offenders, many of whom had literacy problems. Local evaluators sent out questionnaires to 40 magistrates who sit in the youth court and received 17 replies. A more comprehensive evaluation of the two Yots will be available in the local evaluation report to the Yots due by March 2002.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

A shortage of Yot staff has caused major problems for this project. Two of the three officers employed specifically to be working on the project were asked to carry out core case management duties to 'keep the Yot going', and the remaining worker took over a DTO case management role and was not involved in the project at all. There seems to be a distinct lack of clarity in the Yot as to what the project actually constitutes. The group worker also experienced difficulties in engaging young people to attend the groups and has attempted to overcome these problems by developing 'sweeteners' for the project - residentials or dry-skiing trips.

C24
The aims and objectives of the project were to design a specific cognitive behavioural programme to be used to target persistent young offenders in order to reduce the level and seriousness of offending by these young people.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The programme is being run in the Yot by two experienced group workers. The first group, comprising four young people, was established in September 2000, but no subsequent groups have been through the programme. To date, project work has been carried out with pairs or on a one-to-one basis, which means that many of the exercises designed for groups have been left out of sessions. Therefore, it will be difficult to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. The project was discontinued in June 2001. A final decision on whether the programme will be incorporated into the ISSP provisions has not yet been made.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

These consist of social skills, problem-solving, victim awareness and moral reasoning. The programme seeks to change thinking and attitudes to develop a greater understanding of the impacts of offending, and to assist the young people to identify and challenge their personal 'offending risk factors'. The programme does not use offending as an example, and sessions are delivered in a 'classroom scenario'.

❖ Sessions:

A group work programme has been developed by an independent consultancy. The programme is modular and consists of social skills, problem solving, victim awareness and moral reasoning modules. Overall, it is 40 sessions long, with one-hour sessions held twice weekly. Only the first two modules were available to the project from September 2000 - 24 sessions of social skills and problem-solving. The first week of contact comprises four contacts with the young person and their carer(s) focusing on building relationships, and exploring expectations and requirements of participation. Group and individual reviews are to be carried out at the end of the programme when the young person is handed over to their caseworker.

❖ Target group:

The project is aimed at persistent young offenders at risk of receiving a custodial sentence and 'spree' offenders - those convicted of a large number of offences - from the age of 10 to 17. The criterion of being 'at high risk of custody' has now been dropped. As in C23 there is no particular referral procedure in place but, rather, project workers actively target young people for inclusion in the programme. This includes a daily check with police about any overnight arrests, as well as checking court lists. If a suitable candidate has been found and pleaded guilty, project workers will discuss the case with the PSR author with regard to the young person's suitability of involvement in the group-work programme. Project workers will assess the young people's suitability and motivation using 'CrimePics' as a discussion tool.

❖ Evaluation:

The initial evaluation plan was to administer psychometric measures before and after the programme but after piloting these measures the evaluation team had doubts about their reliability. The 'Adolescent Problem Solving Inventory' questionnaire was used with the

first group who participated in the programme, but was not a successful tool and was not used again. Various efforts were made to interview young people - in all, three short interviews were attempted, which were unsuccessful.

Data on self-report offending were collected, but young people reported less offending than they were actually convicted of, despite knowing that local evaluators had access to their files and could check their offending history. Local evaluators found this tool unreliable and unsuitable for the group of persistent young offenders, many of whom had literacy problems. Use has been made of the data collated during the continual contact and meetings between evaluators and project staff, and interviews were carried out with the development officer and two members of the Yots management team.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

Project workers were dissatisfied with the programme bought in from an independent consultancy. Issues arose around the maintenance of programme integrity - the idea that the wording and planned delivery of each module was not to be altered in any way - and inclusion or rather non-inclusion of project staff and their group work experience in the development of the programme. Some amendments were made to the project following extensive discussions with the consultancy, based on views of staff and feedback from young people. One member of staff left the project, partly because of his disillusionment with the programme.

In order to enhance the motivation for the programme, project workers have developed a programme of cognitive skills based activities with a number of voluntary partner agencies to complement the cognitive behavioural group work programme. This has not been implemented because it was not possible to initiate any groups after the first group in September 2000.

PROJECTS WORKING WITH 'ADOLESCENT SEXUAL ABUSERS'

C2

Aims and objectives of the project: are to reduce the frequency and seriousness of sexually aggressive behaviour by children and young people; to prevent offending, in a sexually aggressive way, by young people; to contribute to the Area Child Protection Committee and Children's Service Plan; to identify sexually aggressive behaviour by assessment and offer treatment programmes; to reduce the risk of reoffending in a sexually aggressive way; to demonstrate a positive change in the attitude of the young people in the project, towards victims through assessment/treatment programme; to ensure young people understand their cycle of offending behaviour and triggers so they are able to implement a relapse prevention programme designed to prevent reoffending.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project is underpinned by joint protocols with the local police and the social work division. The purpose of the police protocol is to ensure that the project co-ordinator is notified whenever a young person has been arrested for a sexual offence with a view to an assessment being made. The project manager also contributes to the 'decision-making' process as to the appropriate procedure in the individual case. Social services' decisions in

relation to young people accused of sexually abusive behaviour will always be made in consultation with the project.

The project became operational immediately after the appointment of the project worker who could draw on 11 years of experience in this line of work and also on an established referral network in February 2000. All sessions with the young people are co-worked, and bi-monthly team meetings, built-in evaluation, session planning and a mini-evaluation assessment take place every eight to 10 weeks, ensuring that regular supervision is available to project staff.

At the outset, no written material was available to regulate assessment and treatment procedures or the assessment and monitoring of attitudinal change, which is essential to plan the duration of the project. However, by summer 2001, an assessment manual had been devised by the project manager, and by the end of October 2001, seven Yot workers remain in the Yot who have been trained in the delivery of the project. The manual sets out the assessment process and provides a defined set of aims and objectives for each session, providing guidance and suggestions on delivery and materials to use. It also lists things to do and to avoid, defines juvenile sex offenders and provides general guidance on possible characteristics of young abusers, how to deal with disclosure of abuse, and encourages the use of motivational interviewing techniques. A treatment manual is also in the process of completion. The manual is accompanied by a project pack containing additional materials for work and guidance. Each Yot unit also has use of a project workbox including textbooks, workbooks and material for parents and the project manager holds an open library of relevant books and materials for this line of work. Every young person is provided with an individual booklet, consolidating their work and tailored to their circumstances. It also contains a list of items of 'keeping safe' and the names of persons who have been identified as the young person's support 'network'. This project is 'unique' in this group of projects working with sexually aggressive young people in that it has been intended (as stated in the bid) and set up to serve as a mainstream Yot provision. The project plans to extend its services to run a parent group and carry out preventative work with 14 to 15-year-olds.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The project is tailored to meet the individual young person's cognitive needs and developmental stage, their specific living and social circumstances, and the nature of their offence.

❖ Sessions:

Sessions can be weekly or fortnightly and are usually an hour in length. However, this varies according to the young person's assessed needs and his/her progress through the treatment programme. The assessment consists of four to six sessions and the treatment programme is usually between 12 and 18 months for adolescents. Shorter treatment programmes are offered for children under the age of 10.

❖ Target group:

This project targets young people who have offended sexually. There is also a preventative element for young people between the ages of five and 10, and, therefore, referrals are received from various agencies, including schools, social services, GPs and the police. Most of the young people attend the programme voluntarily, as even long court orders might expire before a treatment programme is successfully completed.

❖ Evaluation:

Resources for the evaluation of the project were stretched financially and in staff time, so the evaluation had to be largely descriptive and it was impossible for the local evaluator to examine the cognitive behavioural process of the project at first hand. Although it was intended and attempted to measure attitude change through other tools than Asset, this was never carried out.

Communication difficulties between local evaluator and project staff, and repeated staff changes on the evaluators' side have disrupted the evaluation. Further, disappointment was expressed by both local evaluators and project staff that the national evaluation was unable to provide 'like' projects with a set of standardised evaluation forms.

Project staff, family members and a number of young people going through the programme have been interviewed.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

This project is based in the Yot, but the nature of the offences committed by the young people targeted by the project places an emphasis on prevention. This means the project accepts referrals relating to abusive or inappropriate behaviour of children under the age of 10 from agencies other than the police, and a significant proportion of the work carried out in the project is concerned with these children (34%). Data on these 'clients' is held on the Yot's Youth Offender Information System (YOIS), and local evaluators expressed concern that the files of the children worked with on a purely voluntary basis are not clearly distinguishable from those of young offenders. Furthermore, when checking data, the local evaluator was alarmed by the amount of inconsistent and inaccurate information on the Yot's IT system and expressed concerns about the reliability of the data.

C3
The project aims to provide appropriate services for young people who display sexually abusive behaviour, and to reduce the risk of young people continuing their inappropriate behaviour by providing them with strategies to control their actions in future and offer support in accomplishing and maintaining this.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project is independent from the Yot and is based in a voluntary organisation. The agency running the programme has extensive experience in this field and runs various projects working with young adolescent sexual abusers in other parts of England and Wales. This particular project was piloted from 1992 onwards and established in 1994. It has since expanded its scope and staff team, with the additional funding provided by the Board.

Main themes of the programme: The themes covered are dependent on the assessment of the young person, but some factors that might be targeted through the intervention are: empathy, self-esteem, denial, social skills, sexual knowledge, attitudes to women and children, anger management, cognitive distortions, and any pertinent background factors. These factors are targeted through motivational interviewing, assumptive questioning, using the cycle of change and cycle of abuse. Theoretical bases mentioned by project workers are cognitive behavioural and social learning theory, but use of these theories is made in an eclectic rather than a conceptual way.

❖ Sessions:

The project offers direct one-to-one and group work for young people, parents and carers, and consultation, support and training for staff from partner agencies. The direct work with the young people is based on a co-working, gender-balanced model, and methods and media used to engage the young people are eclectic rather than strictly cognitive behavioural. The assessment has been adapted to suit young people's individual needs and learning styles.

❖ Target group:

This project targets young people who have behaved in a sexually inappropriate or abusive manner between the ages of 10 and 18. Referrals to the scheme are accepted from five local authorities and, therefore, include referrals from social services as well as Yot referrals.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluation consists of a number of different elements. Local evaluators aim to assess the impact of this programme on young people by carrying out a three-year retrospective study (1998 to 2000 inclusive) and to assess the short-term outcomes by following young people through the project over a period of a year (2001 to 2002).

For this study, local evaluators administered a range of psychometric assessments to a group of project participants, young people who have committed non-sexual offences, and a non-offender comparison group. Both retrospective and prospective study will be put into context by providing descriptive material on the history, establishment and organisation of the project - supported by interviews with project staff and staff from referring agencies to obtain a range of views regarding the impact of the project on young people, parents and carers - and by locating it within the general area of research on sexually abusive behaviour by young people. A report on the interviews with all project staff and seven co-workers from Yot, social services and children's services was submitted in June 2001. The feedback was widely positive and covered issues of communication, staffing levels, staff training, work with young people, referrals and targeting, etc. The monitoring of programme integrity has not been implemented, as the intervention is geared towards the individual and materials need to be adapted to individual needs. At the point of submission of the final report to the national evaluation team, the local evaluation was not complete. Observational work to assess programme delivery has been carried out and will be included in the local evaluator's final evaluation report due by June 2002.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

Funding for the evaluation has been limited and additional staff were recruited for the duration of one year. Due to delays in the recruitment of research assistance, main elements of the evaluation have been delayed, but it is expected that the evaluation will carry on until June 2002 and a more complete and comprehensive picture of the project will be available at that stage. Drop-out rates for this project have been low; the main reason for drop-outs was a lack of support by the young person's carers. A wide range of material for use with the young people is available to all workers, including background literature, board games, art materials, videotapes, worksheets, suggested programmes, legislative information, etc.

C4

The project aims to provide a specialist consultation, assessment and treatment service for children and young people who have shown sexually inappropriate behaviour(s).

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project involves a partnership arrangement between a voluntary agency and four constituent local authorities. It draws on the considerable experience of project workers previously working in child protection teams and the charity which had established similar projects in other parts of the country. Project manager and staff were appointed between April and October 2000, and the project moved into permanent accommodation in October 2000. The project had formally opened for referrals in June 2000 while still located in a temporary venue.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

A number of theories can be seen as underpinning the project's work.

    o Cognitive behavioural theory:

The emphasis is on practical strategies which children and carers can implement to move away from negative behaviours and towards positive, non-abusive alternatives.

    o Attachment theory:

This deals with how disrupted attachments can have a negative impact on children's behaviour; part of the project's work is to reduce the negative impact of these disruptions on the young person's behaviour and make the most of residual attachments that may exist for the individual child.

    o Learning theory:

With learning theory, the project tries to fit its work into the learning style most appropriate for the individual. This entails an emphasis on activity and creative engagement.

    o Developmental theory:

Here, assessments and intervention plans are adapted to the individual young person's age, ethnicity and culture. The project also adheres to anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive perspectives. It targets specifically levels of anger, victim empathy, and cognitions using anger management strategies, role play and moral reasoning.

❖ Sessions:

The typical intervention with a young person consists of 12 sessions lasting an hour each and taking place once weekly. A comprehensive assessment gathers all available information on the alleged inappropriate behaviour; describes and analyses the context and details of the behaviour; elicits information on the victim, the attitude of the young person, information of the prevalence of any disinhibitors, views of parents, carers and significant others; and assesses future risk. Case work starts up with a working agreement between the young person, the carer and the project worker. Nearly all assessment work is based on structured interviewing and only a small number of young people were assessed using standardised measures. Following the assessment, a treatment plan is drawn up, if identified as appropriate. Treatment progress will be reviewed in regular supervision sessions with the project manager. The project keeps an internal case-work summary for each of the young people assessed.

❖ Target group:

The project targets young people, aged between six and 17, who have displayed sexually inappropriate behaviour and have come to the attention of the Youth Justice System and social services. Referrals are accepted from Yots and social services and the vast majority of referrals - about two-thirds - have been received from social services. Some emphasis is placed on the provision of preventative services for those young people 'at high risk of offending'. Young people referred to the project are assessed and treated on a voluntary or a statutory basis. The project also provides services to parents, carers, and residential staff as appropriate, and offers phone advice to schools, local authorities, child protection teams, and consultation work to case managers. Moreover, the project provides training for referring agencies to identify and deal with inappropriate sexual behaviour. The project plans to offer parents and carers the opportunity to join support and educational groups in the future.

❖ Evaluation:

The evaluation of this project follows an action research design, which means that local evaluators are taking an active role within the project - in practice the research assistant was based in the project for one day a week between October 2000 and June 2001, when she left the evaluation team. Systemic variables affecting young people that show sexually inappropriate behaviour and the impact of learning disability on clinical practice were to be researched. A research pack has been piloted and its final version contained measures of victim empathy, cognitive distortions, locus of control, sexual knowledge, social desirability, psychometric measures of intelligence, family structure and cohesiveness, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. By the end of October 2001, this pack had only been applied to 10 per cent of all cases referred to the project, and numbers were too small for analysis. The local evaluation team was particularly interested in the impact that learning disabilities of the young people have on clinical practice. It has been noted that about half

the young people referred to the project have learning difficulties which not only impacts on the clinical practice but also on the evaluation.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

None of the practitioners working on the project had received substantial training on cognitive behavioural approaches; all had a social-work background, and the local evaluator said that a clinical psychologist and a mental health practitioner as part of the team would have helped greatly to promote a more consistent cognitive behavioural approach.

A large number of the young people referred did not meet the project's criterion of seriousness of the young person's behaviour to justify an assessment or treatment plan. Less than half of the young people referred were assessed by the project. Advice and consultation were also provided on a number of cases, but it seems that a third of the cases referred were not appropriate for project work. The local evaluator identified the project's lack of clear boundaries and referral criteria as a possible reason why so many inappropriate referrals were received.

C8
Aims and objectives of this project were to help reduce the incidents of sexual offending and reoffending by young people; to promote the development of healthy sexuality and positive sexual health for young people; to work in partnership with young people, their families, carers and professionals; to promote the development of positive family relationships within a child protection framework; to promote the development of safer communities; and to contribute to the body of knowledge and good practice in this area of work.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The set-up of the project had been severely delayed because of recruitment problems and a lack of skilled workers in the area the project is working in; thus, extensive training in work with adolescent sexual abusers - training on fantasy work and victim empathy, motivational interviewing, working with families of adolescent sexual abusers, play and creative therapy techniques - had to be provided. The project has started active case work in August 2000 but has only been fully staffed since the end of September 2000. It is a partnership arrangement between a voluntary agency, the police, seven constituent local authorities and two health authorities, and it is based in the voluntary agency. No manuals are available for reference and programme integrity is not applicable at this stage, as the project is still developmental and not ready to establish manuals. The local evaluator explained that by making reference to adult community provisions where projects are just now starting to use manuals, after 15 years of 'development work'.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The project provides for the assessment of all young people referred, a longer term treatment programme for certain referrals, consultancy work for members of partner agencies, and training and conferences for managers and staff of partner agencies and outside agencies. Both assessment and treatment are tailored to the individual's age, level of

understanding, needs and risks, and there is no programme manual available which sets out sessions in detail. The assessment will attempt to extract information on the young person's sexual attitudes and beliefs; the young person's account of the offence/inappropriate behaviour; background history, including disclosure of abuse; level of sexual knowledge and sexual development; level of victim empathy; nature of sexual fantasies; etc. If a treatment programme is recommended, it will frequently address issues around sexual attitudes and beliefs; sexual fantasy modification; anger management; victim empathy; sex education; power and control; victimisation; family relationships and functioning, self-esteem; social skills; and relapse prevention strategies.

Even though the project is heavily influenced by cognitive behavioural theory, it has decided to be eclectic in the theories - Sexual Abuse Cycle, Preconditions to Abuse, Trauma Theory, and Attachment Theory - it uses for understanding and addressing individual behaviour.

❖ Sessions:

The majority of work relates to the assessment of the young people referred to the project. The assessment comprises approximately six hour-long sessions taking place once a week, although with rising confidence of the project staff, the assessment process has been streamlined for 'older and normal-range ability adolescents', and now typically lasts for four sessions. Discussions with parents and carers and an information exchange with other professionals involved in the process are part of the assessment. In addition, screening for the level of literacy and comprehension is provided, and for young people over the age of 12, a psychometric assessment is carried out. The sessions are co-worked by a gender-balanced team, and assessments begin with a meeting between the family and the worker to agree a contract outlining an agreed process of intervention.

At the end of the assessment, a report will be produced detailing any further work, if necessary, and both parents/carers and the young people have an opportunity to see and comment on the report prior to it being used by professionals. If the assessment identifies the need for a treatment programme, the programme is planned and adapted to the individual needs of the young person and can vary in length and content. It can also include direct work with parents or carers of the young people involved. The treatment programme will be accompanied by the establishment of 'helping groups' of concerned professionals, parents and carers to monitor change in the young person's behaviour.

❖ Target group:

It targets young people who have offended sexually or behaved inappropriately between the ages of eight and 17. Referrals are accepted from the seven constituent Yots, but also from the child and family section of social services. Where referrals are received from social services or agencies other than the Yot, consent from the young person and, if under 16, his/her carer, has to be gained for an assessment to be carried out.

❖ Evaluation:

In order to measure the impact of the project work on the young people, local evaluators were using the following tools: Asset; referral forms; psychometric tests assessing victim

empathy, cognitive distortions, emotional (over-)identification with children, self-esteem and emotional loneliness. Differences in the quality and quantity of information on the young people remain a concern for the local evaluation, particularly the quality of Asset, with only partially completed forms and information which are often out of date. Furthermore, not all questionnaires and forms are filled in for every young person on the programme and the information collated across the partnership services is inconsistent.

The local evaluator has found that basic evaluation tasks - administering, scoring psychometric tests pre- and post-assessment/treatment, collate information and send it off to the local evaluator - have taken up approximately nine hours of project staff's time per client seen by the project.

More information on national research on the factors associated with sexually abusive behaviour of adolescents is available from the local evaluator, and the evaluation of this project will contribute to knowledge on young people who sexually abuse and to the identification of particular risk factors of persistent or 'life-course' abusers.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The project has developed a generic referral pack and notification procedures. Specific problems have been identified by the local evaluator with respect to 'fast tracking' procedures in the youth justice system. The project offers an assessment to every young person who has allegedly committed a sexual offence so as to assess their individual level of risk and advise on further proceedings. Experiences have shown that final warnings are imposed without consulting the project on a risk assessment which results in the project having no means of enforcing assessment procedures and might also result in low-level offenders being prosecuted and high-risk offenders being finally warned. Also if young people are prosecuted, courts do not always allow the necessary six weeks for the project to assess the young person's level of risk.

The project has set itself long-term performance targets but, due to the specific nature of the work, long-term means five years and thus cannot be covered in the national evaluation. Very low drop-out rates, only two out of 52 clients who were offered treatment have characterised the evaluation period.

The project has secured funding for another year, but there is uncertainty as to funding to secure the longevity of the project. A problem in dealing with finances was presented through the accounting system established by the Board in contrast to the charity's accounting system answerable to the Charity Commission, and it has caused enormous work and expense for the project.

It has been stated by the local evaluator to be of particular benefit for this project to be based in a charity with a reputation of being child-centred in order to gain credibility in the eyes of the Yots but also local authorities and thus to receive a large number of referrals for young people not convicted of a sexual offence but displaying worrying and abusive sexual behaviour. This is an important point for this particular client group, as it is difficult to secure convictions against adolescent abusers. It has also benefited the programme that the two principal social workers were/are extremely motivated and enthusiastic, promoted the project and were also very supportive of the evaluation.

Project staff plan to develop a group work programme for the young people and a parent/carer support group.

C16/C17 - educational projects

This first section summarises points that are common to both C16 and C17. Aims and objectives of the projects are to reduce offending and criminal activity, change thinking and behaviour, enhance independent living skills and ensure the participants are able to access post 16 opportunities.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

Both projects went live in September 1999 and are run by an organisation independent of the Yot. In April 2000, the Yot set up referral procedures to the projects, but the impact of that has been small, even though a large number of the young people referred to the projects from the LEA are known to the Yot and have a criminal history. The one basic difference between the projects is that C16 only accepts full-time permanently excluded students on its project and C17 also offers places on a part-time, day-release basis to young people who are at risk of being excluded from school or are not attending school.

It emerged relatively early on in the development of the projects that there was a demand for holiday drop-in facilities to maintain a certain degree of continuity and to avoid the complete disengagement of the young people from the projects during the holiday periods. The local evaluator stresses the importance of the location of the projects, not to be associated with official school or college buildings, and the young people's feeling of ownership of the place. The projects have consolidated over their lifetime and need to document their practices in order to consider boundaries, note good practice and examine any gaps. The projects now provide specialist skills - however, the projects' development could be further enhanced if working practices were supported by models of cognitive behavioural theory applicable in and related to this particular line of work.

❖ Evaluation:

Local evaluators reviewed the strategies and background material used in the construction and delivery of the programme. Further, local evaluators observed working practices and the delivery of the project at intervals, and they interviewed young people, project staff, Yot staff and LEA staff to assess its position within the network of services. They have also developed a database to collate quantitative data including information on reoffending. The educational projects do not have regular access to Yot data, and this proved problematic for the demands of the national evaluation which is committed to reporting on reoffending.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The projects run over a school year and address academic and motivational issues in the young people's lives, their self-perception and individual educational deficits. Further, project staff address issues such as lack of self-esteem and confidence through structured sessions of problem-solving, self-assessment and social interaction skills.

❖ Target group:

Both projects target young people who have been excluded or are at risk of being excluded from school. Both projects accept referrals from the LEA as well as local Yots. Staff assess the motivational and educational level of the young people in association with the referring agency, the school or the PRU to make sure the project starts its input at the right level.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

The ground-rules at both projects are set out by the students, in discussion with staff, and they will be revisited and renegotiated if necessary.

Issues around moral reasoning, self-esteem and awareness of others are addressed through a general discussion rather than one focused on offending behaviour. In order to fully appreciate the way the projects operate in addressing risk factors, it is necessary to wait until the projects have documented their working practices.

Non-attendance will be immediately addressed through phone calls at the contact address, and this might be followed up with a home visit by the project worker. Staff attempt to maintain good contact with the parents of the young people on the projects to avoid misunderstandings and keep information flowing. Administrative tasks take up a lot of project workers' time at both locations; they keep extensive records on each young person, which are updated daily, and collate and write up information for management, other partners and evaluators. Both projects are considering expanding to a second location in the local authority they are serving.

The implementation of a cognitive behavioural concept into the projects' work has been hindered by a lack of directly applicable cognitive behavioural models, and the limited amount of training that practitioners have received. Members of both teams have attended a one-day workshop on cognitive behavioural theory and practice, and also attended a one-day conference including a paper on cognitive behavioural theory which proved to be inaccessible to practitioners.

One factor fundamentally affecting attendance rates of the young people was identified by staff at both projects to be a lack of parental support.

Of considerable importance in understanding the context of these projects is the fact that they are highly dependent on the LEA. The projects could not operate without the education funding attached to each young person and this can only be accessed through a combination of partnership agencies. This funding trail may be one of the reasons for the lack of direct Yot referrals to the projects.

Both projects make use of their contacts with specialist agencies to provide education and training on issues relevant to young people, such as drugs, sex and careers through 'guest speakers'.

C16
The objectives of the project are as above, but aiming, in particular, towards employment and college training.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

This project is based in an urban area and, after a difficult period of sharing accommodation with other organisations, it moved to its own premises in July 2000. The project does not work directly with schools but with the LEA and PRUs. As a result, it has a less structured approach to the educational element of the project.

❖ Sessions:

The programme runs five days a week for four hours a day, with an hour of concentrated academic work supported by a 'talking' session to 'clear the decks', and afternoon group activities including sports and academic awards. The project work is supported by the 'Learning Gateway' programme running over the summer holiday period.

❖ Target group:

To date, the project has targeted young people from 15 to 16 to prepare them for the world of work and training, but this age range might be extended in the future.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

This project has experienced particular problems due to its urban setting, and thus the limited location and closed community from which it draws its referrals. Both groups attending the project over the last two years had known each other long and attended the same PRU. They were established groups using their cohesiveness to challenge project staff and undermine their authority. The fact that the students were a consolidated group did also impact on the integration of new students whose arrivals were accompanied with threats of violence.

C17
The aims and objectives of the project are as above, but with an emphasis on the delivery of an educational programme.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project is based in a rural area and, again, after a difficult period of sharing its accommodation, it has moved to new premises. This project works directly with schools and is working towards a structured educational approach to gain certificates in specialist subjects. A growing number of schools are buying full-time and part-time places on the project for their students. One of the project workers has developed a 'programme' to take into schools based on the project's principles. The programme addresses challenging behaviour, drugs education and offers training to teachers and staff on both issues.

❖ Sessions:

It runs five days a week with a 'core day' of five-and-a-half hours. Again, one session is reserved for academic work, one for 'talking' and the afternoon sessions for academic awards, crafts, and other activities.

❖ Target group:

It accepts young people between the ages of 14 and 16, and the aim of the scheme is to ensure that the young people receive a reasonable level of education and to enable them, if possible, to stay in their school.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

This project is working with young people of different ages and attendance status. While the project did not have the problem, as described above, of having to work with pre-established groups of young people because they receive referrals from a large rural area, where it is unlikely that young people know each other, it has to monitor its referrals carefully to avoid becoming a 'dumping ground' for young people who have fallen outside the education and youth justice system.

Initially the project aimed to provide an additional service for young people at risk of being excluded from school or those who did not attend. This service was intended to enable their reintegration into school, but this was not achieved because schools used the project as a holding facility for the young people who were not attending school full-time.

C1 - reparation project
Aims and objectives of the project are to address the risks, implications, causes and consequences of offending and the effects on self and significant others.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

It soon emerged that due to the high level of referrals and the groups quickly running to capacity, it was difficult to start young people on the groups early enough to fulfil requirements of orders and to include those young people again who had missed a session. In October 2000, the local evaluator reported that the project had established a separate 'rolling' group to cater for those young people who had missed sessions. The idea of using a rolling programme to avoid tensions between the need to take young people on quickly and maintaining programme integrity was extended when the project piloted a rolling on/rolling off programme in June 2001. This meant that young people can start on the programme within a few weeks of their sentence. At the time of writing the final report, the project operates exclusively as a roll on/roll off programme.

The main focus of this project is on reparation, it became operational in June 2000. All staff have received intensive core training from youth services, cognitive behavioural training, a 'what works' course, and a restorative justice training programme. The project has emerged as a partnership between the county council's youth services, a number of local Yots, district councils and other agencies. The project is therefore spread over both rural and urban areas and face difficulties in including young people in some isolated areas due to a lack of adequate public transport. The project can be followed-up by a 'Buddy' (mentoring) project and some young people seem to make use of that opportunity.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

Indirect reparation, and the attitudes and beliefs of offenders are addressed by a session on self-esteem and problem-solving.

❖ Sessions:

The usual programme comprises 12 hours of indirect reparation, six weekly sessions in all, including one session of cognitive behaviour work carried out as a structured group discussion. However, the project has recently changed the minimum programme it is offering to six hours of indirect reparation involving two sessions of reparation and one session of cognitive behaviour work. The session on cognitive behaviour covers issues such as causes and consequences of offending behaviour; risks of offending behaviour; and implications of offending behaviour on self and significant others. In addition to the group work session, staff will also engage in one-to-one discussion of these issues with young people while they are undertaking indirect reparation.

❖ Target group:

The project is run by an organisation independent of the Yot and targets 10 to 17-year olds on all available orders that have an element of indirect reparation. To date, a large number of young people have completed the programme. The project devised a standardised referral form to be completed by Yot practitioners.

❖ Evaluation:

The scheme is operating independently of the Yot and, subsequently, local evaluators were facing difficulties in obtaining Asset data. Initially, the internal monitoring of the programme included an entrance, mid-term and exit interview, but mid-term and entrance interviews are no longer carried out. After sentence, a project worker conducts an entrance interview and the young person then signs a contract indicating his/her willingness to comply with the rules of the project. The evaluation process takes up to an hour per session. The team has made use of the evaluation as a development tool for the programme on an ongoing basis.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

According to the local evaluators, the project has benefited from being able to make use of: an existing framework of policies and procedures of professional working practices; an existing support system; and being line-managed by the county council's community services department rather than the Yot. When the project was set up, there was initial confusion as to whose role it was to fill in Asset forms. It was established that this was the Yot's responsibility and thus the project has had no access to Asset until very late in the local and national evaluation.

C15 - mental health project
Aims and objectives of the project are to provide appropriate, accessible and responsive mental health services to young offenders.

❖ Project development/changes/contextual information:

The project focuses on the mental health needs of young people in the youth justice system and although it was anticipated that this might have an impact on their offending

behaviour, the reduction of reoffending was not assessed as being a sensitive short-term outcome for this project.

The Yot places an emphasis on the provision of services for young people with mental health problems. The remit of the project and thus the remit of the evaluation have changed since the project's commencement. When the project was established, a cognitive behavioural therapist was to provide training to Yot workers in cognitive behavioural therapy and to develop cognitive behavioural programmes for use within the Yot. In addition, PMHWs were seconded to the Yot to carry out direct work with young people who were assessed as having significant mental health needs. Both the cognitive behavioural training of Yot workers and its impact on their direct work and the work of the PMHWs were to be evaluated. In April 2000, the cognitive behavioural therapist was unable to continue his duties, some of which were subsequently taken on by the PMHWs. The evaluation had to be reshaped and new protocols were negotiated and drawn up. These stated that the researcher was to evaluate the role of PMHWs in the Yot, including: the evaluation of their direct work; consultation; joint work; overall impact on the Yot; the impact of the cognitive behavioural training on Yot staff, their perception of its clarity, appropriateness to their work, acquisition of skills and knowledge, and confidence to apply these skills.

❖ Main themes of the programme:

The direct work of the PMHWs is carried out on a one-to-one basis and to formal operational protocols. They do not use cognitive behaviour principles exclusively but make use of other therapeutic principles, e.g. family therapy, art therapy, counselling and psychotherapeutic intervention, anger management, etc. PMHWs provide consultation to Yot workers on cognitive behaviour and mental health issues and are currently planning to train Yot staff in cognitive behavioural approaches.

❖ Sessions:

Interventions are specifically developed according to young people's individual needs and will vary considerably in length, between 1 and 19 sessions, commonly lasting for about an hour, and taking place weekly or fortnightly.

❖ Target group:

Direct intervention by a PMHW is offered to any young person assessed as having significant mental health needs. Assessment is carried out through a referral form specifically developed - from a research checklist - for the Yot to screen the young people referred to the PMHW's service. Prior to the development of the full referral from the Yot, workers depended on Asset's mental health section for the identification of young people with mental health needs but it had been identified as being too blunt to adequately assess mental health needs.

❖ Evaluation:

The local evaluator only took up post in August 2000 and, due to the need to revise the evaluation and draw up new protocols, consent from the Yots to pursue the evaluation

study was only received in January 2001. The local evaluator has mainly used the HoNOSCA as a short-term outcome measure to assess whether PMHW's work has an impact on the young people's mental health. It was also attempted to use the 'Strength and Difficulties' questionnaire but response rates were very small because the researchers did not have the resources to directly contact the young people. Three focus groups of staff working with PMHWs have been established to assess 'service user' satisfaction with PMHWs direct work and consultation. A major problem for the evaluation was that the young people were not complying with the request to complete relevant questionnaires or to be interviewed. The evaluation has been found to be a support to focus the clinical team.

❖ Specific positives or problems:

By the end of the evaluation period, the PMHWs posts had grown to four, which were jointly funded by the local health authority and the Board. They were part of a wider initiative to provide easily accessible mental health services to young offenders, young people looked after by local authorities, and the homeless. Furthermore, permanent posts have been created for a secretary, a part-time psychologist and a part-time psychiatrist. During the evaluation period, issues have emerged regarding the availability of mental health services to young people in secure units. These issues are unresolved, but there are recommendations for the development of an adolescent forensic team working across health authority boundaries.

APPENDIX 2: AGGREGATE DATA

The tables included in this section follow the same format. The percentages in the shaded cells of the tables refer to the "Data available" where data were provided. Percentages in the white cells indicate the amount of missing data.

Gender	Number of referrals	%
Male	418	90
Female	49	10
Data available	467	88
Missing data	64	12
Total	531	100

90% of 467 cases are male.

Data available for 88% of the sample of 531 cases.

12% missing data (64 cases) of the total sample of 531.

Projects working with persistent young offenders

Table 1.1: Gender

Gender	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Male	418	90	251	88	118	87
Female	49	10	35	12	18	13
Data available	467	88	286	87	136	89
Missing data	64	12	44	13	16	11
Total	531	100	330	100	152	100

Table 1.2: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
White	365	91	248	91	118	88
Asian	5	1	2	0.7	0	0
Black	20	5	16	6	12	9
Mixed	9	2	8	3	4	3
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
Data available	399	75	274	83	134	88
Missing data	132	25	56	17	18	12
Total	531	100	330	100	152	100

Table 1.3: Age

Age	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
11	2	0.5	1	0.4	0	0
12	1	0.2	0	0	0	0
13	10	2	3	1	1	0.8
14	45	10	27	10	10	8
15	86	20	60	22	38	30
16	124	29	77	29	37	29
17	140	32	87	33	36	28
18	16	4	2	0.8	2	2
Other	10	2	10	4	4	3
Data available	434	82	267	81	128	84
Missing data	97	18	63	19	24	16
Total	531	100	330	100	152	100

Table 1.4: Distribution of orders

Order	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Non Yot referrals	1	0.3	1	0.4	1	0.8
Reprimand/Final Warning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Referral Order	1	0.3	0	0	0	0
Reparation Order	5	1	1	0.4	1	0.8
Action Plan Order	28	7	13	5	12	10
DTTO	1	0.3	1	0.4	1	0.8
Probation Order	30	7	18	7	4	3
Supervision Order	213	53	159	63	75	63
Combination Order	10	2	5	2	3	3
Community Service Order	5	1	0	0	0	0
Curfew Order	2	0.5	0	0	0	0
DTO/Licence	63	16	26	10	10	8
Voluntary attendance	15	4	15	6	7	6
Other	32	8	15	6	6	5
Data available	405	76	253	77	119	78
Missing	126	24	77	23	33	22
Total	531	100	330	100	152	100

Table 1.5: Index offence

Offence	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Violence	106	29	61	27	31	30
Sex	5	1	5	5	5	5
Burglary	57	16	42	19	18	17
Theft	68	19	33	15	16	16
Fraud	2	0.6	2	0.9	1	1
Motor Offences	57	16	36	16	13	13
Criminal Damage	15	4	8	4	3	3
Drugs	8	2	4	2	3	3
Other	45	12	32	14	12	12
Not applicable	1	0.3	1	0.5	1	1
Data available	**364**	**69**	**224**	**68**	**103**	**68**
Missing data	167	31	106	32	49	32
Total	**531**	**100**	**330**	**100**	**152**	**100**

Table 1.6: Offending history: Previous convictions

Number of previous convictions	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
0	39	13	13	8	9	15
1	16	5	9	6	8	13
2-3	50	17	19	12	11	18
4-5	48	16	34	22	15	25
6-10	74	25	38	24	12	20
More than 10	64	22	44	28	4	7
Not applicable	1	0.3	1	0.6	1	2
Data available	**292**	**52**	**158**	**48**	**60**	**39**
Missing data	239	48	172	52	92	61
Total	**531**	**100**	**330**	**100**	**152**	**100**

Table 1.7: Offending History: Age at first conviction

Age at 1st conviction	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
10	2	0.7	0	0	0	0
11	12	4	7	5	1	2
12	29	11	16	11	6	10
13	37	13	24	16	5	8
14	74	27	38	26	21	35
15	72	26	38	26	15	25
16	37	13	16	11	7	12
17	9	3	3	2	1	2
Not applicable	4	1	4	3	4	7
Data available	**276**	**52**	**146**	**44**	**60**	**39**
Missing data	255	48	184	56	92	61
Total	**531**	**100**	**330**	**100**	**152**	**100**

Table 1.8: Risk factors

Risk factors	Number of referrals	Number of starters	Number of completers
School attendance problems	166	113	51
Employment problems	47	33	13
Drug/Alcohol abuse problems	114	87	36
Mental health problems	30	14	7
Ever been in care	59	42	11
Ever been homeless	37	35	13

Projects working with 'adolescent sexual abusers'

Table 2.1: Gender

Gender	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Male	410	93	215	96	86	97
Female	33	7	10	4	3	3
Data available	443	100	225	72	89	44
Missing data	0	0	86	28	115	56
Total	443	100	311	100	204	100

Table 2.2: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
White	356	88	203	94	85	99
Asian	13	3	1	0.5	0	0
Black	33	8	9	4	1	1
Mixed	3	0.7	3	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
Data available	405	91	216	69	86	42
Missing data	38	9	95	31	118	58
Total	443	100	311	100	204	100

Table 2.3: Age

Age	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Under 10	62	22	26	12	16	19
10	9	3	8	4	2	2
11	11	4	10	5	2	2
12	23	8	19	9	6	7
13	39	14	36	16	13	15
14	33	12	28	13	10	12
15	36	13	32	14	10	12
16	36	13	31	14	14	17
17	29	10	28	13	11	13
18	7	2	2	0.9	0	0
Other	1	0.3	1	0.5	0	0
Data available	**286**	**65**	**221**	**71**	**84**	**41**
Missing data	157	35	90	29	120	59
Total	**443**	**100**	**311**	**100**	**204**	**100**

Table 2.4: Distribution of orders

Order	Number of referrals	%	Number of starters	%	Number of completers	%
Non Yot referrals	170	74	139	72	48	45
Reprimand/Final Warning	31	14	31	16	48	45
Referral Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reparation Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
Action Plan Order	1	0.4	1	0.5	0	0
DTTO	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probation Order	1	0.4	1	0.5	0	0
Supervision Order	1	0.4	1	0.5	1	1
Combination Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Service Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curfew Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
DTO/Licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntary attendance	170	74	139	72	48	45
Other	25	11	21	11	9	8
Data available	**229**	**52**	**194**	**62**	**88**	**43**
Missing	214	48	117	38	116	57
Total	**443**	**100**	**311**	**100**	**204**	**100**

Table 3: Referrals and completion rates for each project

Project No.	No. referred to project	No. started the project (No. started and could have completed*)	No. completed the project	Completion rate (%)	Lifetime of project (in month)**
C1	189	189 (189)	112	59	16
C2	120	108 (88)	68	77	21
C3	90	90 (85)	58	68	24
C4	184	86 (86)	57	66	17
C5	24	24 (14)	8	57	17
C6	26	22 (22)	15	68	14
C7	119	38 (21)	12	57	19
C8	88	72 (32)	21	66	15
C9	57	39 (39)	19	49	17
C10a	28	21 (16)	2	13	14
C10b	47	43 (37)	20	54	14
C11	5	4 (4)	0	0	13
C12	6	6 (6)	6	100	17
C13	17	17 (13)	6	46	16
C14	46	41 (41)	9	22	16
C15	21	21 (21)	18	86	19
C16	133	125 (88)	54	61	26
C17					
C19	81	75 (37)	22	59	18
C20	30	22 (22)	7	32	14
C21	33	27 (13)	4	31	17
C22	27	0	0	NA	12
C23	25	25 (25)	14	56	19
C24	50	16 (16)	8	50	10
Total	**1446**	**1111 (913)**	**540**	**59**	**Average: 17 months**

*Number of young people who started an intervention and could have completed it by 31 October 2001.
**We have asked local evaluators to specify when the project became operational. Data collection for the final report for the national evaluation ended on 31 October 2001 and thus this date has been used to set the 'end of the lifetime' of the project (with the exception of C24, which ceased operation in June 2001).

APPENDIX 3: RECONVICTION STUDY: MORE DETAILS

1 FREQUENCY OF OFFENDING PRIOR AND POST TARGET CONVICTION

A factor that complicates the measurement of frequency of offending for young people is that the Board has made it one of its key objectives to tackle delays in the youth justice system and to speed up the time from arrest to sentence, especially with regard to persistent young offenders. This may have distorted any comparisons of frequency of offending before and after the index offence.

Table 1.1: Comparison of number of court appearances within 12 months either side of the target conviction - 'Persistent Young Offenders' (n=49)

No. of court appearances	Court appearances up to 12 months before target conviction	Reconvictions up to 12 months after target conviction
None	16.3%	20.4%
One	24.5%	20.4%
Two	18.4%	26.5%
Three or more	40.7%	32.7%
One or more	**83.6%**	**79.6%**

Table 1.2: Comparison of number of court appearances within 12 months either side of the target conviction - 'Adolescent Sexual Abusers' (n=16)

No. of court appearances	Court appearances up to 12 months before target conviction	Reconvictions up to 12 months after target conviction
None	62.5%	75%
One	31.3%	12.5%
Two	6.3%	12.5%
Three or more	0%	0
One or more	**37.6%**	**25%**

Table 1.3: Comparison of number of court appearances within 12 months either side of the target conviction - 'Outliers' (n=64)

No. of court appearances	Court appearances up to 12 months before target conviction	Reconvictions up to 12 months after target conviction
None	28.1%	43.8%
One	40.6%	23.4%
Two	18.8%	17.2%
Three or more	12.6%	15.6%
One or more	**72%**	**56.2%**

Table 2.1: Seriousness of offence leading to target conviction compared with most serious reconviction, as measured by the Board gravity score - 'Persistent Young Offenders' (n=49)

Court appearance	1-3	4-5	6-7	N
Target conviction	44.9%	34.7%	20.4%	49
Most serious reconviction	24.3%	56.8%	18.9%	37*
+/-	-20.6	+22.1	-1.5	

*Although 39 persistent young offenders were reconvicted, gravity scores for the offences committed by two of them were not available.

Table 2.2: Seriousness of offence leading to target conviction compared with most serious reconviction, as measured by the Board gravity score - 'Adolescent Sexual Abusers' (n=16)

Court appearance	1-3	4-5	6-7	N
Target conviction	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14*
Most serious reconviction	75.0%	25.0%	0%	4
+/-	+67.9	+10.7	-78.6	

*Although 16 'adolescent abusers' were convicted for sexual offences, gravity scores for the offences committed by two of them were not available.

Table 2.3: Seriousness of offence leading to target conviction compared with most serious reconviction, as measured by the Board gravity score - 'Outliers' (n=64)

Court appearance	1-3	4-5	6-7	N
Target conviction	54.0%	28.6%	17.5%	63*
Most serious reconviction	45.7%	40.0%	14.3%	35*
+/-	-8.3	+11.4	-3.2	

*ALTHOUGH 64/36 'OUTLIERS' WERE CONVICTED/RECONVICTED, GRAVITY SCORES FOR THE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY ONE OF THEM WERE NOT AVAILABLE.

APPENDIX 4: PREVALENCE OF PROBLEMS

Problems	Projects that have experienced problems
Data protection	C1, C2, C5, C7, C8, 10a, C10b, C13, C15, C16, C17, C19, C20, C21, C22
Local Evaluator's access to data (e.g. Asset)	C1, C2, C4, C10a, C10b, C13, C15, C16, C17, C19, C20, C21, C22
Partial or non-existent Asset or other data	C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, 10a, C10b, C14, C15, C16, C17, C19, C21, C22, C23, C24
Internal communication problems (e.g. caseworker - project worker; within voluntary agency)	C7, C9, C12, C13, C14, C20, C23
External communication problems (Yot - Court; Yot - voluntary agency)	C2, C6, C7, C9, C14, C16, C17, C19, C20
Recruitment of staff	C2, C8, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C22, C24
Retention of staff	C4, C6, C7, C9, 10a, C10b, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C22, C23, C24
Supervision of staff	C4, C6, 10a, C10b, C11, C13, C14, C15, C20, C23
Training of staff	C4, C5, C11, C12, C13, C14, C19, C20, C23
Low level of referrals	C5, C6, C7, C9, 10a, C10b, C11, C12, C14, C15, C19, C20, C21, C22, C23
High drop-out rates	C1, C7, C9, 10a, C10b, C14, C21, C23, C24
Maintaining Programme Integrity	C4, C7, C9, 10a, C23, C24
Lack of resources (staff/financial)	C4, C10a, C10b, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C20, C21, C23
Tension between fast-tracking and quality work	C1, C8, C12, C19, C20
Court reluctance to offer flexible Orders	C7, C14
Lack of information-sharing	C9, C13, C14, C16, C17, C19, C20
Inaccessible location	C1, C5, C8, C13
Impact of the introduction of the ISSPs (Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme) on your project	10a, C10b, C24
Other	C2, C5, C6, C7

APPENDIX 5: LIST OF PROJECTS

C1   IS 10 – Reparation and Cognitive Behaviour Scheme, Nottinghamshire
C2   IS 26 – Sexually Aggressive Youngsters Project, Norfolk
C3   IS 27 - Barnados 5a Scheme, Liverpool
C4   IS 45 - NSPCC Black Country Project, West Midlands
C5   IS 55 - Monmouth One-to-One Cognitive Behaviour Project
C6   IS 66 - Can Do Programme, Surrey
C7   IS 92 - Interactive Intervention Programmes for Sex, Violent and Persistent
Offenders, Stoke-on-Trent
C8   IS 130 –   Taith Project, South Wales
C9   IS 158 –   Motivation and Enhanced Cognitive Skills Group, Southwark
C10   IS 162 –   STAR (One-to-One) and Plus (Groupwork) Programmes, Greater
 Manchester
C11   IS 180 –   STAR, Mid-Wales
C12   IS 197 –   Way Out Project, Wandsworth
C13   IS 217 –   Intensive Supervision and Support Programme, Devon
C14   IS 229 –   Choice, Challenge and Change Cognitive Behaviour Programme,
Wessex
C15   IS 231 –   Primary Mental Health Workers within Yots, Leicester,
 Leicestershire and Rutland
C16   IS 244 –   Moves, Shropshire
C17   IS 245 –   Moves, Merseyside
C18   IS 266 –   Brighter Futures - Reoffending Reduction Programme, Solihull
C19   IS 313 –   Corner House 'Phaze' Intensive Supervision Project, Stockton-on-
Teesside
C20   IS 337 –   Young Offender Programme, Cardiff
C21   IS 355 –   Stop and Go, Somerset
C22   IS 402 –   Effective Practice Groupwork, Oxfordshire
C23   IS 411 –   Persistent Offenders Initiative, Gateshead
C24   IS 419 –   Persistent Young Offender Project Sunderland

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