



# **A Review of YOTs and Children's Services' Interaction with Young Offenders and Young People at Risk of Offending**

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## Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a study by Matrix Evidence, commissioned by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) to review Children's Services provision for young offenders and young people at risk of offending. The research aimed to address gaps in the YJB's current knowledge and, more specifically, to understand:

1. The proportion of young people within the Youth Justice System (YJS) receiving assistance from Children's Services.
2. The characteristics of young people involved in the YJS in need of provision from Children's Services.
3. The differences between provision for young offenders, those at risk of offending, and young people on remand, and to understand who falls through the gaps and why.
4. The interaction between youth offending teams (YOTs) and Children's Services to highlight examples of good practice and effective partnerships.
5. To ascertain how effective<sup>1</sup> Children's Services are in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending.

The work was completed in three stages:

1. **A national online survey of YOT managers and Children's Services directors** – the primary aim of the survey was to assess the relationship, the levels of interaction and the strengths and weaknesses in the current working relationship between YOTs and Children's Services.
2. **Case file data analysis** – case file data from more than 4,000 remanded/convicted young people were collected and analysed across 14 YOT areas. The aims of the analyses were to further understand the characteristics of young people in the YJS in need of Children's Services provision and the proportion of young people with Children's Services contact. Data were also collected and analysed from a sample of more than 3,000 young people at risk of offending from three YOT areas.
3. **Semi-structured interviews with practitioners** – a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners in five YOT areas. The aim of these interviews was to gauge practitioners' views about the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services. A small number of interviews were also completed with young people who had current experience of Children's Services.

<sup>1</sup> In this case, "effective" relates to evidence of how Children's Services deal with young offenders on a day-to-day level, rather than considering outcomes such as arrest, reoffending or reconviction.

## Key findings

### The proportion of young people in the YJS receiving assistance from Children's Services

Case file data were analysed from a sample of 4,723 *Asset* core profile assessments from 14 YOT areas in relation to young people remanded/convicted of an offence and 3,102 Onset assessment profiles from three areas in relation to young people who were considered to be "at risk" of offending. The *Asset* core profiles highlighted that a high proportion (43%) of those young people with complete *Asset* profiles have had *previous* Children's Services contact<sup>2</sup> and 15% have *current* contact. Overall, young people *with* any previous Children's Services contact recorded were most likely to have a voluntary arrangement for accommodation in place (30%), to be child protection registered (27%), or to have had a care order in place (18%). A total of 10% of young people from the sample of at-risk cases were also recorded as known to social services.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that details in relation to the social care history of young people were completed in only 65% of all *Assets*, and it is rare for details to be complete in Onset assessments.

### The characteristics of young people involved in the YJS receiving assistance from Children's Services

Young people with previous or current Children's Services contact have a number of characteristics that differentiate them from those young people who do not have a social care history. The analysis of *Asset* assessments highlighted that there is a statistically significant relationship between demographic characteristics such as age and gender and the likelihood of contact. Typically, younger offenders and females were more likely to have contact than older males. For example, a total of 55% of young people aged between 10 and 12 had some social care history as compared with less than 40% of young people aged 15 or over. A total of 56% of girls also had some history recorded as compared with 40% of males. There is also a significant relationship between criminal history and social care history, with more than 70% of young people with more than 10 offences recorded in their file and nearly 80% of young people with more than five convictions recorded having social care history, compared with less than 30% of young people with one offence recorded and less than 60% with one previous conviction. A number of risk factors recorded in the *Asset* assessment were also significantly related to the likelihood of having a social care history. Young people with high *Asset* scores in relation to risk factors such as family issues, mental health issues, living arrangements, and education, training and employment were more likely to have a social care history than young people for whom these factors were absent.

<sup>2</sup> This is care history as measured in the *Asset* core profile. This asks if young people have current or previous care history or are "looked-after". This includes details in relation to whether the young person was/is accommodated by voluntary agreement (s20 Children Act), if they are subject to a care order (s31 Children Act 1989), remanded to local authority accommodation (s23(1) Children and Young Person's Act 1969), are an "eligible child" (still in care and looked-after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14), a "relevant child" (has left care but was looked-after for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and for some time since 16 or 17), if they are on the child protection register or have had any other social services contact.

<sup>3</sup> Details were collected in relation to all care history details in Onset, though it should be noted that data were missing across too many cases for detailed analyses.

## **The interaction between YOTs and Children's Services and provisions for young people**

Given that a high proportion of young people are known to both YOTs and Children's Services, and that they score highly on a number of risk factors associated with offending behaviour, it is important to understand what interaction there is between the two agencies and how this operates. Key issues were examined in both the online survey and in subsequent semi-structured interviews with senior staff and caseworkers across five YOT areas in relation to how the relationship between the YOT and Children's Services is formally founded (in terms of location of the YOT, strategic planning and development of protocols) and how it takes effect on a day-to-day basis. The findings broadly suggest that there are strong strategic links between YOTs and Children's Services, though a number of issues are identified at the operational level. In summary:

- 1. The location of YOTs** – there has been a great deal of movement of YOTs across various departments in the past five years, with many YOTs being relocated to Children's Services departments for planning, partnership and operational reasons – more than 50% of YOTs responding to the online survey have moved departments with around one in four moving into Children's Services departments. Interviews with practitioners highlighted that it was considered that physical co-location within the same office or building was more important than simply situating the YOT in the same directorate as Children's Services. Such physical co-location was said to improve access to services between the organisations and to make working relationships better and closer.
- 2. Strategic planning between YOTs and Children's Services** – there is a great deal of interaction between YOTs and other agencies, including Children's Services, at a strategic level. In the online survey, YOT managers reported that, of all the statutory agencies that oversee the business of the YOTs, the participation of Children's Services was particularly beneficial. There was a widespread consensus that YOTs and Children's Services closely shared common objectives in relation to the reduction of youth crime, and this was reflected in the number of YOTs stating that the Youth Justice Plan was reflected in Children's Services' strategic planning documents. It is surprising that only around 60% of YOT areas had Youth Justice Plans that were integrated into local educational development plans, as such plans could play a role in formalising processes for identifying young people at risk. Where there was evidence of joint planning and shared objectives between YOTs and Children's Services, this was often translated into protocols for day-to-day practice with young people on bail or remand, sentence planning for young offenders and referral to prevention programmes. Protocols commonly existed in relation to working practices with young people on bail or remand – 87% of respondents reported that protocols existed for court bail and remands, 82% for PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) bails and remands. It is notable that fewer respondents reported that there were protocols in place for sentence planning for young offenders for whom Children's Services had some responsibility – only 59% of respondents reported that they had protocols dealing with sentence planning for "looked-after children", while 45% and 43% of respondents reported that they had such protocols for "children in need" and "vulnerable children" respectively. Very few of respondents (39%) reported that protocols exist governing referrals of looked-after children to YOT prevention programmes.
- 3. The day-to-day relationship between YOTs and Children's Services** – formal plans and written protocols aside, interviews with YOT and Children's Services practitioners highlight close working arrangements between the agencies and reports of good practice. There were, however, some shortcomings identified in relation to day-to-day practice, particularly

with regard to the knowledge and operation of protocols, information/knowledge-sharing, provision of services, and access to services. In summary:

- a. **Knowledge and operation of protocols** – despite the widespread existence of protocols to cover areas where co-operation was necessary (particularly bail, remand and sentence planning), there was no universal knowledge of the protocols where they existed. Furthermore, where individuals were aware of the protocols, there were reports that they had not been trained in their implementation. This lack of awareness may have resulted in mixed reports of collaborative working; specifically, the appropriateness of referrals from Children’s Services to YOT prevention services, the ability of YOTs to access Children’s Services, and collaboration in relation to providing appropriate remand facilities.
- b. **Information and knowledge-sharing** – mechanisms for accessing information across the agencies varied across YOT areas, and some respondents suggested it could be difficult to access information on key individuals from the other agency. In relation to liaison and communication, though referral forms existed in the areas, it was not uncommon for these to be bypassed in favour of informal approaches. The effectiveness of communication was said to rely on the quality of the relationships between individual workers. A further issue was mentioned by several Children’s Services caseworkers in interview in relation to knowledge-sharing about individual cases. There was a view that YOTs did not always value the knowledge that Children’s Services caseworkers had in relation to specific children (particularly in relation to pre-sentence reports), and occasionally there were misunderstandings from YOT staff about the roles and responsibilities of Children’s Services generally.
- c. **Provision of services** – the semi-structured interviews revealed that YOT caseworkers were concerned that Children’s Services support for YOT clients was often reactive and consisted of the minimum practical support around money, benefits and accommodation. There was particular pressure on secure placements and YOTs/Children’s Services did not always necessarily agree over court decisions to make these placements. Timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and delays over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. There was also a concern about the robustness of risk assessment, risk management and joint planning around offending behaviour and other areas. This was more of an issue with, for example, children in need than with looked-after children, for whom there was a greater sense of planning. It was also recognised that provision across many areas was lacking in relation to “at-risk” groups or those requiring prevention intervention. Here, both YOT caseworkers and Children’s Services social workers suggested that resource restrictions had a significant impact on the breadth and quality of provision for at-risk young people. This mutual understanding ameliorated potential conflict between the two agencies, but was nevertheless a source of frustration among caseworkers.
- d. **Access to services and their effectiveness** – the main points here related to thresholds for intervention, accommodation requirements and aftercare for young people leaving care. The semi-structured interviews highlighted that thresholds for Children’s Services intervention were considered to be very high in all areas and both YOTs and Children’s Services workers agreed that they generally exceeded the level at which intervention was considered necessary or beneficial by YOTs. Thresholds were particularly high for children in need. Through experience, YOTs were cognisant of

Children's Services thresholds in their local area and targeted their referrals accordingly. Particular issues also exist in relation to accommodation: overall, accommodation was a significant issue which primarily reflected a lack of local resources such as dedicated custody and remand facilities, as well as suitable alternatives to custody. In relation to service provision for those young people leaving care, there was evidence of developing good practice in relation to the development of resettlement aftercare provision teams, though provision of aftercare was not consistent across each area.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This study has highlighted a great deal of joint strategic and operational work done by YOTs in partnership with Children's Services. Most (though not all) YOTs and Children's Services appear to have strong strategic relationships, and there is clear evidence of the two agencies working together in integrated teams with Children's Services practitioners commonly working within YOTs. It is apparent that there are particular weaknesses in relation to operational practices and this is where the recommendations primarily focus. The recommendations made are considered to be both achievable and within the clear resource constraints that all YOTs and Children's Services face:

1. **Completeness of assessment data in relation to social care history** – the study has highlighted that social care fields in both *Asset* and *Onset* assessments (in relation, respectively, to young people convicted/on remand and those considered to be at-risk) are often incomplete or have data missing. If the needs and characteristics of young people with a social care history or with social care needs are to be identified across YOT areas, then it is necessary to have robust data to hand. Caseworkers responsible for completing such assessments need to be made aware that these data are essential for understanding the risks and needs of young people with a social care history and thus records need to be complete. It is also essential that both *Onset* and *Asset* records are recorded electronically (rather than in paper files) to allow easy access for caseworkers.
2. **Knowledge and operation of protocols** – YOTs and Children's Services need to have greater clarity over what protocols they have in place, where new protocols need to be developed and to ensure that once a protocol is in place, there is widespread knowledge among management and operational staff. The results from the interviews show there is a need for protocols around lead responsibilities for looked-after children, children in need, children leaving care, and children leaving custody across all areas. One might have also expected to see a higher number of YOTs/Children's Services with protocols in relation to sentence planning for children in need and vulnerable young children. To achieve this, YOTs and Children's Services need to have a full audit of what protocols they have in place – a dedicated member of staff could do this from each relevant agency. Once this has been completed, all of the existing protocols should be compiled into a "handbook of joint working" across YOTs and Children's Services, which would be made available to all staff. This would provide a vital reference point for which protocols exist, allow staff to view them easily (and increase knowledge) and allow gaps to be easily identified.
3. **Information sharing across agencies** – both agencies require "real-time" information in relation to cases in which they both have an input so that they have clear and up-to-date information on young people. At present, data on young people who have a care history and come to the attention of the YOT can be held in a variety of data systems and it is possible for one young person to have had a CAF (Common Assessment Framework)

assessment (completed by Children's Services), an Onset assessment and an Asset (completed by the YOT). There needs to be transparency across agencies about what data are held on young people and each agency should be allowed access to information. At present, tensions arise, with YOTs requesting information from Children's Services which takes time for Children's Services to collate and forward to the YOT. Much of this tension could be alleviated if there was common YOT/Children's Service access to systems. This could be achieved by allowing real-time access to these systems on shared secure networks. The success of this would obviously be dependent on the existing systems being updated by the relevant caseworkers.

4. **Joint planning across agencies** – all agencies involved with looked-after children, children in need, children leaving care and children leaving custody need to be involved in joint planning in relation to young people. There is close planning between YOTs and Children's Services, though there is a need for greater involvement of the local education authority (LEA) across some areas in relation to prevention issues with looked-after children. Encouraging the LEA to play a greater role in planning could be achieved by integrating Youth Justice Plans into local educational development plans, encouraging attendance at existing steering group meetings (and holding sessions on joint planning) or by holding dedicated half-day events with YOTs and the LEA. Such events would encourage dialogue in relation to planning and would place the issue on the agenda of all agencies concerned.
5. **Effective use of Children's Services knowledge** – caseworkers from Children's Services often feel that YOTs do not value or use their input in relation to looked-after children in pre-sentence reports/court reports. This is a key issue as Children's Services caseworkers have experience of looked-after children and are aware of their specific welfare needs, which would appear to be essential at the pre-sentence report stage. Where a young person is being looked after, has been looked-after, or has close involvement with Children's Services, it would be advisable for a person with detailed knowledge of that young person's care history to have an input into the pre-sentence report. It is acknowledged here that the preparation of such reports takes a significant proportion of YOT caseworker time. However, it would be in the best interests of the young person if there was a requirement to at least engage with somebody with detailed knowledge of the young person's care history and include these details in the pre-sentence report.
6. **Transparency and understanding of roles generally** – there is a need for more transparency and understanding about what each agency does at a strategic and operational level, e.g. explaining YOT orders to Children's Services staff, details of care plans and clearer explanations to YOT staff of options that exist for supporting young people who possibly don't reach the thresholds for Children's Services intervention. Both management and operational staff need a clearer understanding of what the overall strategic role of each organisation is and what involvement they might be expected to have in each other's business at an operational level. This might be achieved through management meetings or half-day conferences between the relevant people in each agency in each local authority.
7. **Greater YOT and Children's Services understanding in individual cases of what contact each agency has had with the young person concerned** – there is a need for more face-to-face contact between YOTs and Children's Services staff to understand their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to *specific* cases that involve YOTs and Children's Services input. It is apparent that the size of caseloads held by YOT and social

workers make it difficult for staff to regularly maintain contact in these cross-agency cases. However, shared data systems (as long as they are regularly updated) could enable caseworkers from both agencies to access case records in real time (see information sharing above).

8. **Review thresholds for Children's Services interventions** – there is a requirement to conduct more research to review the thresholds in place for Children's Services interventions and to understand the differences in practice nationally. There was clear evidence in the interviews with practitioners that, although referrals from YOTs to Children's Services were fairly common, the thresholds for Children's Services intervention were often considered to be very high, and, therefore, exclusive. In all areas there are strict assessment criteria in place in relation to those young people considered a high, medium or low risk. Tensions arise in relation to the low-risk groups (those with a common assessment framework assessment and in need of early intervention) rather than the medium (S17 group: child in need) or the high risk (S47 group: child protection). There is evidence, however, that the criteria are not consistent from area to area, and this requires further investigation.
9. **Timeliness of provision** – timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and prevarication over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. Policy review is required here as it is likely to be key to the welfare of individuals that assessment and intervention are timely. It is recommended that all assessments should be completed within strict timeframes and that this message needs to be filtered down to Children's Services.
10. **Leaving care support for looked-after children** – support for looked-after children leaving care appeared to be patchy from area to area. There is a need for greater clarity from leaving care teams about the level and type of support that young people can expect from Children's Services on leaving care. However, it is understood that a number of issues identified here are being addressed in the national Resettlement and Aftercare Programme.

## 1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a study by Matrix Evidence, commissioned by the YJB to review Children's Services provision for young offenders and young people at risk of offending. The research was required to address gaps in the YJB's current knowledge of this area and, more specifically, to understand:

- The proportion of young people within the YJS receiving assistance from Children's Services.
- The characteristics of young people involved in the YJS in need of provision from Children's Services.
- The differences between provision for young offenders, those at risk of offending and young people on remand; and to understand who falls through the gaps and why.
- The interaction between YOTs and Children's Services to highlight examples of good practice and effective partnerships.
- To ascertain how effective<sup>4</sup> Children's Services are in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending.

The study was commissioned to build upon previous research in this area and to develop the YJB's knowledge of the types of young people who require social care provision; the interaction between YOTs and Children's Services and issues that arise at a strategic and operational level in relation to that interaction. Previous research has highlighted that the welfare needs of young people who commit offences is often not adequately addressed (see Nacro, 2003) and that the links between YOTs and Children's Services are inadequate. As a result of these inadequate links, there can be a lack of service provision for young offenders in need of welfare.

Three main stages of work were completed:<sup>5</sup>

1. An online survey of YOT managers and Children's Services directors to assess levels of interaction between YOTs and Children's Services authorities.
2. Analyses of case file data from YOTs to ascertain the proportion of young people in receipt of Children's Services assistance and to compare the characteristics of young people who are at risk, have been convicted or remanded and have had Children's Services contact with those who have not had Children's Services contact.

<sup>4</sup> In this case, "effective" relates to evidence of how Children's Services deal with young offenders on a day-to-day level rather than considering outcomes such as arrest, reoffending or reconviction.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the work was intended to be exploratory in nature and the findings are not necessarily representative or generic to all 157 YOTs.

3. Detailed semi-structured interviews with a number of representatives from YOTs and Children's Services authorities to consider some of the main issues highlighted at stage one and two in more detail.

This report is structured into five main sections. The remainder of this chapter describes the policy context of this study (Section 1.1). This outlines some of key research that has considered the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services/Social Services. The methodological approach used in this study is outlined in Chapter 2 and the key findings are presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. The findings of the online survey of YOT managers and Children's Services directors are presented in Chapter 3, the analysis of case file data analyses in Chapter 4, and the findings of the semi-structured interviews in Chapter 5. A summary of the main findings and recommendations are presented in the final chapter.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

There has been a growing recognition that children who are looked after by the local authority are disproportionately more likely have contact with the YJS and to enter custody than other children (Day *et al*, 2007). The Department for Children, Schools and Families Green Paper "Care Matters" (DCSF, 2006) reported that 10% of children aged 10 and over who were in care had been involved in crime, this is around three times the national average. Fielder *et al* (2007) state that around 20% of all children in custody are looked-after children or relevant care leavers. It is also apparent that being a looked-after child can influence the likelihood that an individual will offend in adulthood. The Prince's Trust (2007) suggested that an offender in custody was up to 13 times more likely to have been in care as a child than the wider population – though the term "looked-after" is often used, children with Children's Services contact/care history can be categorised into a number of groups – these are outlined in Box 1.1.

## Box 1.1

### **Classification of the types of children most likely to have Children's Services contact/care history**

This report is primarily concerned with young people who have current or previous Children's Services contact and have been convicted of a crime or are considered to be at risk of developing a criminal career. The young people included under this broad label might include "children in need", "looked-after children" and "vulnerable" children. The Children Act 1989, section 17(10), gives the following broad definitions:

**Children in need:** children who are "unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for [them] of services by a local authority"; children whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision for them of such services; and disabled children.

**Looked-after children:** those who have been accommodated, e.g. with a foster carer, in a children's home or with a relative.

**Vulnerable children** include: looked-after children, pupils with medical needs, gypsies/travellers, asylum seekers, young carers and school refusers.

Both academics and those with a policy interest have put forward reasons why the risks of developing a criminal career are higher for looked-after children compared with other children.<sup>6</sup> These reasons primarily relate to the prevalence of risk factors in the lives of looked-after children and the way that behaviour is managed by their carers. For example, Pitts (2004) highlighted that the prevalence of risk factors for looked-after children is much higher than for the wider population and that looked-after children are more likely to lack parental support, have a poor school attendance record and thus lack basic numeracy and literacy skills. It is also apparent that, as a result of their often traumatic backgrounds, looked-after children are more likely to develop emotional problems and begin to misuse drugs and alcohol. Also, the way that behaviour is managed in looked-after children is often very different to children in the wider population and, as a result, looked-after children (particularly those in residential homes) will often come into contact with the criminal justice system for relatively minor behavioural issues that for many children would be managed within their families (Nacro, 2003).

Since 1997, the policy context in relation to youth justice and the way that criminal justice services and Children's Services work together has altered significantly. Before 1997, youth justice was administered by local authority Social Services Departments, though, as a result of the recommendations of the "No More Excuses" report (Home Office, 1997), the system was reorganised to create a separate Youth Justice System. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) created the Youth Justice Board and made it a statutory obligation for every local authority area to have a youth offending team.<sup>7</sup> The primary focus of the YOTs therefore became the

<sup>6</sup> A number of publications have outlined what factors appear to promote risk and those that act as protective factors. For example, see the YJB report "Risk and Protective Factors" (2006).

<sup>7</sup> YOTs were introduced in April 2000 and there was a statutory duty for Social Services and education, the police, the probation service and the health authorities to contribute.

prevention of offending by young people aged 10–17,<sup>8</sup> though they were also partially engaged in the welfare functions.

There was also significant reorganisation in relation to Children's Services. After the creation of the YOTs, it was widely perceived that Social Services "were fragmented and centred on the needs of agencies rather than the needs of children and families" (Fielder *et al*, 2007). In particular, Lord Laming's 2003 inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, identified fragmentation and lack of cooperation among Social Services in the UK<sup>9</sup> and identified the multi-agency structure of the YOTs as a model of good practice. These findings led to the drafting of the "Every Child Matters" Green paper (HM Treasury, 2003) and the subsequent 2004 Children Act which created Children's Services authorities. The Children's Services authorities were tasked with taking statutory responsibility for social care arrangements and educational functions of children. This responsibility was to be delivered through Children's Trust arrangements that would integrate all services working with and for children.<sup>10</sup>

Despite these statutory changes, the position of YOTs within the Children's Trust arrangements has not always been clear (Fielder *et al*, 2007). The potential for overlap between Children's Services authorities and YOTs is obvious, as young people with Children's Services involvement have a high risk of developing a criminal career. However, it has not always been clear who takes responsibility for looked-after children as the "corporate" parent. A report by Nacro (2003) considered the relationship between YOTs and Social Services and stated that "the cluster of risk factors that feature in the lives of children who pass through the child protection system and those who come into contact with the Youth Justice System bear a high level of similarity" (Nacro, 2003). Therefore any child who is being "looked after" is viewed as being at "high risk" of offending and thus is (partly) the responsibility of both Children's Services and the YOT. This raises questions about who takes responsibility for children when, for example, attending court, and it has been noted that tensions can also arise between YOTs and Social Services in relation to accessing each other's services (Nacro, 2003). These tensions are partly a result of the fact that the 2004 Children Act *did not* outline how services should be integrated at the local level – this was to be left to local discretion. Thus, the codification and implementation of these arrangements at a local level has been ad hoc, and the source of a growing body of research.

<sup>8</sup> As outlined in section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that after the death of "Baby P" in Haringey in 2008, Lord Laming led another inquiry in relation to Haringey Children's Services, who were seen as having failed to implement Lord Laming's recommendations from the first inquiry. A recent joint area review of safeguarding in Haringey by Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the police inspectorate found that the Serious Case Review (SCR) into Baby P's death was inadequate. A separate report on SCRs by Ofsted found that 20 out of 50 SCRs assessed by the inspectorate from 2007–8 were inadequate. Of the 50 children involved, 35 were known to social care agencies but professionals "too often missed the warning signs or failed to act". Lord Laming's report on Baby P (2009) made 58 recommendations in relation to child protection issues. These are likely to have far-reaching implications for strategic and operational objectives in relation to child protection issues for a number of government departments (including DfE, the Home Office and the Department of Health) and Children's Services at a local level.

<sup>10</sup> Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 clearly states that YOTs are expected to be a partner agency.

Despite the fact that the research was completed before Children's Services authorities were set up, the aforementioned study by Nacro (2003) made a number of important observations that are pertinent to this study. The study assessed the links between Social Services departments and YOTs and recognised that if YOTs are to fulfil their statutory obligation in relation to the provision of youth justice services, then they need to be able access services provided by Social Services, to work closely together with Social Services in relation to service planning, and that YOT practitioners (ideally) need to understand the impact of the looked-after experience (Nacro, 2003). Some of the other key conclusions of the study were:

- The role of YOTs in preventative work necessitates close links between YOTs and Social Services departments.
- Tensions often arise between YOTs and Social Services departments in relation to the provision of local authority accommodation for children.
- There was a need to re-establish the option to remand into local authority accommodation as a credible choice for courts to avoid the unnecessary use of the secure estate.
- Close links are necessary to fully incorporate looked-after children into YOT reports to the courts for informed sentencing and intervention planning.

Some of the findings of the Nacro study were also echoed in a later study by the National Children's Bureau study for the YJB which considered the relationship between YOTs and the new Children's Trusts (Fielder *et al*, 2007). The primary purpose of the work was to provide "practical pointers for those working in YOTs in order to support them in developing successful relationships with partners in Children's Services both at strategic and operational level" (Fielder *et al*, 2007).<sup>11</sup> The report suggested that although there was a wish for YOTs and Children's Services to work together, there was also a strong desire for YOTs to remain as an independent crime reduction service (separate from Drug Action Teams and Community Safety Partnerships) as recommended in the Audit Commission report of 2004. The NCB also reported that a number of different management structures existed between YOTs and Children's Services authorities with some YOTs being located within Children's Services departments, others being located in community safety departments, and some being freestanding.<sup>12</sup> It was also reported that strategic level relationships between YOTs and Children's Services had developed in different ways, though the YOTs involved in the work reported that much had been done to bridge the gap between the two agencies through management arrangements and local partnership/steering groups. Other key findings revealed that:

- YOTs often had a difficult "balancing" act between community safety (a justice function) and children in need (a welfare function).

<sup>11</sup> The NCB work included conducting an online survey with 49 YOT managers in March 2006 and detailed fieldwork in six YOT areas, which included focus groups, interviews with 32 young people and interviews with 40 senior stakeholders.

<sup>12</sup> The majority of YOTs are now located within Children's Services.

- YOT managers felt that their YOT had a well-balanced position between community safety and Children's Services partners.
- There was little evidence of YOTs and Children's Trusts working together within integrated teams.
- YOTs viewed attendance on strategic level Children's Trusts arrangements as being essential if YOTs were to influence strategic planning/service delivery.
- There was a need for greater access to preventative services for young people, as access to services often came after the child had offended.
- There was a common view that "optimum" arrangements for the YOT/Children's Trusts relationships vary from place to place and are not universal.

The National Children's Bureau report also placed a strong emphasis on the contexts of local partnerships and stated that a "one size fits all" approach should *not* be recommended for YOTs/Children's Trusts relationships. The authors offered a number of dynamic responses to overcome challenges of partnership working between YOTs and Children's Trusts. It was suggested that these might include the key ingredients of:

1. The YOT has an effective management board
2. The YOT has a clear identity and status
3. There is a champion for young offenders at a strategic level
4. The YOT has strong links with both children's and criminal justice partners
5. Youth crime – and the prevention of youth crime – is included in all key plans
6. There is a shared local version for all children which includes young offenders
7. YOTs are fully engaged in joint commissioning arrangements
8. There are integrated processes in place between the YOT and other Children's Services
9. Performance and inspection are linked and outcome-focused
10. The aims, objectives and responsibilities of all agencies are clearly delineated.

In summary, a number of conclusions can be made about the previous work in relation to the characteristics of young offenders with Children's Services contact and the interaction between YOTs and Children's Services:

1. Children who are perceived as being in need, looked-after or vulnerable are more likely to enter the criminal justice system than children who are not in any of these groups.
2. A number of factors have been identified within these groups that promote the risk of contact with the criminal justice system, such as lack of parental support, poor school attendance and having emotional problems.
3. Since 1997 there has been significant re-organisation of the YJS and Children's Services with the creation of YOTs and Children's Services authorities.

4. The role of YOTs within local Children's Trusts has not always been clear and is subject to much local discretion.
5. There has been ambiguity between YOTs and Children's Services in relation to their responsibilities as the corporate parent.
6. Tensions can often arise between YOTs and Children's Services in relation to the provision of accommodation for children, particularly the option to remand into local authority accommodations.
7. There is often a lack of integration between YOTs and Children's Services.

## 2.0 Methodology

The previous research in this area helped to shape both the focus of this study and the approach that has been used. The fieldwork for the study was conducted in three main stages:

- A national online survey of YOT managers and Children’s Services directors to assess the relationship, levels of interaction and strengths/weaknesses in the current working relationship between YOTs and Children’s Services.
- A data collection exercise across 14 YOT areas to further understand the characteristics of young people involved in the YJS in need of social service provision, and the proportion of young people with Children’s Services contact.
- Semi-structured interviews in five YOT areas to gauge practitioners’ views about the interaction between YOTs and Children’s Services.

Each of these stages was developed to address a number of key research questions. These questions and how they have been addressed are outlined in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Key research questions and methodological approach used to address them**

Key research question	How addressed
1. The proportion of young people within the YJS receiving Children’s Services assistance.	Data collection exercise that analysed more than 7,000 Youth Offending Information System (YOIS) case files from 14 YOTs.
2. The characteristics of young people in the YJS in need of Children’s Services provision.	Data collection exercise that analysed more than 7,000 YOIS case files from 14 YOTs.
3. The differences between provision for young offenders, those at risk of offending and young people on remand, and to understand who falls through the gaps and why.	Semi-structured interviews with YOT practitioners and Children’s Services practitioners.
4. The interaction between Children’s Services and YOTs and to highlight examples of good practice and effective partnerships.	National online survey of YOT managers. Semi-structured interviews with YOT practitioners and Children’s Services practitioners.
5. To ascertain how ‘effective’ Children’s Services are in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending.	National online survey of YOT managers. Semi-structured interviews with YOT practitioners and Children’s Services practitioners.

The methodological approach used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches to address the key questions. As shown in Table 2.1, data in relation to the proportion of young people within the YJS receiving Children’s Services assistance and the characteristics of young people involved in the YJS in need of Children’s Services provision were captured through collecting case file data from YOIS. Data in relation to the differences between provision for young offenders, those at risk of offending and young people on remand, and information about who falls through the gaps and why were primarily captured through semi-

structured interviews. Data in relation to the interaction between Children's Services and YOTs, and how "effective" Children's Services are in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending were addressed both in the online survey and the semi-structured interviews. The next sections outline these approaches in more detail.

## **2.1 A national online survey of YOT managers and Children's Services managers**

The key aims of the first stage of the research were to:

- Assess the relationship and levels of interaction between YOTs and Children's Services.
- Highlight examples of good practice/effective partnerships.
- Begin to ascertain how effective Children's Services are in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending.

These questions were primarily addressed by conducting an online survey with YOT managers and Children's Services managers.

A brief scoping stage preceded the development of the final online questionnaire. This scoping stage included a review of previous research literature<sup>13</sup> in relation to links between YOTs and Children's Services, a brief telephone interview with a selection of YOT and Children's Services managers in relation to what issues they saw as being important to include in the questionnaire and a review of any documentation that YOTs were able to supply that set out any protocols/policies in relation to joint YOT/Children's Services working. A total of 10 YOT/Children's Services areas were selected to participate in this stage of the research, with one being selected across each government region, nine in England and one in Wales. The sample was also selected in order to provide a mixture of areas with high/low caseloads and an urban/rural mix. All areas were contacted by email and telephone. Of the 10 YOTs that were contacted, seven YOT managers responded positively and supplied copies of protocols/policies that were in place with the Children's Services authority – the other three YOT managers did not respond to regular email and telephone messages. The analysis of the protocols/policies is in Annex A.

The scoping stage enabled the team to begin to understand the nature of the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services and to draft a questionnaire. It was suggested that interaction between YOTs and Children's Services could be broadly classified in two groups – strategic level and operational level (the nature of the relationship is outlined in Figure 2.1). This broad distinction was reflected in the design of the questionnaire which was placed on a secure internet server and sent to five YOT managers and five Children's Services directors for piloting. In the piloting phase, the respondents were asked not only to complete the survey, but also to comment on their understanding of the questions, the relevance of the questions to the study, the length of the survey, and (as it was conducted online) that the technological aspects

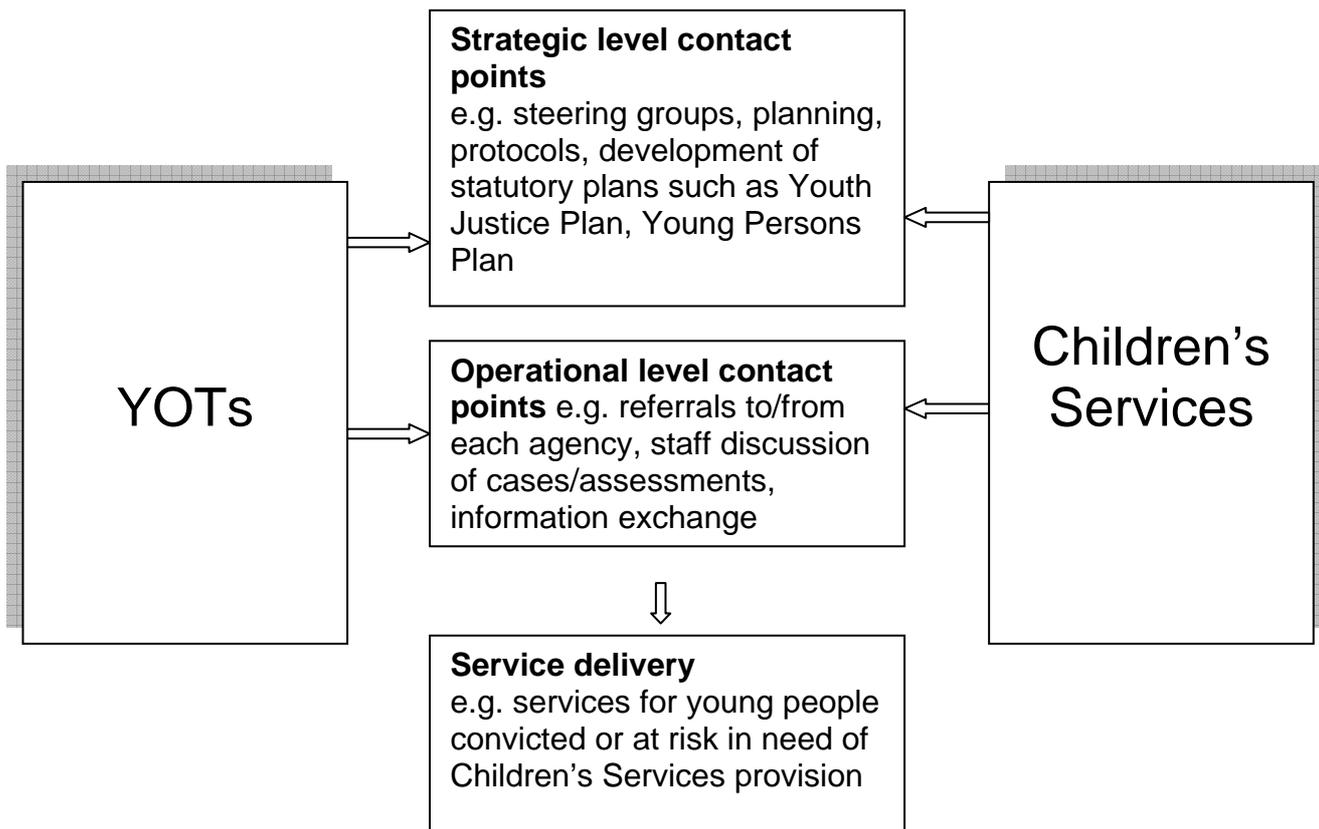
<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the literature review was not a systematic review.

of the survey were operating properly. After the initial piloting work was completed, a final draft survey was then developed (the full survey is in Annex B). This survey consisted of five sections, including:

- **Description of the YOT** – this section asked YOT managers about the type of local authority the YOT serves, the department it sits in and why it is located within that department.
- **The governance of the YOT** – this section was concerned with governance issues, primarily, the management of the YOT, the agencies that sit on the management steering group, and views on the benefits of having those agencies sit on the steering group.
- **YOT budget and funding** – this section was concerned with YOT budgets and the contributions of partners to the YOT budget.
- **Planning and partnership working with other agencies** – this section asked YOT managers for their views on working with partners and whether common objectives were shared with partners. This was primarily concerned with the sharing of common objectives with YOTs and the development of protocols between YOTs and Children's Services.
- **Overall views of working relationships between YOTs and Children's Services** – YOT managers were finally asked to comment on their overall view of the working relationship between the YOT and Children's Services. This included commenting on issues such as the appropriateness of referrals from Children's Services to YOT prevention services, access to the services that Children's Services provide, information exchange between YOTs and Children's Services, sentence planning and Police Criminal and Evidence Act remands.

A similar survey was developed to be completed by directors of Children's Services. This survey followed a similar structure to the YOT survey, though questions were tailored accordingly (the full Children's Services survey is in Annex C).

**Figure 2.1: Generic overview of the types of interaction between YOTs and Children’s Services**



All 157 English and Welsh YOT managers were invited to take part in the survey, as were all 150 English and Welsh Children’s Services authorities. The YOT managers were initially emailed and asked to complete the survey. The email contained a letter outlining the purpose of the survey and a web link to the survey.<sup>14</sup> YOT managers were also asked to forward this web link to their local Children’s Services director or relevant contact. An email reminder was then sent to the YOT manager one week after the initial invitation and a further reminder was made by telephone a week after this to try and ensure their participation.

A total of 98 YOTs responded to the survey, which represents a 62%<sup>15</sup> response rate.<sup>16</sup> A further 32 surveys were completed by Children’s Services directors (or equivalent), representing a response rate of 21%.<sup>17</sup> The lower response rate from Children’s Services

<sup>14</sup> Once the survey had been completed, the file was moved directly into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists).

<sup>15</sup> A sample of 98 from 157 suggests the data has a sample error of 6% at a 95% rate of statistical significance.

<sup>16</sup> Three YOTs responded twice. In these cases, two entries were made by different people, though in each case one response was not complete. In each of these cases, the “complete” response has been included in the analysis.

<sup>17</sup> It is understood that there are 150 Children’s Services in England and Wales.

directors was mainly due to difficulties encountered in making contact with them through the YOT managers. The main implication of these response rates is that the data cannot be considered to be representative of all YOT and Children's Services directors nationally. Therefore, the findings have to be treated with caution.

## **2.2 Case file analysis of young people involved in the YJS in need of Children's Services provision**

The second stage of the research sought to establish the proportion of young people within the criminal justice system receiving Children's Services assistance and the key characteristics of young people involved in the YJS in need of Children's Services provision. To ensure that these questions could be answered in full, there was a desire to collect data from a sample of case file records across a number of YOTs in relation to:

- Whether the young person had been convicted or was classified as being "at risk".
- If each person within the sample had previously had any contact with Children's Services.
- The main characteristics of the young people in the sample, including demographic details, risks and needs.

Some scoping work was conducted in a YOT area to assess what data were available. The exercise revealed that a relatively small proportion of young people appeared to have any current contact with Children's Services.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, if any statistically robust findings were to be generated, a large "base" sample of cases needed to be collected. The scoping work also revealed that, whereas data in relation to young people remanded or convicted were routinely logged on electronic YOT case management systems (such as YOIS), data on the "at-risk" population were not routinely collected on similar systems, though enquires with a number of YOTs did reveal that most areas were using the Universal Management Information System (UMIS) for prevention cases.

A total of 21 YOTs were approached for data on young people who had been convicted/remanded.<sup>19</sup> These areas were selected as they represented a mixture of urban and rural areas and thus had caseloads that were representative of the wider population.<sup>20</sup> Of these, 14 YOTs agreed to take part in the study. Data were downloaded<sup>21</sup> from all of these areas using an "extract wizard" which enabled the collection of data for all individuals in the

<sup>18</sup> The scoping work revealed that from a sample of 1,000 cases, around 58 or just under 6% would be likely to have "current" contact with Children's Services logged onto the system. This number is lower than the average observed in the eventual dataset.

<sup>19</sup> It was agreed with the YJB that the sites approached would all be sites using YOIS. The main reason for this was that the research team had specialist knowledge of how to write data extract for YOIS and therefore data could be downloaded from these sites relatively easily.

<sup>20</sup> These areas had all indicated in the online survey that they would be happy to assist in a data-collection exercise.

<sup>21</sup> The data were downloaded into Excel and then converted to SPSS for analysis.

YOT area for a period of 12 months across a number of variables.<sup>22</sup> The variables were scoped carefully to ensure that the data analysis would allow us to draw some conclusions as to the differences in characteristics of the population with Children’s Services contact as compared with those with no contact (these variables are presented in Table 2.2). For each case file, data were collected in relation to the background of the young person (such as their demographic details), criminal history, contact with Children’s Services/care history, and the 12 core elements of *Asset*<sup>23</sup> for their *most recent Asset* completed.

**Table 2.2: Variables collected for the convicted sample**

<b>Key themes</b>	<b>Specific variables</b>
Background details of offender	Ethnicity Gender Case stage
Offence details and criminal history	Type of offence(s) Criminal history (age at first offence/conviction, number of convictions, custodial sentences) Previous disposals
Type disposal	Pre-court, first tier, community or custodial
Care history/contact with Children’s Services and when (i.e. current or previous contact)	If ever accommodated by voluntary agreement with parents under s20 Children Act 1989 If ever subject to care order under s31 Children Act 1989 If ever remanded to local authority accommodation under s23 (1) Children and Young Persons Act 1969. If an ‘eligible child’ (still in care and looked-after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14). If child is on child protection register
<b>Core elements of Asset</b>	<b>Risk scores logged for all 12 core elements</b>
1. Living arrangements	Whether the young person has mostly been living at home (with parents) or in care over the previous six months
2. Family and personal relationships	Whether there has been contact with family members in past six months If there is evidence that family background promotes risk of offending
3. Education, training and employment	If the young person is in education or training If they have any qualifications/skills
4. Neighbourhood	If they live in a problem neighbourhood

<sup>22</sup> Data were sampled for young people with a court appearance linked to the sentence between October 2008 and October 2009.

<sup>23</sup> *Asset* is the standard assessment system used by YOTs to assess the risk and needs of young offenders aged 10–17.

5. Lifestyle	If lifestyle is a risk factor
6. Substance use	Whether ever used drugs/alcohol If currently using drugs/alcohol
7. Physical health	Are there health concerns about the young person
8. Emotional and mental health	Is there evidence of emotional problems Have they been diagnosed with mental health problems
9. Perception of self and others	Does their perception of self represent a risk factor
10. Thinking and behaviour	Do they have problems in understanding consequences of their actions Do they display signs of problem behaviour
11. Attitudes to offending	Do they display signs of pro-offending attitudes
12. Motivation to change	Are they receptive to changing their lives

The total number of cases sampled per area is outlined in Table 2.3 overleaf, the area names are not presented for the purpose of anonymity. Overall, data were collected in relation to 7,232 cases. However, there were a high proportion of cases where it was not known if there had been any Children's Services contact at all. Areas four and two were the YOT areas that were most likely to have a record of whether young people had *any* Children's Services contact, at 96% and 92% respectively. There were some areas where as little as 10% of cases had recorded contact with services (area 14). This suggests that different recording practices are being used across YOT areas and some areas are more likely to routinely enter such details than others. To ensure that valid data were used for this study, only cases where it was recorded if there was any known care history/contact with Children's Services were included in the analysis – all cases with no data were excluded from the analysis.

**Table 2.3: Total base sample – ranked by number of cases where it could be established if there had been contact with Children’s Services/care history**

YOT area	Total base sample of cases (n)	CS contact not recorded in an Asset (n)	Any CS contact recorded on Asset (% of records)	Total sample of cases where contact with CS known (n)
1	1422	485	66%	937
2	826	70	92%	756
3	805	239	70%	566
4	452	19	96%	433
5	394	44	89%	350
6	309	53	83%	256
7	271	31	89%	240
8	738	511	31%	227
9	410	193	53%	217
10	379	169	56%	210
11	382	189	51%	193
12	259	106	59%	153
13	208	59	72%	149
14	377	341	10%	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,232</b>	<b>2,509</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>4,723</b>

Base sample: All 7,232 collected cases, 4,723 cases used for analysis.

There was also a desire to collect data in relation to young people who were deemed to be “at risk” and were known to YOTs as part of a prevention programme. An audit of the available data was completed in all 14 YOT areas where the data for the convicted/remanded sample were collected. The main purpose of the audit was to establish if prevention data could be collected to make a comparison of needs for a sample of young people who had Children’s Services contact with a sample without such contact.

The audit established that all of the areas ran prevention schemes and thus collected some data on the at-risk population. It was also suggested that Onset<sup>24</sup> assessments were completed for all “at-risk” cases and that data were generally held in UMIS. However, although there was a desire to complete Onset assessments for the at-risk cases, often these assessments were incomplete and sometimes they were not entered onto UMIS. It was also

<sup>24</sup> Onset is an assessment system used for young people considered to be “at risk” of offending.

ascertained that the variable on Children's Services contact (social care) is often completed only in a small number of cases. Therefore, it could be very difficult to ascertain if the young people have had any Children's Services contact simply by looking at UMIS data. In summary, the main difficulties with the prevention data were:

- Not all areas collect any prevention data at all/do Onset assessments. Two areas did not routinely complete Onset assessments.
- A number of areas that do complete Onset assessments do not record the data electronically on UMIS. Three areas did not record data electronically.
- Even where Onset assessments are completed and data are held electronically, the numbers of young people with Onset assessments completed over the course of a year is often small compared with the convicted caseload.
- Often the Onset assessment fields in relation to social care arrangements (whether there is Children's Services contact) are not routinely completed.

The prevention data were collected from three areas<sup>25</sup> – the areas are not named due to the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the data, though these were all areas that had been included in the convicted data sample. For each area, data were downloaded electronically, though further checks were made at the YOT to ensure that details in relation to Children's Services contact were as complete as possible. Area one was a small YOT in a metropolitan area in the North-West, area two was a large YOT in London, and area three was a YOT that focuses heavily on prevention in a medium-sized city in the Midlands. In area one, data were collected for a 12-month period, the calendar year of 2008. For area two and three, all prevention data held on UMIS from January 2006 were provided.

A total sample of 3,102 cases were collected, 121 in area one, 1,225 in area two and 1,756 in area three. The data variables requested followed a similar format to those collected for the "convicted sample" (see above). Therefore, variables were collected in relation to demographic details of individuals, offending history, care history and for Onset scores for key risk factors, such as neighbourhood, lifestyle and substance use. The full suite of variables collected in relation to the at-risk sample is in Annex D.

### ***2.3 Semi-structured interviews with practitioners in five YOT areas and five Children's Services areas***

The online survey and case management data collection were supplemented by a number of semi-structured interviews with key individuals in five YOT/Children's Services areas. The small number of areas selected for inclusion obviously means that the findings should not be considered representative of all 157 YOT areas, though the findings are meant to be indicative

<sup>25</sup> Data were also downloaded from another area, but the limited available data on Children's Services contact for each case rendered the data unusable for the purpose of this exercise.

of the types of issues that are likely to be faced across many areas. The main purpose of these interviews was to:

- address questions in relation to the level of interaction between the YOTs and Children’s Services
- understand differences in provision for young offenders and those at risk
- understand who falls through the gap and why
- assess the effectiveness of Children’s Services at dealing with young offenders and those at risk.

The five areas were selected on the basis that they were geographically diverse and were located in different types of local authority departments. The five YOT areas had also taken part in the earlier online survey and had indicated that the strength of their relationship with Children’s Services varied across a number of criteria. A brief description of key parameters that were used for selection is given in Table 2.4. These included the types of geographical location (large city, small town, etc.), the location of the YOT in the local authority structure, the ability of the YOT/Children’s Services to identify areas of common interest, the ability of the YOT/Children’s Services to identify resources and the overall assessment of the YOT/Children’s Services relationship as made by the YOT manager – the area names are not given here for the purpose of anonymity.

**Table 2.4: Profiles of areas selected for semi-structured interviews**

<b>Area</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Type of location	Major city (pop more than 1m)	Large city (pop more than 500,000)	Small town (pop less than 150,000)	Medium-sized town (pop approx 200,000)	Rural location
Location of YOT in LA structure	Community Safety Dept	Chief Exec Dept	Children’s Services	Community Safety and Children’s Dept	Chief Exec Dept
Ability of YOT/Children’s Services to identify areas of common interest	Fair	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Fair
Ability of YOT/Children’s Services to identify resources	Fair	Poor	Very Good	Very Good	Poor
Ability of overall assessment of YOT/Children’s Services relationship	Good	Fair	Very Good	Very Good	Fair

The table shows a degree of variation across the areas. In summary:

- Area L was based in London had a high caseload and the YOT was located in a community safety department.
- Area M was based in a large conurbation and the YOT was located in the chief executive's department.
- Area S was based in a small northern town within a large conurbation and the YOT was located within Children's Services.
- Area B was based in a medium-sized town on the south coast. It was located in the community safety and children's department.
- Area C was a small YOT in Wales located in the chief executive's department of the local authority.

To answer the research questions in full, it was considered important to interview a variety of practitioners in each area. These included:

- A. **YOT managers (or similar rank)** – YOT managers (five in total) were interviewed as they have knowledge of strategic level issues in relation to the YOT workings with Children's Services. The purpose of these interviews was to consider issues in relation to joint policies with Children's Services and strategies for dealing with looked-after children, operational relationships with Children's Services, and other issues that arose within working relationships. These interviews were tailored according to the responses given in the online survey of the stage two findings (the interview schedule is in Annex E).
- B. **Directors of Children's Services (or similar rank)** – a total of three directors of Children's Services were also interviewed as they were able to provide an insight of strategic issues from the Children's Services perspective. Therefore, these interviews also considered details of joint policies with YOTs, operational relationships and any other issues that arise within working relationships. These interviews were also tailored according to responses given in the online survey and the stage two findings (the interview schedule is in Annex F).
- C. **YOT caseworkers** – a total of 12 YOT caseworkers were interviewed. The main reason for interviewing this group was because they have knowledge of operational (day-to-day) contact and working practices with Children's Services. These interviews were designed to establish how the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services works in practice, which agency takes the lead on which aspects of the joint working, and what the key issues are. Key areas of investigation included remand into local authority care and remand into secure accommodation (the interview schedule is in Annex G).
- D. **Social workers** – a further eight interviews were conducted with caseworkers based in Children's Services. Similar to YOT caseworkers, Children's Services social workers have knowledge of operational (day-to-day) contact and working practices with Children's Services. As above, these interviews focused on how the agencies work together on relevant cases (the interview schedule is in Annex H).

All initial contact with the areas was made through the YOT manager and the director of Children's Services. They were briefed on the aims of the study and the purpose of stage three of the work. It was considered to be important to try to conduct interviews with the YOT manager and the director of Children's Services (or equivalent) in each area to offer a balanced view of provisions made for young people by both agencies. The YOT manager and the director of Children's Services were then asked to provide contacts of caseworkers who

regularly deal with accommodated children who have been convicted or deemed to be at risk. The desire and ability of the YOT managers and the directors of Children’s Services to take part in the interviews and to provide further contacts with caseworkers varied.

Table 2.5 presents an overview of the key groups interviewed across each area. Overall, 28 interviews were completed with practitioners. The YOT manager was interviewed in each area, three directors of Children’s Services were interviewed, and 20 caseworkers/social workers. In area L, the YOT manager was interviewed, as well as seven caseworkers, including YOT caseworkers and social workers. In area M, the YOT manager and two YOT caseworkers were interviewed, though no interviews were secured with Children’s Services.<sup>26</sup>

In area S, the YOT manager, the director of Children’s Services and two Children’s Services caseworkers were spoken to.<sup>27</sup> In both area B and C, the YOT manager, the Children’s Services director and nine caseworkers were interviewed. The caseworkers who were spoken to held a variety of positions. These included YOT managers, YOT officers, social workers/caseworkers, senior community workers, and early intervention team officers.

**Table 2.5: The number of practitioners interviewed across each area**

Area	YOT manager	Children’s Services manager	YOT caseworkers/social workers	Children’s Services caseworkers/social workers	Total
L	Yes	No	Four caseworkers	Three caseworkers	<b>8</b>
M	Yes	No	Two caseworkers	No	<b>3</b>
S	Yes	Yes	No	Two caseworkers	<b>4</b>
B	Yes	Yes	Four caseworkers	One caseworker	<b>7</b>
C	Yes	Yes	Two caseworkers	Two caseworkers	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28</b>

<sup>26</sup> One could not be interviewed as she had to take sick leave during the fieldwork period and the other, despite agreeing to take part, become unavailable for interview.

<sup>27</sup> The responses in areas M and S were also affected by adverse weather conditions. On the two days when several appointments were made in both areas, adverse weather meant that a number of interviewees could not attend the interview. Problems then arose in fixing a future date for interview.

A further six interviews were also completed with young people who had had both YOT and Children's Services contact in three YOT areas – one from area L, one from area B, and four from area C. The children for these interviews were accessed through prior agreement with YOT managers, caseworkers and the children themselves. These interviews were intended to give a broad overview of the experiences of young people with both YOT and Children's Services contact. All of the young people had a history of being looked after in local authority care and had been convicted (the interview schedule is in Annex I).

## 3.0 The relationship between YOTs and Children's Services

The online survey was conducted with both English and Welsh YOTs and Children's Services authorities to try to establish:

- Existing links between YOTs and Children's Services in relation to strategic planning and the provision of services for young people who are at risk of offending/have been convicted and are in need of Children's Services assistance.
- The views of YOT managers and Children's Services directors in relation to the links that exist between the agencies and the services they provide.
- The effectiveness of Children's Services in dealing with young people at risk of offending.

The key findings of the survey are presented in three main sections:

1. **Key findings in relation to the YOT survey** – first, an outline of the profile of the responding YOTs is presented. Findings are then presented in relation to the planning and partnership working of YOTs and their working relationship with Children's Services. Examples of good practice are also highlighted in this section.
2. **Key findings in relation to the Children's Services survey** – an overview is given of the findings of the Children's Services survey. Attention here focuses on comparing some of the main views and perceptions of Children's Services directors with those of YOT managers.
3. **Summary of the key findings and implications of the online survey** – finally, a summary is given of the key findings and implications of the survey.

It should be noted that the sample achieved by both surveys – 62% for the YOT survey and 21% for the Children's Services survey – means that the findings cannot be considered to be representative of all YOTs and Children's Services.

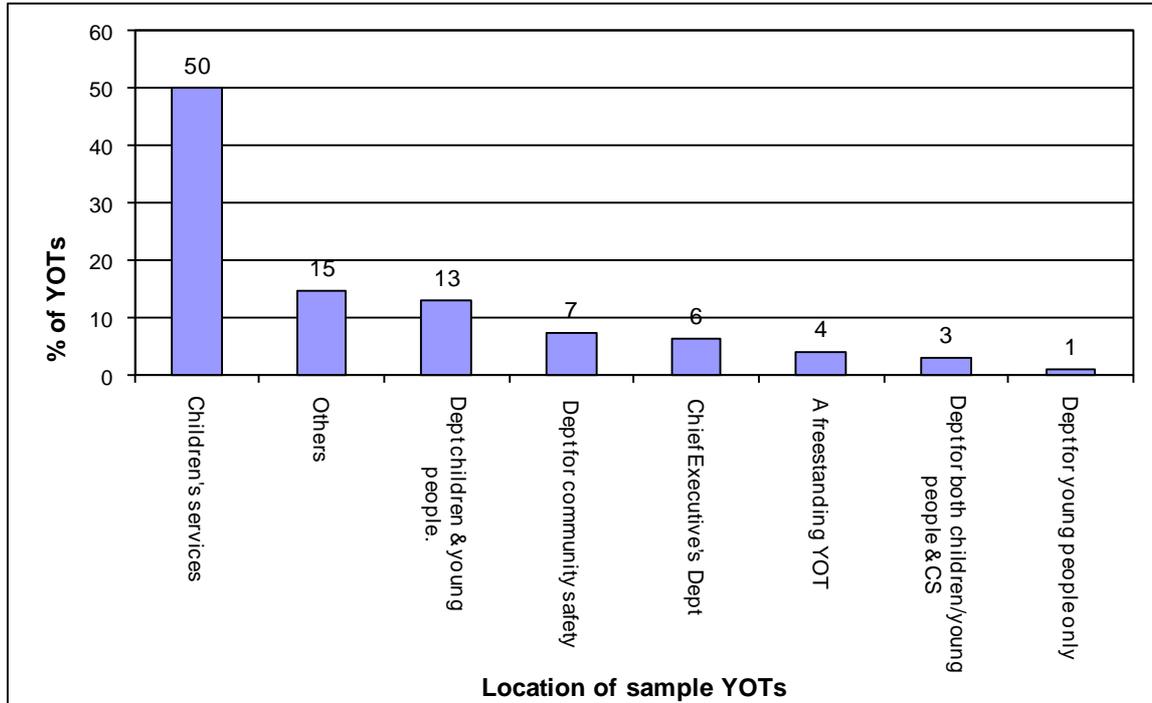
### 3.1 YOT survey findings

A total of 79% (n=77) of the respondents described themselves as YOT managers or heads of service, 8% (n=8) were support services managers or practitioners, 10% (n=10) were temporary managers/heads of service, and 3% (n=3) did not state their position.<sup>28</sup> The YOTs served a range of authorities, with 37% (n=36) serving a unitary authority, 33% (n=30) a metropolitan council, 26% (n=25) a county council, and 5% (n=5) serving "cross-authority" areas that included county and unitary authorities.

<sup>28</sup> Throughout, the respondents will be referred to as YOT managers and Children's Services directors as appropriate.

Figure 3.1 outlines where the YOTs were located within the local authority. It shows that nearly half of the YOTs (50%; n=49) were located in Children’s Services. The second largest subgroup were “others” (15%; n=15). Of these, seven stated that they were located in a department such as child and families, two were located in child and social care, two in the communities directorate, and one each in adults and learning, adults and housing, and positive steps, regeneration and planning (one also did not specify).

**Figure 3.1: Location of the sample YOTs (%)**



Base: 98 YOTs

More than half of the YOTs (53%; n=48) said that their location had changed in the past five years. Table 3.1 overleaf compares the present location of the YOTs for those who *have* moved and those who *have not* moved in the past five years. Some caution is necessary when interpreting the figures due to the small numbers in some subsets, though the table indicates that overall there has been a high degree of movement of YOTs across different departments and a high proportion of YOTs have moved towards Children’s Services. Nearly one in four (25%) of the total sample (or 50% of those moving location) have moved into Children’s Services departments over this period.

**Table 3.1: Comparison of the departments where YOTs that *have* moved over the past five years and those that *have not* moved are now located (table ranked by base sample number in each category)**

	<b>Movers (as % of total sample)</b>	<b>Non- movers (as % of total sample)</b>	<b>Base sample</b>
Children's Services	25 (n=22)	24 (n=21)	43
Others	11 (n=10)	6 (n=5)	15
Department for children and young people	9 (n=8)	5 (n=4)	12
Department for community safety	5 (n=4)	3 (n=3)	7
A freestanding YOT at arm's length from departmental structure	2 (n=2)	2 (n=2)	4
Chief Executive's Department	2 (n=2)	4 (n=4)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 (n=48)</b>	<b>45 (n=39)</b>	<b>87</b>

Base: 87 YOTs who were able to specify

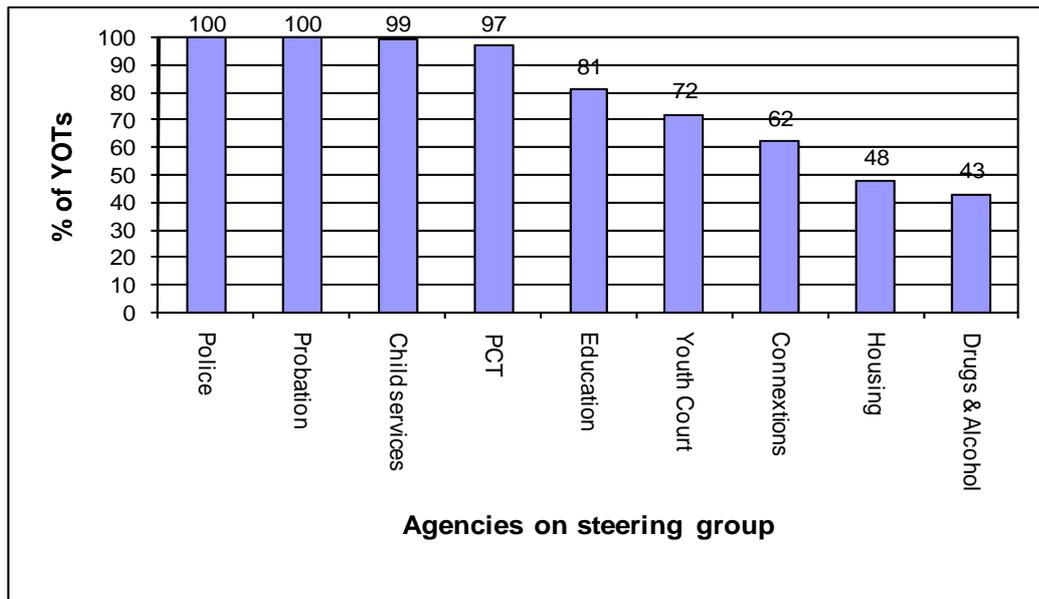
The data suggest that YOTs are particularly mindful about why they are located within a department. The most common reasons cited were “to maximise planning and partnership working” (83%), “operational reasons” (62%), “to enable better joint commissioning of services” (60%), and “to better reflect the reduction of reoffending aim of the YOT” (43%). Costs and geography were cited as the least common reasons for the current location of the YOT.

### **3.1.1 YOT planning and partnership working**

The survey asked YOT managers about the governance of the YOT in detail. Half of the YOTs (50%; n=49) were managed by a stand-alone inter-agency steering group, with a further 33% (n=32) being managed by Children's Services and 10% (n=10) by the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). Generally, the location of the YOT tended to determine who chaired steering group meetings. For example, those located in Children's Services tended to be chaired by a Children's Services representative.

Most of the YOTs in the survey had regular routine contact with a number of agencies. For example, it was common for a range of agencies to sit on the YOT steering group. Figure 3.2 shows that the police, probation, the Children's Services representatives and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) sit on the steering group of virtually all the YOTs responding to the survey. A high number also have representation from education (81%). It is least common for representatives from housing (48%) and drugs/alcohol teams (43%), to sit on YOT steering groups.

**Figure 3.2: Percentage of YOTs with the following agencies on the steering group**



Base: 98 YOTs

Respondents were asked to make a judgement about the benefit of having these agencies sit on their steering group. Table 3.2 compares the attendance *rate* with whether YOT managers view the attendance of a particular agency as being of much or little benefit. It is interesting to note that both the police and Children’s Services have representatives who sit on virtually all YOT steering groups and are also rated as being the most useful partners by YOT managers – 83% said that Children’s Services provide much benefit and 81% said the police provide much benefit. The anomaly in this trend relates to probation. Probation representatives sit on all YOT steering groups though only 58% of YOTs rated their participation in their steering group as being of much benefit. A relatively small proportion of YOT managers saw the contribution of a partnership agency on their steering group as of “little benefit”. The least beneficial were housing (9% rated as of “little benefit”), probation (7%) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) (7%).

The reason why a small proportion of YOT managers view housing, probation and the PCT as being of limited value on their steering groups is potentially linked to the contribution that these partnership agencies make to YOT budgets.<sup>29</sup> A number of YOT managers described the level of funding from their respective partners as “unsatisfactory” or “very unsatisfactory”. The highest level of discontent was with the probation service, with 40% of YOT managers describing their contribution as unsatisfactory/very unsatisfactory. It is also worth noting that

<sup>29</sup> The total financing received across the YOTs varied from £500,000 to more than £11 million. The largest proportion of YOTs (57%: n=56) received between £1–3 million of funding per year, with 27% (n=26) receiving more than £3 million and just over 8% (n=8) receiving less than £1million of funding per year. There appeared to be little correlation between funding and the types of local authority that the YOT served.

(generally) those YOTs that described having certain agencies on their steering group as of little benefit were also more likely to say that the financial contribution of these groups was unsatisfactory.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 3.2: Perceptions of the benefit of having particular agencies on the YOT steering group (ranked by attendance)**

Agency	% attend	Much benefit %	Little benefit (%)	Sample base number (for benefit rating)
Police	100	81	5	86
Probation	100	58	7	86
Child services	99	83	2	86
PCT	97	50	7	85
Education	81	70	4	73
Youth court	72	53	2	54
Connexions	62	57	6	51
Housing	48	46	9	45
Drugs and Alcohol	43	53	2	54

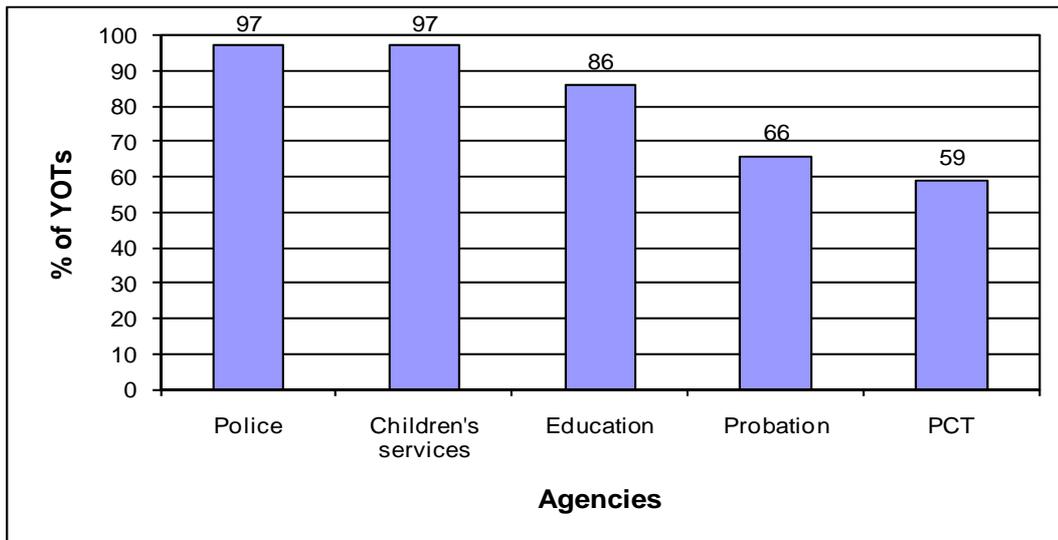
Base (for % attendance): Police (98); Probation (98); Child Services (97); PCT (96); Education (86); Youth Court (86), Connexions (79); Housing (79); Drugs and Alcohol (73).

It is also apparent that YOT managers have a clear perception about the sharing of common objectives with other agencies in relation to the prevention and reduction of youth crime. Figure 3.3 shows that 97% of YOTs (unsurprisingly) feel that they share common objectives with both the police and Children’s Services. They were least likely to share common objectives for prevention and the reduction of youth crime with probation (66%) and the PCT (59%).

<sup>30</sup> The pattern, of course, does not hold true for all YOTs, and the relationship cannot be tested for statistical significance due to the small number of cases in some cells.

The level at which YOT managers view the Youth Justice Plan as being integrated with plans drawn up by partnership agencies also appears to be closely related to their views on the sharing of common objectives. A total of 96% of YOT managers said that the Youth Justice Plan had been integrated into the Children and Young Persons Plan (which ties in closely with their views on sharing common objectives with Children’s Services). A total of 96% also said that the Youth Justice Plan had been integrated into the Local Crime and Disorder Plan, though only 61% said that it had been integrated into the education development plan, and 37% into the health improvement plan.

**Figure 3.3: Percentage of YOTs stating that other statutory agencies share common objectives with YOTs in relation to the prevention and reduction of youth crime**



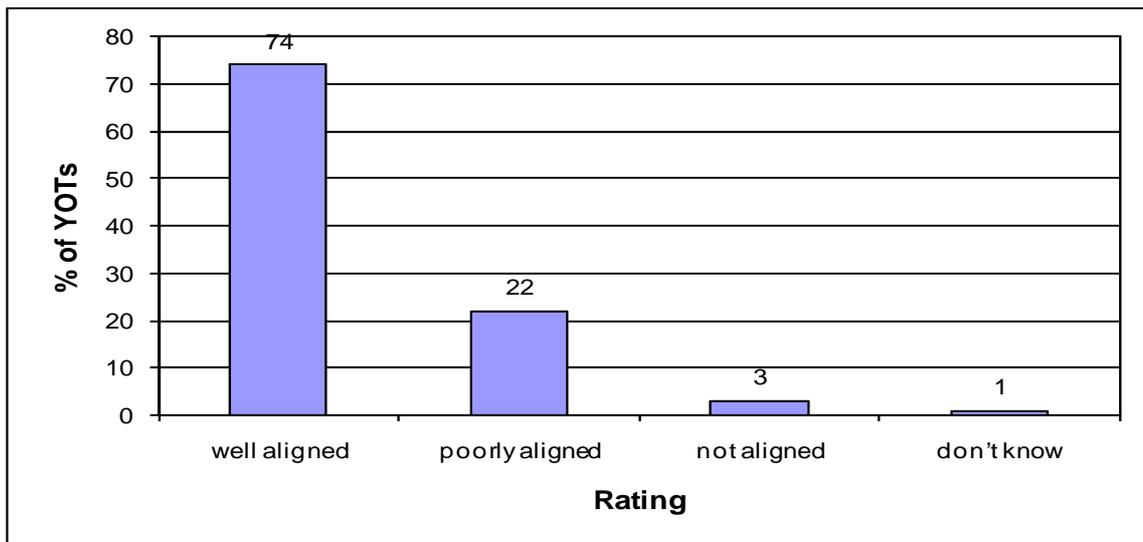
Base: 92 respondents in relation to police, 92 Children’s Services, 82 education, 82 probation and 80 PCT.

The pattern that is evident in relation to planning and partnership working is one where the YOTs are generally positive about the participation of the police and Children’s Services on their steering group (and their financial contribution) and are less positive about the contribution of probation. The rate of attendance by different agencies at steering groups (Table 3.2) suggests that there is a high degree of interaction between these agencies, and the rate at which common objectives are often shared (Figure 3.3) suggests a high degree of integration between a number of agencies.

### 3.1.2 Alignment of Children and Young People’s Plan with the Youth Justice Plan

A key indicator of strategic level planning between the YOTs and Children’s Services is the level to which the Children and Young People’s Plan<sup>31</sup> aligns with the Youth Justice Plan.<sup>32</sup> One would expect YOTs with close alignment of their Youth Justice Plan to the Children and Young People’s Plan to have a close and well-integrated working relationship with Children’s Services. Figure 3.4 shows that, generally, YOT managers thought that their local Youth Justice Plan was well aligned with the Children and Young People’s Plan. Overall, 74% (n=72) thought that the Children and Young People’s Plan was well aligned with the Youth Justice Plan. However, 22% (n=21) also said they were not well aligned.

**Figure 3.4: YOT managers’ views about how well the Children and Young People’s Plan is aligned to the YOT Youth Justice Plan (%)**



Base: 97 respondents

It is interesting to note here that YOTs managed by Children’s Services or the CSPs tended to be more likely to suggest that the Children and Young People’s Plan is well aligned to the Youth Justice Plan. Though the numbers of cases are small, 90% (n=9) of YOTs managed by the CSPs and 81% (n=25) managed by Children’s Services thought the Children and Young People’s Plan was well aligned to the Youth Justice Plan. This compares to 67% (n=35) of YOTs with other management structures in place.

<sup>31</sup> Every Children’s Services area has a Children and Young People’s Plan. The plan is intended to drive better local integration of Children’s Services, to help strengthen local partnership arrangements, and to describe what improvements will be achieved in the local area, and when these improvements will be delivered.

<sup>32</sup> Section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to submit a Youth Justice Plan to the YJB. The Plan is intended to outline how the key agencies are addressing youth offending. Integral to this work is the YOT. However, the structure of the plan, which is determined by the YJB, is broadly based on its Strategic Objectives for 2008–2011. These are preventing offending, reducing re-offending, ensuring safe and effective use of custody, and increasing victim and public confidence.

### 3.1.3 Protocols between YOTs and Children's Services

A further indicator of strategic level planning between YOTs and Children's Services is the extent to which protocols exist between them. YOT managers were asked if their YOT has a protocol with Children's Services in relation to a number of areas, including:

- roles and responsibilities of social worker posts in the YOT
- competencies required to meet agreed roles and responsibilities
- social worker training needs
- information-sharing protocol to facilitate assessments
- referrals of young people between Children's Services and YOT
- referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes run by the YOT
- Police Criminal and Evidence Act bail and remands
- court bail and remands
- exchange of information on young people subject to court reports
- sentence planning for children and young people assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable
- sentence planning for looked-after children
- sentence planning for children in need.

Table 3.3 presents a summary of the number of YOTs that said that a protocol existed across any of these categories (only four YOTs did not have any protocols in place at all). This shows that protocols between the YOT and Children's Services are most likely to exist in relation to court bail and remands (87%), PACE bail and remands (82%), and referrals between Children's Services and YOTs (71%). Protocols were least likely to exist in relation to referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes (30%), social worker training needs (21%), and competencies required to meet agreed roles and responsibilities (14%).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that protocols are more likely to exist in YOTs that are managed by the CSP or the Children's Services. YOTs that were managed by the CSP were most likely to have protocols in relation to PACE bail, facilitating assessments, social worker roles, sentence planning for children in need, sentencing planning for vulnerable children, court bail and remands, and competencies required to meet roles and responsibilities. Those managed by the Children's Services were most likely to have protocols in relation to PACE bail and remands, referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes and social worker training needs. Those describing their management structures as "mixed" were most likely to have a protocol in relation to exchange of information. One YOT located in Children's Services did say that, because of their location, there was no need for protocols in a number of areas.

**Table 3.3: Protocols that exist between the YOTs and Children’s Services in relation to a number of specific issues (ranked by those YOTs saying that protocols did exist)**

	Number saying that protocol did exist	%	Base sample
Court bail and remands	71	87	82
PACE bail and remands	70	82	85
Referrals between Children’s Services and YOT	61	71	86
Exchange of information on court reports	56	70	80
Information sharing to facilitate assessments	56	68	82
Sentence planning for looked-after children	50	59	85
Social worker roles and responsibilities	41	53	77
Sentence planning for children in need	37	45	83
Sentence planning for vulnerable young people	37	43	86
Referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes	30	39	78
Social worker training needs	21	32	66
Competencies required to meet roles and responsibilities	14	21	68

Base: refer to column 3.

There was some further exploration of the relationship between location, management structure and the percentage of YOTs with protocols in place. This highlights that YOTs managed by the CSP or Children’s Services are more likely to have protocols in place, although the small numbers in the sample subsets make it difficult to draw any *firm* conclusions from these data. It is, however, interesting to note that there are a number of areas in which one might expect protocols to exist where they do not. For example, protocols in relation to sentence planning for children in need and vulnerable young people in need exist in less than half of all the YOTs surveyed. Also, as previous research has indicated that young people with Children’s Services contact have a high risk of coming into contact with the Youth Justice System, it is somewhat surprising that protocols do not commonly exist in relation to referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes.

### 3.1.4 Partnership working: good practice

The previous section highlighted that there is close strategic planning and partnership working between nearly all of the YOTs and Children's Services in the sample (this is not surprising considering that such a high number of YOTs are located within Children's Services). YOT managers were also able to highlight a number of examples of good practice working between YOTs and Children's Services. Some key examples are presented below. These include a range of activities, though can broadly be categorised into either *strategic* or *operational* issues.

#### **Strategy: good practice**

- **Strategy development** – a number of examples were given of putting structures in place for Children's Services and YOT managers to meet and share practice and develop future working practices. A number of YOTs also mentioned the development of closer ties between themselves and Children's Services in relation to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)<sup>34</sup> and prevention agenda of Children's Services.
- **Development of protocols** – it was common for YOTs to state that they were developing protocols across a number of areas, most notably in relation to working with Children's Services and police to divert looked-after children away from the criminal justice system and also in relation to remand fostering bed space.
- **Training of staff** – collaborative training in relation to looked-after children's issues and prevention was common across a number of areas.
- **Greater integration** – there is clearly a desire for greater integration in relation to early intervention across a number of areas. There appeared to be a particular desire to ensure that the early intervention panel was integrated to the CAF panel.
- **Pooling of resources** – in many areas there was joint pooling of resources to provide posts that straddled the YOT and Children's Services; for example, "Looked-after Children (LAC) Offending Reduction Officers" to improve planning and intervention in relation to looked-after children and to ensure that one preventative service exists for looked-after children and offending.
- **Development of multi-agency approaches** – in one area, the YOT and Children's Services have developed a new community model to deal with prevention issues that involve a number of other partners.

<sup>34</sup> The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met. It can be used by practitioners across Children's Services in England.

### **Operation: good practice**

- **Assessment of cases** – several areas mentioned that steps had been taken to develop closer working with Children’s Services to assess child in need cases.
- **Parenting work** – many areas are also developing closer working with parents of at-risk children to reduce the likelihood that young people might require local authority accommodation.
- **Targeting looked-after children** – there is growing recognition of the link between being looked-after and entry into the criminal justice system. Therefore, some areas are working directly with looked-after young people to reduce the likelihood of offending.
- **Working in/with schools** – a number of areas are using YOT prevention workers to work in schools to target at-risk young people and link in with the Children’s Services extended schools agenda.
- **Police-led diversion work** – multi-agency work with police, Children’s Services and YOT to target vulnerable groups and reduce first-time entry to criminal justice system.
- **Restorative justice in residential homes** – several areas are developing and running schemes that use the principles of restorative justice in residential care homes.
- **Employing LAC officers** – employing officers to review LAC cases and liaise with family services is becoming more common. These officers identify high-risk cases and then aim to put strategies in place to prevent offending.
- **Developing sexually harmful behaviour teams** – there is a growing development of sexually harmful behaviour teams to monitor child protection referrals.

### **3.1.5 YOT managers’ assessment of YOTs’ working relationships with Children’s Services**

YOT managers were asked for their views about working relationship between the YOT and Children’s Services. These questions asked the managers to make an assessment in relation to areas such as:

- appropriateness of referrals from Children’s Services to prevention services for looked-after children who are located in the YOT
- ability of YOT to access Children’s Services (accessing LAC places and accommodation)
- information exchange on young people between the YOT and Children’s Services
- Children’s Services ability to provide information on young people to court team
- collaboration in respect of Police Criminal and Evidence Act remands
- effectiveness of Children’s Services in discharging PACE remands
- Children’s Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities
- issues in relation to sentence planning.

These issues are considered in the subsections below.

### **3.1.6 Assessment, referrals and information exchange**

YOT managers had mixed views about the appropriateness of referrals of looked-after children (LAC) from Children’s Services to YOT prevention services and the ability of YOTs to access

Children’s Services such as LAC places (Table 3.4). Nearly half (48%: n=43) of YOT managers rated the appropriateness of referrals as good or very good. However, it is interesting to note that one in five respondents (20%) said that they thought the appropriateness of referrals was often poor or very poor. In relation to the ability of the YOT to access Children’s Services, the majority of YOTs rate this as either fair or good/very good. More than 80% suggested that the ability of YOTs to access Children’s Services was either good/very good or fair. The data here suggest that YOTs are more likely to face problems with the appropriateness of referrals from Children’s Services to prevention services for looked-after children than with their ability to access children’s services (such as LAC places). However, it is worth noting that YOTs located in Children’s Services departments (or similar) were more likely to suggest that the appropriateness of referrals was poor or very poor as compared with YOTs located in other types of departments (such as community safety), though they were also more likely to suggest that access to services was good or very good.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 3.4: YOT manager assessments about the appropriateness of referrals from Children’s Services to prevention services and the ability of YOTs to access Children’s Services (%)**

	<b>Appropriateness of referrals from Children’s Services to prevention services for looked-after children</b>	<b>Ability of YOT to access Children’s Services</b>
Good/very Good	48 (n=43)	43 (n=42)
Fair	32 (n=29)	39 (n=38)
Poor/very poor	20 (n=18)	17 (n=2)
Don’t know	0 (n=0)	1 (n=1)

Base: Appropriateness of referrals =90; ability of YOT to access services=98.

YOT managers’ views in relation to information exchange on young people and the ability of Children’s Services to provide information to the court team was very positive. More than 60% of respondents said that information exchange between the YOT and Children’s Services was good or very good, with 58% suggesting the ability of Children’s Services to provide information on young people to the court team was good or very good. Generally, YOTs that were *not* located in Children’s Services tended to suggest that information exchange on young people was poor or very poor (12% as compared with 4% of YOTs located in Children’s Services) and 12% also suggested that the ability of Children’s Services to provide information to the court team was poor/very poor as compared with 4% of YOTs located in Children’s Services.

<sup>35</sup> A total of 49% of YOTs located in Children’s Services said that the appropriateness of referrals was poor or very poor as compared with 35% in other departments. A total of 47% of YOTs said that access to services was good or very good compared with 31% of YOTs located in other departments.

**Table 3.5: YOT managers' assessments of information exchange between YOT and Children's Services, and of ability to provide information on young people to court team (%)**

	<b>Information exchange on young people between YOT and Children's Services</b>	<b>Children's Services ability to provide information on young people to court team</b>
Good/very Good	66 (n=65)	58 (n=55)
Fair	28 (n=27)	33 (n=32)
Poor/very poor	6 (n=6)	8 (n=8)

Base: Information exchange= 98; information to court team=95.

### **3.1.7 PACE remands**

A series of questions were asked in relation to Police and Criminal Evidence Act remands.<sup>36</sup> YOT managers were asked for their views in relation to collaboration between YOT and Children's Services in respect of PACE remands, the effectiveness of Children's Services in discharging its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands, and the ability of Children's Services to provide appropriate remand facilities.

There were mixed views in relation to these three questions. A total of 42% of respondents said that collaboration between the YOT and Children's Services in respect of PACE remands was good or very good, with 35% describing it as "fair". However, 20% did suggest that collaboration was either poor or very poor. YOTs *not* located in Children's Services departments were most likely to suggest that collaboration was poor or very poor (31% of that subset).

A total of 23% of respondents said that the effectiveness of Children's Services in discharging its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands was good or very good and 36% suggested that the Children's Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities was also good or very good. However, 40% described the effectiveness of Children's Services in discharging its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands as poor or very poor and 36% said that the Children's Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities was also poor or very poor.<sup>37</sup> With regards to the effectiveness of Children's Services in discharging its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands, YOTs located in Children's Services departments were more likely to suggest this was poor/very poor compared with other YOTs (43% compared with 30%). In

<sup>36</sup> The YOTs were also asked about bail and remand facilities that are available in their area. A total of 60% had local authority care homes, 39% remand fostering, 38% voluntary care homes, 20% young offenders institute, 16% secure care homes, and 11% a secure training centre.

<sup>37</sup> A general pattern was observed here in that those YOTs suggesting that collaboration in respect of PACE remands was poor also stated that provision in relation to discharges and remand facilities was poor.

relation to Children’s Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities, 35% of YOTs located in Children’s Services and 34% of YOTs outside Children’s Services rate this as poor/very poor.

**Table 3.6: YOT managers’ views about ‘collaboration in respect of PACE remands’, ‘effectiveness of Children’s Services in discharging PACE remands’ and ‘Children’s Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities’ (%)**

	<b>Collaboration in respect of PACE remands</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Children’s Services in discharging PACE remands</b>	<b>Children’s Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities</b>
Good/very good	42 (n=40)	23 (n=22)	36 (n=34)
Fair	35 (n=33)	32 (n=30)	29 (n=27)
Poor/very poor	20 (n=19)	40 (n=38)	36 (n=33)
Don’t know	3 (n=3)	5 (n=5)	0 (n=0)

Base: Collaboration in respect of PACE remands=95; Effectiveness of Children’s Services in discharging PACE remands=95; Children’s Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities=94.

### **3.1.8 Working together in relation to sentence planning**

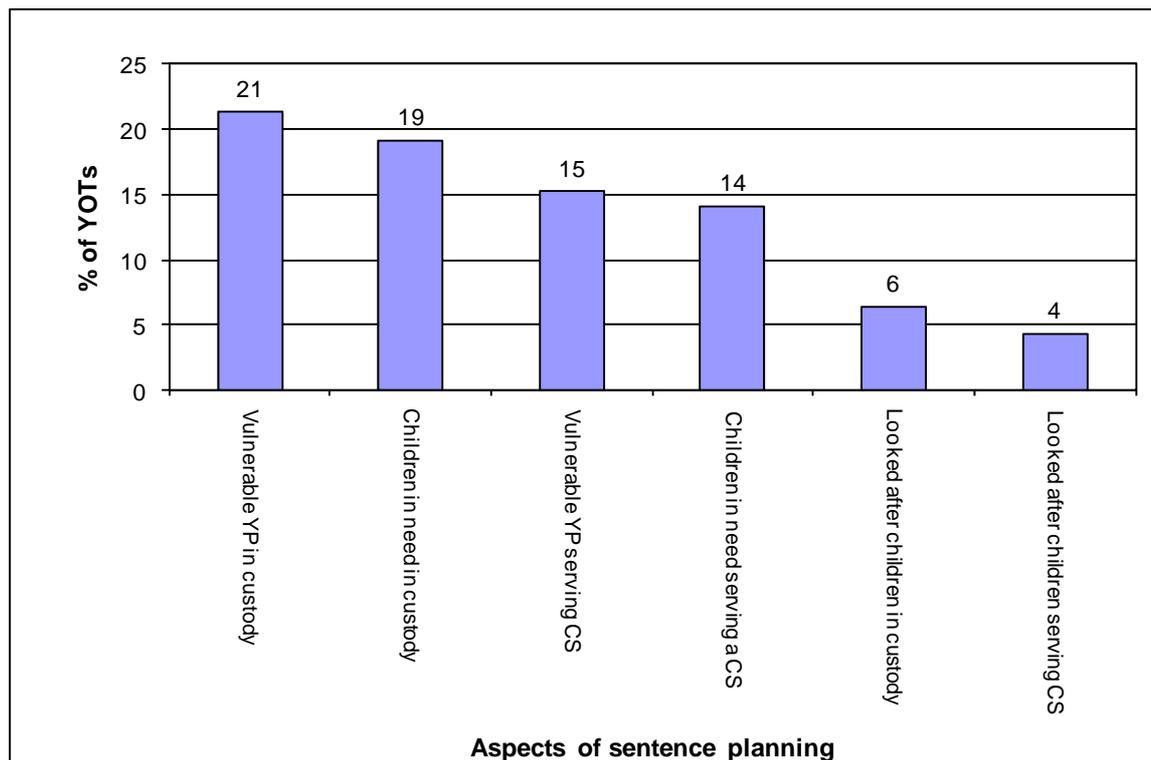
YOT managers were also asked for their views as to how well they thought YOTs and Children’s Services work together in relation to sentence planning for “children in need”, “looked-after children”, and “young people assessed as being vulnerable” who were serving either a custodial or a community sentence.

A clear pattern is evident in respect of YOT managers’ views in relation to sentence planning. The managers clearly suggest that sentence planning in relation to looked-after children tends to be better than that for children in need or vulnerable people. A total of 63% (n=59) of respondents said that sentence planning in relation to looked-after children in custody and 62% (n=57) for those serving a community sentence was either good or very good. The number of

respondents suggesting that sentence planning in relation to the other categories is either good or very good tended to average around 40%.<sup>38</sup>

What is also of particular interest here is the proportion of YOT managers who actually described various aspects of sentence planning as *poor* or *very poor* (Figure 3.5). Around one in five respondents described both joint sentence planning for vulnerable children in custody and children in need in custody as poor or very poor. It is worth noting here that the two areas of sentence planning (in relation to children in need and vulnerable children) in which the relationship between YOTs and Children’s Services was viewed as poor or very poor were the two areas in which protocols were least likely to exist (see Table 3.3).

**Figure 3.5: Percentage of YOT managers who suggest that relationship between Children’s Services and YOT in respect of various aspects of sentence planning is poor or very poor**



Base: looked-after children in custody=94/serving CS=92; children in need in custody=94/serving a CS=92; vulnerable YP in custody=94/serving CS=92

It is also worth noting that 20% of YOTs located in Children’s Services departments described sentence planning in relation to children in need in custody as poor or very poor compared with 15% not located in Children’s Services. Because of low numbers, it is difficult to establish a

<sup>38</sup> In relation to sentence planning for children in need serving a community sentence it was 36% (n=33), and for children serving a community sentence it was 42% (n=39). For vulnerable children, the figures were 40% (n=37) and 42% (n=39) respectively.

general relationship between the location of the YOTs and satisfaction in relation to sentence planning, but it does suggest that, even if a YOT is located within Children’s Services, it does not necessarily mean they have a better relationship with regards to sentence planning than those located outside Children’s Services.

### 3.1.9 YOT managers’ overall assessment of relationship with Children’s Services

The survey asked YOT managers to make a number of overall assessments about the relationship between the YOT and Children’s Services. These assessments were made about the ability to identify “areas of common interest” (such as key legislation, policy changes, practice and procedure), to “identify resource requirements” to be made by respective agencies, and the overall relationship between the YOT and Children’s Services. The results are outlined in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7: Overall assessment of YOT and Children’s Services relationship in respect of areas of common interest, identifying resource requirements and overall relationship**

	<b>Areas of common interest</b>	<b>Identifying resource requirements to be made by the respective agencies</b>	<b>Overall relationship</b>
Good/very good	67 (n=65)	49 (n=48)	69 (n=67)
Fair	26 (n=25)	29 (n=28)	24 (n=23)
Poor/very poor	7 (n=7)	21 (n=20)	7 (n=7)
Don’t know	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)

Base: Areas of common interest=97; Identifying resource requirements=96; Overall relationship=97

This data suggest that the YOT/Children’s Services relationship is viewed very positively by many YOT managers. Overall, 67% suggested that the relationship between the YOT and Children’s Services in areas of common interest was good or very good (only 7% described it was poor/very poor) and 69% described the overall YOT/Children’s Services relationship as good or very good (only 7% described it as poor or very poor). It should be noted, however, that 49% said that the ability of the YOT and Children’s Services to work together to identify resource requirements was good/very good (with 21% suggesting it was poor or very poor).

It is interesting to note that there is little general difference in the assessments made in relation to areas of common interest, identifying resource requirements and the overall YOT/Children’s Services relationship according to whether the YOT is located within a Children’s Services department or not. In relation to areas of common interest, 65% of YOTs located in a Children’s Services department said they thought the relationship between the YOT and Children’s Services was good/very good (compared with 73% of YOTs located outside of Children’s Services), 55% rated the success of the YOT/Children’s Services in working together to identify resource requirements as good/very good (as compared with 46% of other YOTs), and 69% of YOTs located in Children’s Services rated their overall relationship with Children’s Services as good/very good (as did 69% of YOTs not based in Children’s Services departments).

### 3.2 Directors of Children's Services survey findings

The Children's Services Authority (Children's Services) survey was intended to elicit views from directors of Children's Services about the relationship between Children's Services and YOTs. But the Children's Services survey generated a much lower level of response than the YOT survey. In total, 32 directors responded to the survey. Of these, 25 were from Children's Services departments that directly-line managed YOTs, seven were from Children's Services departments that held regular meetings with YOTs, and three were from departments that held only ad hoc meetings with YOTs. This means that the robustness of the findings is more limited than the findings of the YOT survey, and the results must be treated with caution.

This section begins by comparing Children's Services and YOT perceptions in relation to partnership working (with each other) and access to services and management. Consideration is then given to sentence planning and the overall perception that Children's Services have of their working relationship with the YOT.

Table 3.8 compares directors of Children's Services' and YOT managers' perceptions about how effective the agencies are at partnership working, accessing each other's services and remand management. This suggests that Children's Services tend to view their relationship with YOTs more positively than vice versa. For example, 91% of Children's Services said that that the YOT was either good/very good at providing a remand service for young people, though only 36% of YOTs saw Children's Services as being good/very good at providing remand services. A similar pattern is observed in relation to accessing each other's services and collaboration in respect of Police Criminal and Evidence Act remands. The gap is less marked in relation to perceptions of the alignment of the Youth Justice Plan to the Children and Young People's Plan and the exchange of information between the services.

**Table 3.8: Comparison of Children's Services and YOT perceptions in relation to partnership working, access to services and management (ranked by % of those stating good or very good)**

	Children's Services	YOTs
How effective are YOTs and Children's Services at providing remand management services for young people	91 (n=29)	36 (n=35)
How well aligned is the Youth Justice Plan to the Children and Young People's plan	84 (n=27)	74 (n=72)
How well is information exchanged between services	81 (n=26)	66 (n=64)
How easy to access are each other's services	81 (n=26)	43 (n=42)
Collaboration in respect of PACE remands	70 (n=22)	42 (n=41)

Base: 32 Children's Services and 98 YOTs

Table 3.9 highlights that Children's Services also had a more positive perception than YOTs in relation to sentence planning. Again, caution is necessary due to the low sample size of Children's Services, though what is of interest are the similarities in the findings for Children's Services and YOTs. For example, both suggest sentence planning tends to be better for looked-after children (although the variation in perceptions of whether the planning is good or

very good is fairly marked) than for children in need or those described as vulnerable. It is also worthy of note how sharply the perceptions of sentence planning for vulnerable children and children in need as either good or very good fall in the Children's Services sample when compared with looked-after children. For example, more than 90% of Children's Services respondents viewed sentence planning for looked-after children in custody or the community as good or very good as compared with less than 60% in relation to vulnerable children or children in need.

**Table 3.9: Comparison of perceptions of Children’s Services and YOT respondents of sentence planning (ranked by % of those stating good or very good)**

	<b>Children’s Services</b>	<b>YOTs</b>
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of looked-after children in custody	93 (n=30)	63 (n=62)
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of looked-after children serving community sentence	90 (n=29)	62 (n=61)
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of young people assessed as vulnerable serving community sentence	57 (n=18)	40 (n=39)
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of children in need serving community sentence	52 (n=16)	46 (n=45)
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of young people in custody assessed as vulnerable	52 (n=16)	42 (n=41)
How well Children’s Services and YOT work together in relation to sentence planning of children in need in custody	48 (n=15)	42 (n=41)

Base: 32 Children’s Services and 98 YOTs

In summary, it is apparent that the directors of Children’s Services tended to have a more favourable view of the overall relationship between the two agencies than YOT managers (Table 3.10). The Children’s Services respondents were more likely to suggest that the overall relationship between Children’s Services and YOTs, their relationship in terms of areas of common interest and of the success of the agencies to work together to secure resource requirements was either good or very good.

**Table 3.10: Overall perception of Children’s Services and YOT working relationship (% of those stating as good or very good)**

	<b>Children’s Services</b>	<b>YOTs</b>
Perceptions of overall relationship	84 (n=27)	69 (n=68)
Perceptions of the relationship in areas of common interest	84 (n=27)	67 (n=66)
Perceptions of success of YOT/Children’s Services to working together to secure resource requirements	76 (n=24)	49 (n=48)

Base: 32 Children’s Services and 98 YOTs

### 3.2.1 Area variations in the findings

As the online survey was conducted with both YOTs and Children’s Services, there was a small number (26) of responses received from both the YOT managers and directors of Children’s Services managers within the same local authority area. This enables some analysis to be conducted of same area differences in the views of the two groups.

Table 3.11 begins by presenting data on the same area differences in relation to a number of areas of service and planning. The table presents “raw” numbers for the responses (rather than percentages). Column A presents the number of responses where *differences* in perceptions between the YOTs and Children’s Services were observed. Columns B and C then tell us whether the differences in responses given by the YOT was more negative or positive than the responses given by Children’s Services. For example, if Children’s Services answered “very good” or “good” while the YOT answered “fair” or “poor” to the same question, this would be recorded as a more negative response; if Children’s Services responded “poor” and the YOT said “fair” or “good”, this would be recorded as a more positive response.

Table 3.11 shows that in relation to a number of areas of service and planning, there were clear same area variations between Children’s Services and YOTs. The largest difference was in relation to remand management where there was a difference of opinion in 20 of the 26 responses. Of the 20 where a disagreement was recorded, 19 of the YOTs had a more negative view of remand management than Children’s Services. It should also be noted that a high level of disagreement in relation to other areas of service and planning was also recorded. These differences generally saw the YOTs giving more negative responses than their Children’s Services counterparts.

**Table 3.11: Same area differences in relation to areas of service provision (raw numbers)**

	Children’s Services to YOT		
	Difference	Positive	Negative
Remand management	20	1	19
Access to prevention services	10	2	8
Collaboration in respect of PACE remands	10	2	8
Alignment of Children and Young People’s Plan and Youth Justice Plan	9	3	6
Exchange of information between agencies	8	2	6

Base: 26 same-area respondents in YOT and Children’s Services

Differences of opinion in the same area sample were also observed in relation to sentence planning (Table 3.12). The largest numbers of differences are observed in relation to children in need in custody and vulnerable children in custody – these were areas where the YOTs and Children’s Services were most likely to see their relationship as being fair or poor. Differences were observed in nearly half of the same area sample for these groups. although there was a split in whether the YOTs viewed these areas in a more or less positive light than Children’s Services. It should be noted, however, that the YOTs tended to view sentence planning in relation to looked-after children in a less favourable light that did Children’s Services.

**Table 3.12: Same area differences in relation to sentence planning (raw numbers)**

	Children's Services to YOT		
	Difference	Positive	Negative
Children in need in custody	14	8	6
Vulnerable children in custody	13	5	8
Children in need serving community sentence	11	4	7
Vulnerable children serving community sentence	10	3	7
Looked-after children in custody	9	1	8
Looked-after children serving community sentence	8	1	7

Base: 26 same-area respondents in YOT and Children's Services

There were also same area differences observed in the overall assessment of the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services (Table 3.13). However, these differences were less marked than in a number of areas identified in Tables 3.11 and 3.12. In 11 areas there was disagreement in relation to whether YOTs/Children's Services could work together to identify resources requirements. In six areas there was disagreement over whether YOTs/Children's Services had agreed common areas of interest, and six areas also disagreed over the overall relationship between the YOTs/Children's Services. The general trend across all of these categories is for the YOT to be more negative about the relationship than Children's Services.

**Table 3.13: Same area differences in relation to overall assessment of YOT/Children's Services relationship (raw numbers)**

	Children's Services to YOT		
	Difference	Positive	Negative
Work together in identifying resource requirements	11	2	9
Areas of common interest	6	2	6
Overall relationship with YOT	6	1	5

Base: 26 same-area respondents in YOTs and Children's Services

### 3.3 Summary

The key aims of both the YOT and the Children's Services surveys were to establish the links (interaction) between YOTs and Children's Services and how effective Children's Services are

in dealing with young people at risk of offending. The overall relationship between the YOTs and Children's Services appears to be viewed favourably by YOTs and Children's Services across a number of local authority areas, although the relationship tends to be viewed more favourably by Children's Services. There are, however, clearly a number of areas in which the relationship between the YOT and Children's Services does not run smoothly. In summary, the main findings of the survey are:

1. **Location of YOTs** – there has been considerable movement of YOTs across various departments in the past five years. More than 50% of responding YOTs have moved departments, with around one in four moving into Children's Services departments. A high proportion of the "movers" state that the move was made for planning, partnership and operational reasons, although it is not clear from this survey what impact this movement has had on the quality of service provision for young people.
2. **Steering group representation** – it is common for a number of agencies to sit on the steering groups that oversee the business of the YOTs. The attendance of the police and Children's Services was viewed by YOTs as being particularly beneficial. The attendance of probation, the PCT and housing representatives was seen as being of less benefit.
3. **Sharing of common objectives** – most respondents thought that the police and Children's Services closely shared common objectives with the YOT in relation to the reduction of youth crime – the Children's Services respondents agreed with this view. This was reflected in the number of YOTs stating that the Youth Justice Plan had been reflected in the strategic planning documents of agencies such as the police and Children's Services. Most YOTs said that the Youth Justice Plan was reflected in the local crime and disorder plan and the Children's Services plan. However, the Youth Justice Plan was less likely to be integrated into the education development plan or the health improvement plan.
4. **Protocols between YOT and Children's Services** – protocols commonly exist between the YOTs and Children's Services in relation to court bail and remands, PACE bail and remands, and referrals between Children's Services and YOT. They are least likely to exist in relation to social worker training and the competencies required to meet roles and responsibilities. Only four YOTs/Children's Services do not have any protocols at all. There are areas where one might expect protocols to exist in a high number of YOTs that presently do not. For example, one might have expected to see a higher number of YOTs/Children's Services with protocols in relation to sentence planning for children in need and vulnerable young children.
5. **Referrals and access to Children's Services** – there were mixed views about the appropriateness of referrals from Children's Services to YOT prevention services and the ability of YOTs to access Children's Services. One in five YOTs thought the appropriateness of referrals was poor/very poor and more than 10% thought the ability of the YOT to access Children's Services was poor/very poor, as did 6% of Children's Services in relation to accessing YOT services.
6. **Information exchange** – generally, the level and quality of information exchange between the YOT and Children's Services was viewed as good or very good. In relation to Children's Service's ability to provide information on young people to the court team, only one in 20 YOTs viewed this as poor. Even fewer saw information exchange generally between the agencies as poor – none of the Children's Services respondents reported information exchange as being poor.

7. **PACE remands and providing remand facilities** – around one in five YOTs thought that collaboration in respect of PACE remands was poor/very poor – only one director of Children’s Services viewed it as poor/very poor. An even higher number of YOTs thought that Children’s Services were poor/very poor at discharging PACE remands and were poor/very poor in providing appropriate remand facilities.
8. **Sentence planning** – in respect of looked-after children, sentence planning was viewed very favourably by the YOTs and Children’s Services. However, one in 20 YOTs viewed sentence planning in relation to vulnerable children in custody and children in need in custody as poor or very poor. The directors of Children’s Services were also less positive about sentence planning for these groups.
9. **Same area differences in relation to service provision** – there were a number of different views expressed by directors of Children’s Services and YOT respondents from within the same authority in relation to service provision. For example, in relation to remand management, there was a difference of opinion in 20 of the 26 areas in which both the YOT and Children’s Services responded to the survey. Generally, YOTs tended to have a more negative perception of service provision than Children’s Services respondents.
10. **Same area differences in relation to sentence planning** – there were also a number of different views expressed by Children’s Services and YOT respondents from within the same authority in relation to sentence planning. For example, in relation to sentence planning for children in need in custody, there was a difference of opinion in 14 of the 26 areas where both the YOT and Children’s Services responded to the survey. Again, YOTs tended to have more negative perceptions about sentence planning than Children’s Services.

## 4.0 The characteristics of young people involved in the Youth Justice System who are known to Children's Services

Case file data were collected from 14 YOTs.<sup>39</sup> The aim of the data collection was to identify the key characteristics and the proportion of young people remanded or convicted who were also known to Children's Services. The sample included individuals who were either convicted or remanded, and all had had a court appearance or pre-court outcome in the designated 12-month<sup>40</sup> data collection period. There was also at least one *Asset* available for all cases.

A total sample of 7,232 cases was collected. Of these, it was established that 4,723 cases had details of Children's Service contact/care history recorded and were included in the final sample (these are referred to as usable cases).<sup>41</sup> Of the usable sample of cases:

- 38% (n=1806) had a "most recent" court outcome that was recorded on YOIS as a first-tier disposal
- 25% (n=1,197) had a court outcome that was noted as "pre-court" (this included police reprimands and final warnings)
- 19% (n=882) received a community sentence
- 10% (n=481) were recorded as "others" (the majority of these included bail)
- 7% (n=341) received a custodial sentence.

### 4.1 Extent and type of contact with Children's Services

Figure 4.1 presents the percentage of cases in which there was any *actual previous* Children's Services contact<sup>42</sup> recorded and if there was any *current* contact recorded. This shows that, on average, 43% of young people had had Children's Services contact at some point and this contact was logged on YOIS. The area with the highest proportion of young people with contact was area 11 (more than 50%). The lowest was in area two (just over 30%).<sup>43</sup> A total of

<sup>39</sup> As data were collected from 14 of the 157 YOTs (9%), the findings are not nationally representative and must be treated with caution.

<sup>40</sup> These were cases with a court appearance between October 2008 and October 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Often details of the care history and looked-after status of young people are not completed in the *Asset*. Some enquires were made with caseworkers as to why these details were not completed. Most suggested that details would not be completed when the information was not known.

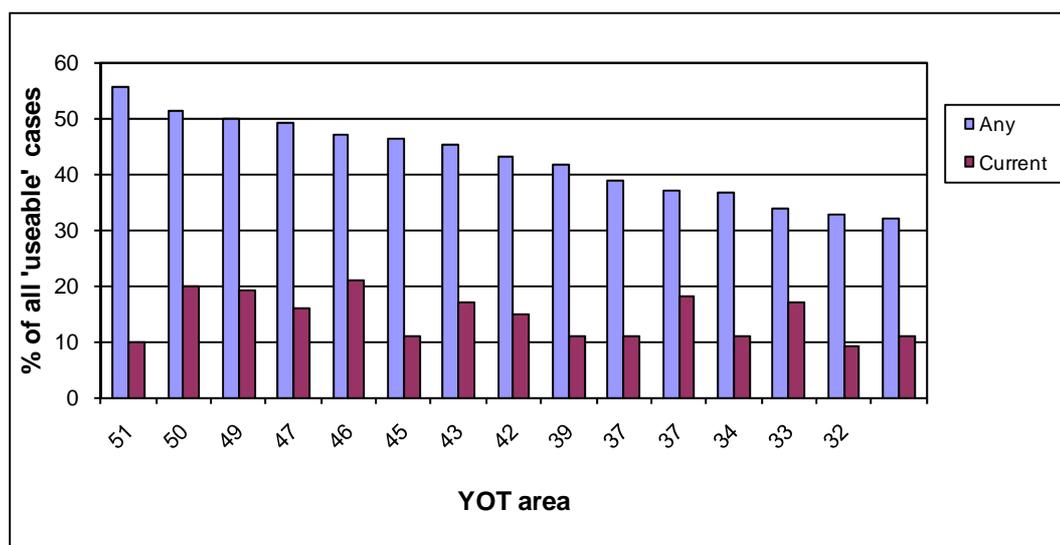
<sup>42</sup> Throughout, Children's Services contact refers to young people who have contact recorded on *Asset* in the care history/looked-after status section.

<sup>43</sup> It is worth noting that young people in receipt of a custodial sentence were more likely to have had some contact with Children's Services than those with other types of sentence outcomes recorded. Overall, 63% (n=214) of young people in receipt of a custodial sentence at the most recent court hearing had had some Children's

15% of the sample were thought to have current Children’s Services contact. The highest rate of current contact was in area five at 21% of the sample, and the lowest was in area six at 9%.

These data indicate that the likelihood of young people with YOT contact having current Children’s Services contact/being looked after is far higher than for young people in the wider population. In 2004–2005, a total of 37,300<sup>44</sup> young people aged 10–17 were looked-after in England (National Statistics, 2005) from a population of just over five million people in that age group (2001 census data). This suggests that less than 1%<sup>45</sup> of the total population of young people aged 10–17 are looked-after.

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of cases with any previous or current Children’s Services contact by YOT area (ranked from high to low on any contact)**



Base sample: 4,723 cases where Children’s Services contact known.

It is evident that a significant proportion of young people in the YOTs had some form of contact with Children’s Services. There are, however, a number of different types of contact that a young person might have. These include:

- **Being accommodated by voluntary agreement with parents (s20 Children Act 1989)** – a voluntary agreement is an arrangement with the parent or by anyone else with parental responsibility to allow the child to be accommodated by the local authority.
- **Having a care order (s31 Children Act 1989)** – a local authority will seek a court order if a child is not receiving the sort of care it would be reasonable to expect from a parent, and

Services contact. This compares with 61% (n=291) in the “others” category, 57% (n=501) of those in receipt of a community sentence, 39% (n=700) of those with a first-tier disposal, and 26% (n=314) with a pre-court disposal.

<sup>44</sup> The total looked-after population was 60,900 (National Statistics, 2005).

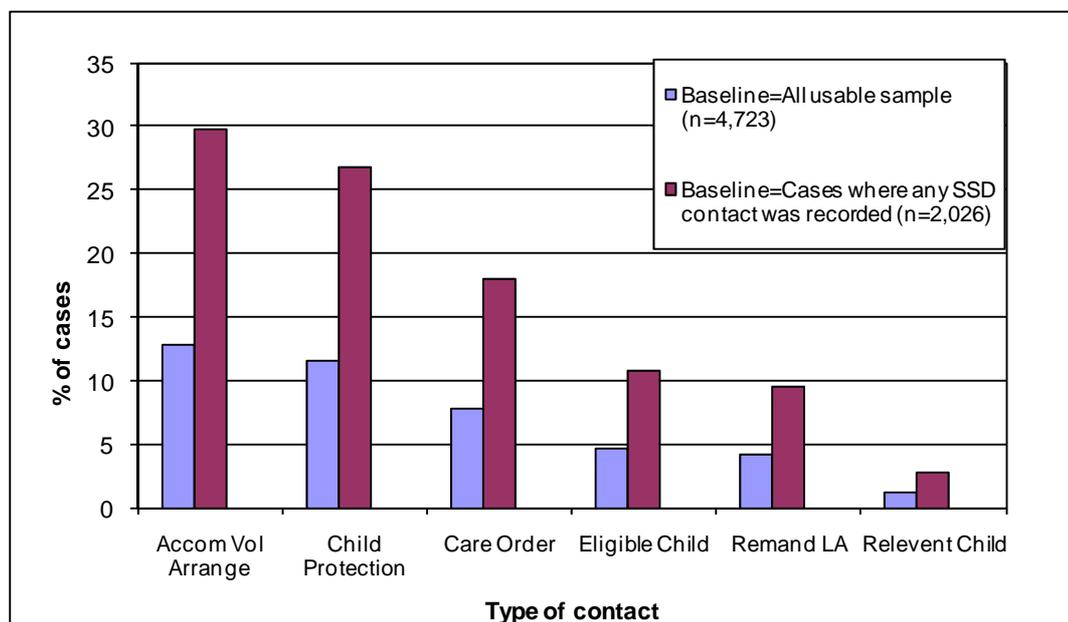
<sup>45</sup> The population for those aged 10–17 in the 2001 census was 5,084,080 so the actual percentage looked after is 0.7%.

this lack of care is causing the child significant harm. The court will decide whether or not a child is suffering harm in this way.

- **Being remanded to local authority accommodation (s23(1) Children and Young Persons Act 1969)** – children may be detained by being remanded to local authority or secure accommodation by a court, or as result of Police Powers of Protection. In such cases the child may not be removed without the agreement of the local authority, the police or a court.
- **Being an eligible child** – a child who is still in care and looked-after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.
- **Being a relevant child** – relevant children are young people aged 16 and 17 who have been looked-after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have been looked-after at some time after their 16th birthday, and who have now left care.
- **Being on the child protection register** – the child protection register is a confidential list of names of children who are believed to be at risk of significant harm. This might be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Figure 4.2 presents the prevalence rate of the types of Children’s Services contact that were recorded. This presents the rate of contact as measured against either the total usable sample of cases (4,723) or those cases where there was known Children’s Services contact (2,026). Overall, young people with Children’s Services contact were most likely to have a voluntary accommodation arrangement (13%: n=602 of total sample), and 11% (n=543) were child protection registered. Only 1% (n=56) were recorded as being a relevant child.

**Figure 4.2: Types of contact with Children’s Services**



Base sample: Total sample=4,723 cases, and with Children’s Services contact recorded=2,026.

Of the 2,026 cases where there was known Children’s Services contact, we are able to ascertain the *number* of types of contacts that were made across these contact types in 989 cases (48% of those with any Children’s Services contact). Of these, the majority (54%:

n=531) had only one type of contact with Children's Services recorded. A further 28% (n=273) had two contacts recorded, 14% (n=136) had three, 4% (n=43) had four, and less than 1% (n=6) had five.

In 40% (n=688) of cases where there was Children's Services contact, the contact was said to be current – 14.5% of the total sample where it was known if there was Children's Services contact. Table 4.2 presents data in relation to whether the contact type was current or previous across the main types of Children's Services contact. We see that contact was most likely to be current in relation to care orders (85%) and most likely to be previous in relation to child protection (52%) and remanded in local authority accommodation (also 52%).

**Table 4.2: Whether Children's Services contact was current or previous by type of contact (ranked by current contact)**

	<b>Current</b>	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Total base number</b>
Care order	85% (n=274)	15% (n=47)	321
Accommodation by voluntary arrangement	66% (n=333)	44% (n=169)	502
Child protection	48% (n=227)	52% (n=246)	473
Remand local authority	48% (n=61)	52% (n=66)	127

Base: Cases where it is known if contact is current or previous

## **4.2 Key characteristics of young people with Children's Services contact**

We now turn to the key characteristics of young people with Children's Services contact. First we consider demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and age.

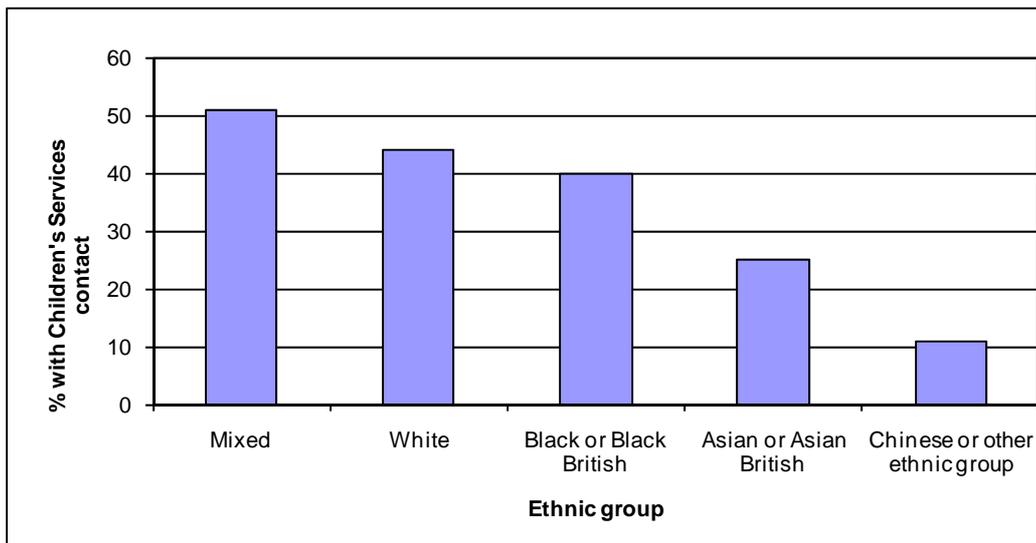
### **4.2.1 Ethnicity, gender and age**

The ethnicity of the sample was 80% white (n=3,788), 8% (n=359) black/black British, and 6% (n=268) Asian, with 5% (n=259) described as mixed. These figures show that when compared with the general population of young people, there are a slightly higher proportion of black offenders than might be expected. The 2001 census data show that 86% of the youth population were white compared with 6.6% Asian, 4.2% mixed, and 3.1% black. Some caution has to be expressed here as the census data classify the youth population as being in the 10–19 age group, while the YOIS data are collected for young people aged 10–17. It is also likely that the proportion of young people in each of these groups will have changed since 2001.

Figure 4.3 presents the relationship between ethnicity and Children's Services contact. This shows that the ethnic group classified as mixed are most likely to have Children's Services contact with the least likely being Asian children – this is statistically significant at the 0.00 level. Over 50% (n=132) of the mixed group recorded some contact compared with 44% (n=1669) of those described as white, 40% (n=142) of the black subset, and 25% (n=67) of those described as Asian.

For the 688 cases in which there was current contact recorded, the ethnic profile of cases was similar to the profile for those with any recorded contact. A total of 80% (n=548) were white, 9% (n=62) were black/black British, 8% (n=54) were mixed and only 2% (n=17) Asian. The mixed group were also most likely to have current contact (20% of the mixed group had current contact). This was followed by 17% within the black group and 14.5% of those described as white. Only 6% of the Asian subset had current Children’s Services contact – a statistically significant relationship at the 0.00 level.

**Figure 4.3: Ethnicity and Children’s Services contact<sup>46</sup>**

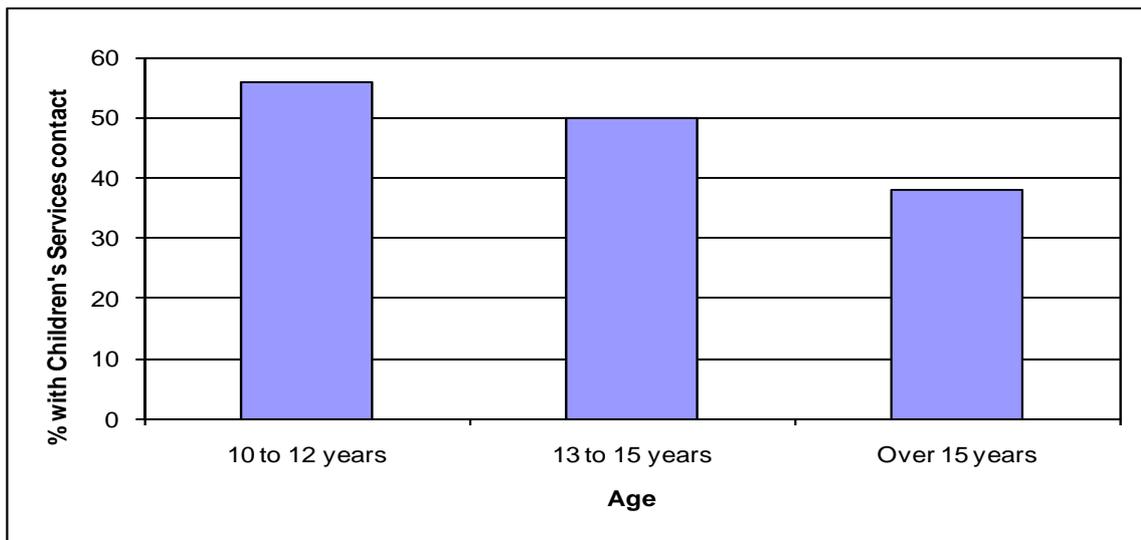


Base sample: 4,723; white=3,788; black/black British=359; Asian=268; mixed=259 and Chinese/other=9

There is also a statistically significant relationship (at the 0.00 level) between the age of the young person and the likelihood that the young person will have had Children’s Services contact. Essentially, the younger the offender the more likely it is that the offender will have had contact. This relationship is presented in Figure 4.4, which shows that more than 55% (n=43) of the 10–12 age group had contact, compared with 50% (n=514) of those aged 13–15 years, and 38% (n=976) of the over-15 age group. It should be noted, however, that the sample size for the younger group is much lower than for those aged over-15. A similar pattern is also observed for those with current Children’s Services contact. Here, 25% (n=19) of those in the 10–12 age group had current contact, compared with 20% (n=209) in the 13–15 age group and 11% (n=282) in the over-15 age group (data significant at the 0.00 level).

<sup>46</sup> The Chinese subset is included for reference, although the sample size was only nine.

**Figure 4.4: Age and Children's Services contact**



Base sample: 4,723; those aged 10 to 12 year =77; 13 to 15 years=1,034; over 15 years=2,585

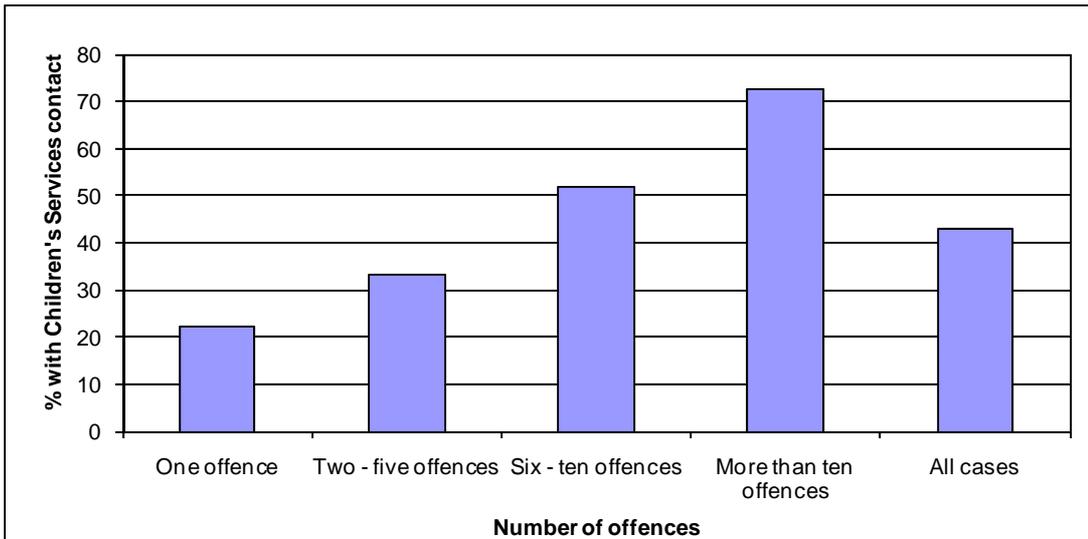
If we turn to the relationship between gender and Children's Services contact, it is clear that girls are more likely than boys to have some contact. Of the total sample, 80% (n=3,759) were male and 20% (n=963) were female. Overall, 56% of the females (n=538) had Children's Services contact compared with 40% (n=1,487) of the males – again, the relationship is significant at the 0.00 level. As with ethnicity and gender, the pattern observed in relation to age and any current Children's Services contact is similar to the pattern outlined above. Overall, 23% (n=226) of females had current Children's Services contact compared with 12% (n=461) of males.

#### **4.2.2 Crime profiles and Children's Services contact**

A clear relationship also exists between the extent of offending that is recorded on YOIS and the likelihood of Children's Services contact. Data were collected on the total number of previous offences that were recorded in the system. Overall, the majority of the sample (53%; n=2,498) had between two and five offences recorded, 10% (n=480) had just one offence recorded, and 19% (n=917) had more than 10.

The most prolific offenders were the most likely to have had Children's Services contact (Figure 4.5). A total of 73% (n=665) of offenders with more than 10 offences recorded had had contact. The rate of contact then gradually falls in each category. A total of 52% (n=429) in the six to 10 offence category had Children's Services contact, 33% (n=825) in the two to five offence category, and 22% (n=107) in the one offence category. A similar pattern is observed for the subset with current Children's Services contact. Young people with more than 10 offences recorded are most likely to have contact (26%: n=237), followed by those in the six to 10 group (21%: n=170), the two to five group (10%: n=245) and, finally, those with one offence recorded (7%: n=35).

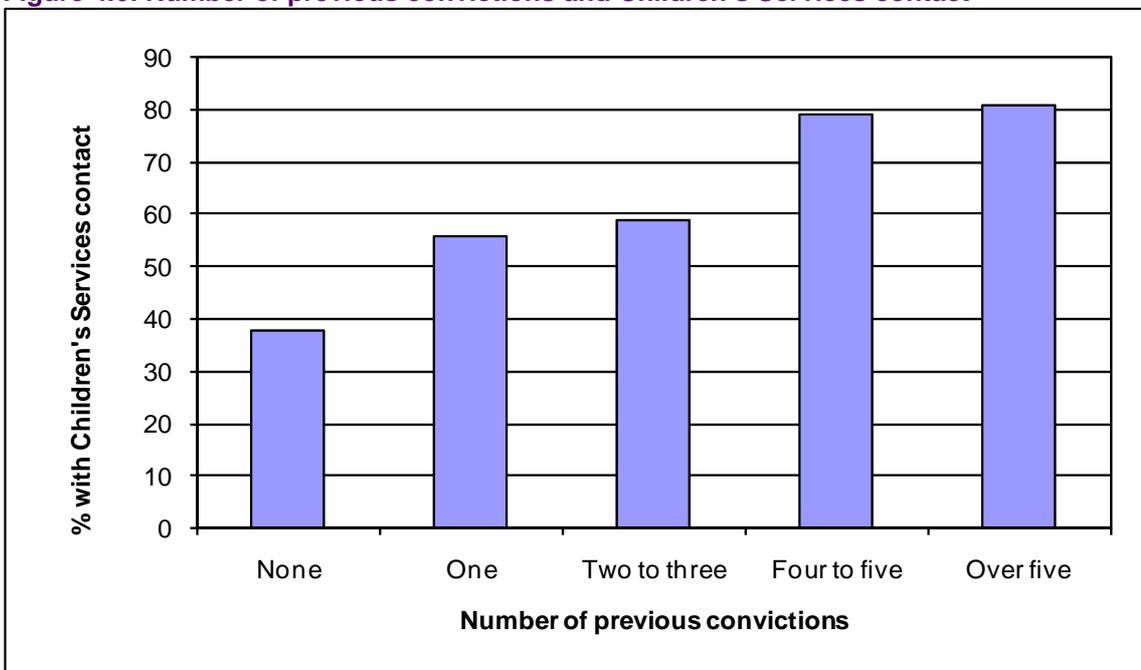
**Figure 4.5: Extent of offending and any Children's Services contact**



Base: 4,723 cases; one offence=480; two to five=2,498; six to ten=828, more than ten=917. Pearson chi square test data significant at the 0.00 level

A similar pattern is observed for the relationship between previous convictions and Children's Services contact (Figure 4.6). Overall, 45% (n=2,121) had no previous convictions, 12% (n=387) had one, 11% (n=362) had two to three, 5% (n=244) had four to five, and 7% (n=244) had more than five. Those with more than five convictions were most likely to have Children's Services contact (81%; n=198), followed by those with between four and five (79%; n=134). Of the subset with no previous convictions, only 38% (n=813) had any previous Children's Services contact.

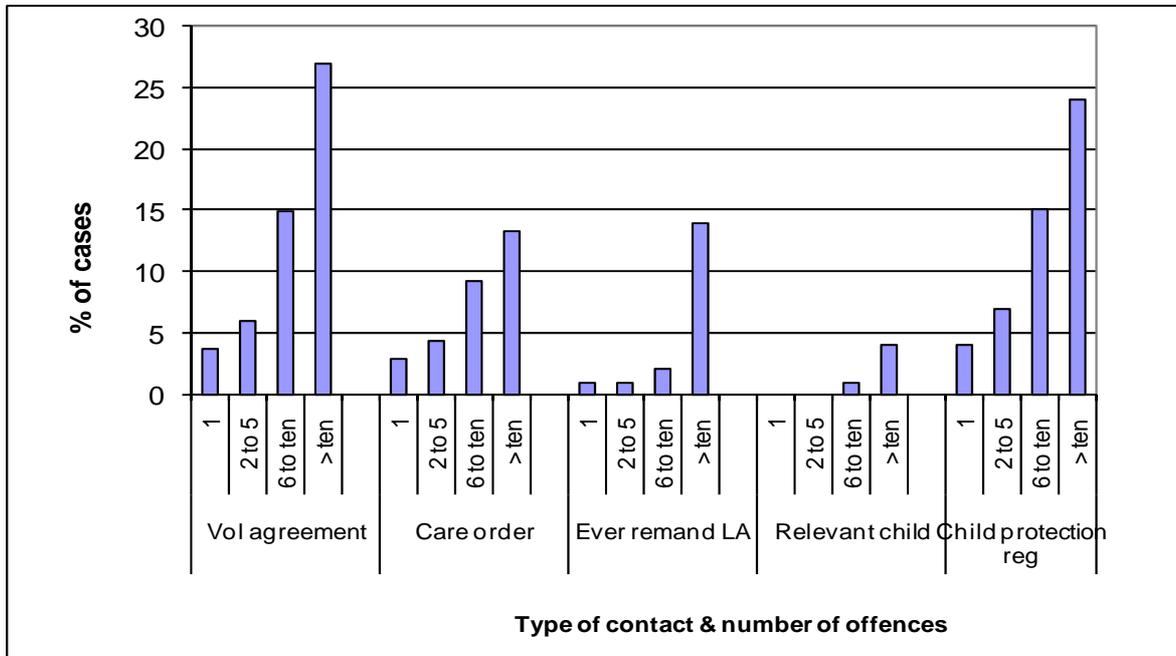
**Figure 4.6: Number of previous convictions and Children's Services contact**



Base: 4,723 cases; no previous convictions=2,121; one=387; two to three=362; four to five=169; more than five=244. Pearson chi square test data significant at 0.00 level

Figure 4.7 considers the relationship between the extent of offending and the types of Children’s Services contact that young people had. This shows that young people with 10 or more offences recorded on *Asset* were most likely to have Children’s Services contact within any of the contact groups. For example, more than 25% of young people with more than ten offences recorded had a voluntary agreement compared with less than 5% with only one offence recorded. Likewise, nearly 25% of those with more than 10 offences recorded were on the child protection register compared with less than 5% with one offence recorded.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure 4.7: Extent of offending and any Children’s Services contact by types of contacts**



Base: 4,723 cases: Pearson chi square test data significant at the 0.00 level

### 4.2.3 *Asset* risk assessment and Children’s Services contact

In this section, the association between *Asset* scores and the likelihood of Children’s Services contact is considered. For the entire sample, an attempt was made to collect the most recent *Asset* available. For 72% (n=3,431) of the usable cases, a core *Asset* was available; for 26% (n=1,220) a final warning *Asset* was available, in 1% (n=56) a bail/remand *Asset*, in less than 1% (n=9) an extended *Asset*, and also in less than 1% (n=7) a mini *Asset*.

<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that some of the characteristics of young people with Children’s Services contact appear to be fairly consistent with the findings of previous research in relation to children who are abused or neglected prior to entering custody (see Day *et al*, 2007). Day *et al* (2007) highlighted that young people who were child protection registered were more likely to offend earlier than other young people, and they committed a higher number of offences.

The *Asset* makes an assessment of the extent to which a number of characteristics are likely to be associated with further offending. These characteristics are outlined in Table 4.3.

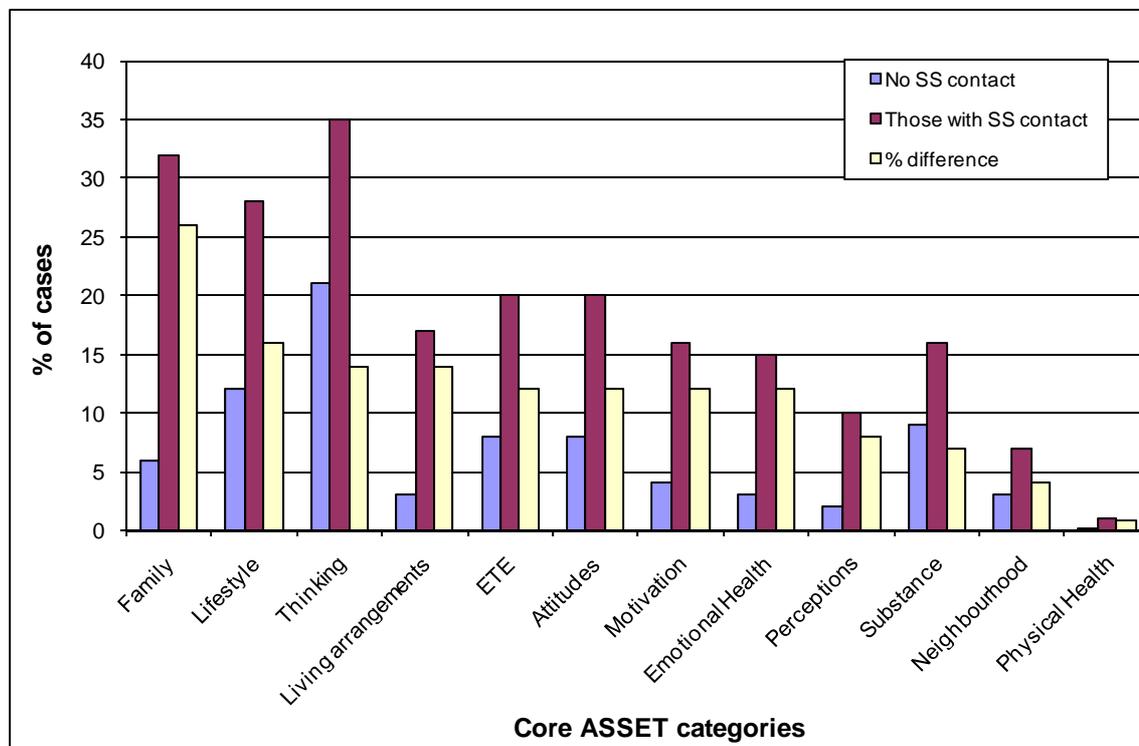
**Table 4.3: Asset core profile**

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Example of questions asked</b>
1. Living arrangements	Who has the young person lived with for past six months? Living with known offenders? Are they absconding from home?
2. Family and personal relationships	Which family members have they been in contact with in the past six months? Family members involved in criminal activity? Experience of abuse?
3. Education, training and employment (ETE)	ETE status, including how many hours per week they attend Evidence of any qualifications? Problems with literacy/numeracy/language skills?
4. Neighbourhood	Is the area a crime hotspot? Obvious signs of drug dealing? Lack of age appropriate facilities?
5. Lifestyle	Lack of age appropriate friendships? Pro-criminal peers?
6. Substance use	Whether they have ever/have recently used various drugs/substances Offending to obtain money for substances?
7. Physical health	Any health conditions that significantly affect everyday functioning? Health put at risk by own behaviour?
8. Emotional and mental health	Coming to terms with significant past events? Formal diagnosis of mental illness?
9. Perception of self and others	Inappropriate self-esteem (i.e. too high or too low)? General mistrust of others? Perceives him/herself as having a criminal identity?
10. Thinking and behaviour	Lack of understanding of consequences? Gives in too easily to pressure from others?
11. Attitudes to offending	Denial of seriousness of behaviour? Thinks that further offending is inevitable?
12. Motivation to change	Has identified clear reasons for him/her to avoid further offending? Shows real evidence of wanting to stop offending?

For each of these 12 core dynamic risk factors a score between zero and four is given for the extent to which the risk factor is likely to be associated with the risk of further offending. A score of zero indicates that the factor is not associated, and a score of four indicates that it is very strongly associated. For the purpose of this exercise, the scores were recoded into two categories, with a score of three or four coded as high level of association and a score of zero to two coded as low/no association.

Figure 4.8 presents the percentage of those young people in the sample with Children’s Services contact who were recorded as having a high level of association for each of the core Asset profile categories compared with those with no contact. The figure also presents the percentage difference between the two groups across each of the core profile categories.

**Figure 4.8: Difference between the percentage of young people with core Asset scores of three or four who have had Children’s Services contact compared with those with no contact (ranked by percentage differences)**



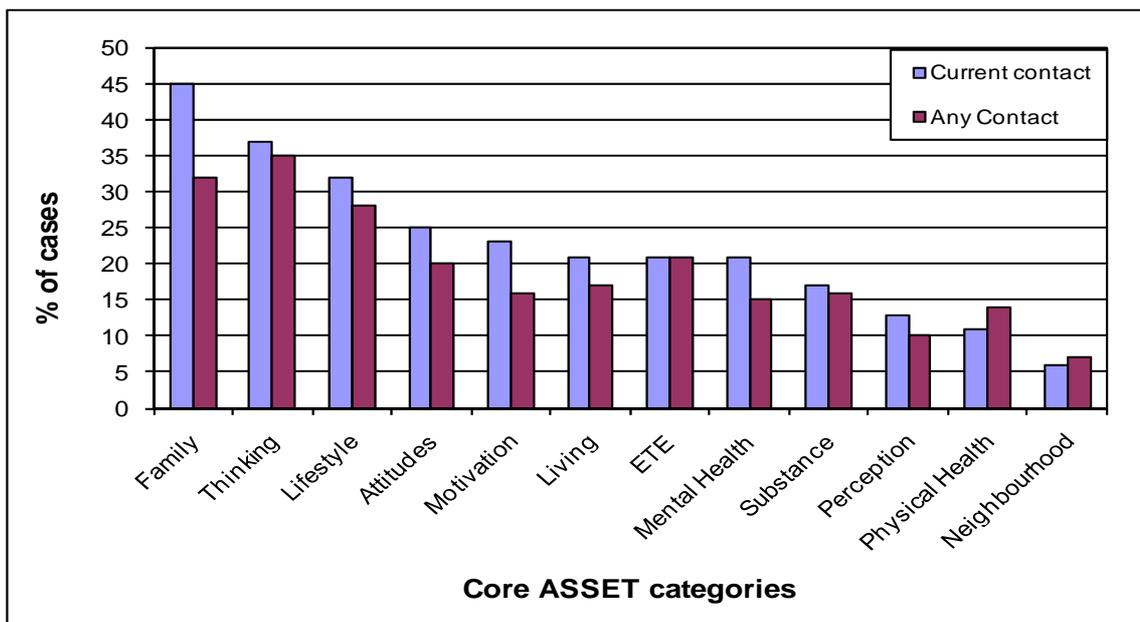
Base: available Asset scores; Family=4,682; lifestyle=4,674; thinking=4,654; living arrangements=4,693; ETE=4,674; attitudes=4,665; motivation=4,630; emotional health=4,659; perceptions=4,647; substance use=4,646; neighbourhood=4,656; physical health=4,669.

A clear pattern is established in Figure 4.8. For each of the core profile categories, the group that has had Children’s Services contact is more likely to have characteristics that are strongly associated with the likelihood of further offending (these are all statistically significant at the 0.00 level). There are also a number of subtle differences between the risk factors recorded for the no Children’s Services contact sample as compared with those who have had Children’s Services contact. Overall, the factors most commonly associated with the likelihood of further offending are thinking and behaviour, lifestyle and family, and personal relationships. A total of 27% (n=1,240) of the sample recorded a risk score of three or four in relation to thinking and behaviour, 19% (n=886) in relation to lifestyle, and 17% (n=818) in relation to family and personal relationships. These factors are also most commonly associated with the risk of further offending for the group that has had Children’s Services contact. Here we see that 35% (n=694) of the contact group were recorded as having thinking and behavioural issues that are likely to be strongly associated with further offending, 32% (n=646) had family issues, and 28% (n=570) lifestyle factors.

What is most striking about the risks associated with further offending are the large differences in the proportion in the Children’s Services contact group that have risk rates of three or four as compared with the group that had no contact with Children’s Services.

It should also be noted here that the overall pattern of *Asset* scores for young people with *current* Children’s Services contact is similar to those for the group with just *any previous* contact recorded. Figure 4.9 shows that there is a high level of consistency between the two. It should, however, be noted that in relation to family issues, a far higher proportion of those with current contact (45%) have a score of three or four compared with 32% for the any contact group.

**Figure 4.9: Comparison of the proportion of young people with *current* Children’s Services contact and *any* Children’s Services contact who have *Asset* scores of three or four**



Base: available *Asset* scores; Family=4,682; lifestyle=4,674; thinking=4,654; living arrangements=4,693; ETE=4,674; attitudes=4,665; motivation=4,630; emotional health=4,659; perceptions=4,647; substance use=4,646; neighbourhood=4,656; physical health=4,669.

### **4.3 The key characteristics of young people in the YJS in need of Children’s Services provision**

So far, the data show that there are strong relationships between characteristics such as age, gender, rates of offending, family and personal relationships, lifestyle, thinking/behaviour and the likelihood of Children’s Services contact. However, the analysis has so far only considered the association between these variables and Children’s Services contact in isolation. We now consider the impact of these variables in combination through the use of regression analysis.

The regression analysis was done using logistic regression modelling. In principle, this is similar to the more commonly used linear regression techniques, though is used with binary or categorical variables, rather than ratio variables. Logistic regression modelling is able to tell us the likelihood or probability that a young person will have particular demographic or risk characteristics that are strongly associated with Children’s Services contact, when controlling for the impact of other variables. The model was developed in three stages:

1. The relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender and ethnicity) and Children's Services contact was considered
2. Offending history (number of offences) was added to the model
3. Core Asset profile scores were added to the model.

Table 4.4 presents the variables that were used in the model. These are categorised into independent/explanatory variables and dependent variables. The independent variables which have already been highlighted to have some association with Children's Services contact are included in the model. The key dependent variable is whether a young person has had any Children's Services contact.

**Table 4.4: Variables in the model**

<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Age (categorical)	1=10 to 12 2=13 to 15 3=16 and over
Gender (binary)	0=Male 1=Female
Ethnicity (categorical)	1=White 2=Mixed 3=Asian 4=Black
Offence Number (categorical)	1= More than 10 offences 2=6 to 10 offences 3=2 to 5 offences 4=1 offence
Asset profiles (all binary)	0=Low risk 1=High risk (3 or 4)
<b>Dependent variable (s)</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Any Children's Services contact (current or previous)	0=No recorded contact 1=Contact recorded
Any <i>current</i> Children's Services contact	0=No recorded contact 1=Current contact recorded

#### **4.3.1 The relationship between demographic characteristics of young people and any Children's Services contact**

The first stage of the development of the model included understanding the relationship between demographic variables such as age, gender and ethnicity (explanatory variables) and if there had been any Children's Services contact (the dependent variable). Table 4.5 presents the output for the relationship between these variables and Children's Services contact. For the variables age and ethnicity, more than one row of output is presented. This is because they are categorical variables and they have more than two codes, therefore one of the codes is treated as a reference category. Thus, for age, the odds of Children's Services contact are expressed

as odds compared with being 16 years or over (the reference category); and for ethnicity, the odds are expressed as odds compared with being black (the reference category). The table shows that:

- Young people aged 10 to 12 are twice as likely to have had Children’s Services contact compared with the reference group (those aged 16 or over). Those in age group 2 (13 to 15 years) are 1.5 times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those aged 16 or over. Both associations are statistically significant.
- Being female makes a young person nearly twice as likely to have had Children’s Services contact as being male.
- Being in ethnic group 1 (white) and 2 (mixed race) also makes a young person more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than somebody in the reference group (black). However, these associations are not strongly statistically significant. Being Asian makes a young person less likely to have contact.

**Table 4.5: The relationship between demographic characteristics of young people and any Children’s Services contact**

Independent variable	Statistical significance	Increased odds of Children’s Services contact
Being in the 10 to 12 age group	**	2
Being in the 13 to 15 age group	***	1.5
Being female	***	1.9
Being white	Ns	1
Being mixed race	*	1.5
Being Asian	***	0.5

Variable(s) entered on step 1: age, gender, ethnicity: \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

#### **4.3.2 The relationship between demographic characteristics of young people, Children’s Services contact and criminogenic background characteristics**

Table 4.6 overleaf presents the same model with the addition of the number of offences (as stated on *Asset*) that the young person has committed as this is a good indicator of the extent to which a young person has been criminally active. The table shows that all of the variables are statistically significant apart from ethnic group 1 (white) and 2 (mixed race), which are not strongly significant.

**Table 4.6: The relationship between demographic characteristics of young people, children’s services Contact and criminogenic background characteristics**

Independent variable	Statistical significance	Increased odds of Children’s Services contact
Being in the 10 to 12 age group	***	3.6
Being in the 13 to 15 age group	***	2.0
Being female	***	2.6
Being white	ns	1.0
Being mixed race	ns	1.2
Being Asian	***	0.46
More than 10 offences	***	14.1
Six to 10 offences	***	4.8
Two to five offences	***	1.8

Variable(s) entered on step 1: age, gender, ethnicity, offence number. \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

The model suggests that when offences are added, age and gender remain statistically significant, and the patterns are similar to the ones observed in table 4.5 above. What is of interest in relation to offences are the odds of Children’s Services contact for each of the groups: the model clearly shows that when controlling for all of the other variables, the greater the number of previous offences committed, the more likely the young person will have had some Children’s Services contact. Young people with more than 10 offences are 14 times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with one offence (the reference category here); those with six to 10 offences are nearly five times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact; and those with two to five offences recorded are nearly twice as likely to have had Children’s Services contact.

#### **4.3.3 The relationship between Asset scores any Children’s Services contact**

The previous section highlights that age, gender and number of offences are all significantly related to Children’s Services contact. It was also highlighted earlier that a number of risk factors (such as family issues, lifestyle and thinking) are closely associated with Children’s Services contact. Here we begin to add risk factors to the model. Table 4.7 presents an overview of the association of individual Asset risk factors when controlling for the impact of other variables.

**Table 4.7: The relationship between Asset risk scores and the likelihood of children’s services contact (ranked by odds ratio)**

Independent variable	Statistical significance	Increased odds of Children’s Services contact
Family	***	3.8
Mental health	***	2.8
Physical health	Ns	2.7
Living arrangements	***	2.5
Perceptions	*	1.5
Motivation	**	1.5
Education (ETE)	***	1.4
Lifestyle	***	1.4
Substance	Ns	1.0
Thinking and behaviour	Ns	1.0
Attitudes to offending	Ns	.997
Neighbourhood factors	Ns	.845

Variable(s) entered on step 1: living arrangements, family, education, neighbourhood, lifestyle, substance, physical health, mental health, perceptions, thinking, attitudes, motivation. \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

The table shows that the odds of having Children’s Services contact are greater for young people with family, mental health, physical health and living issues. Those with a family risk score of three to four were 3.8 times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with a score of zero to two. The odds were 2.8 times higher for those with mental health issues, 2.7 for those with physical health issues (though not statistically significant), and 2.5 times higher for living issues. Young people with scores of three to four in relation to perceptions, motivation, ETE and lifestyle were also more likely to have Children’s Services contact. Substance use, thinking, attitudes and neighbourhood factors were not statistically significantly in relation to Children’s Services contact.

#### 4.4 The factors most strongly associated with Children's Services contact

A final model was generated which included only the variables that were previously shown to have a statistically significant relationship with Children's Services contact. This showed that, when controlling for other variables, factors such as perceptions, motivation and lifestyle were no longer statistically significant. These variables were therefore omitted from the final model which is presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Factors most strongly associated with Children's Services contact**

Independent variable	Statistical significance	Increased odds of Children's Services contact
Being in the 10 to 12 age group	***	3.2
Being in the 13 to 15 age group	***	1.9
Being female	***	2.4
More than 10 offences	***	9.4
Six to 10 offences	***	4.1
Two to five offences	***	1.9
Living arrangements	***	2.6
Family	***	3.3
Education	*	1.3
Mental health	***	2.4

Variable(s) entered on step 1: age, gender, offence number, living arrangements, family, education, mental health. \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

The model tells us that when controlling for all of the other variables:

- Age is significantly related to the likelihood of Children's Services contact. Young people in the age group 10 to 12 years are more than three times more likely to have had Children's Services contact than young people aged 16 or over.
- Gender is significantly related to the likelihood of Children's Services contact. Females are 2.4 times more likely to have had Children's Services contact than males.
- The number of previous offences committed is significantly related to the likelihood of Children's Services contact. Young people who have committed more than 10 offences are 9.4 times more likely to have had Children's Services contact than those who have committed one offence.

- Young people who are recorded on *Asset* as having family issues that could be highly associated with future offending (scores of three or four) are more than three times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with scores of zero to two.
- Young people who are recorded on *Asset* as having mental health issues that could be highly associated with future offending (scores of three or four) are more than twice more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with scores of zero to two.
- Young people who are recorded on *Asset* as having living arrangements issues that could be highly associated with future offending (scores of three or four) are more than twice more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with scores of zero to two.
- Young people who are recorded on *Asset* as having education issues that could be highly associated with future offending (scores of three or four) are 1.3 times more likely to have had Children’s Services contact than those with scores of zero to two.

#### 4.4.1 The factors most strongly associated with *current* Children’s Services contact

The model presented above was also run by using the dependent variable of “current Children’s Services contact”. As might be expected, this model showed similarities to the one outlined above. In summary:

- **The relationship between demographic characteristics and current Children’s Services contact** – as with the model outlined above, being in the 10 to 12 age group and being female are the demographic characteristics most commonly associated with current contact. Those in the 10 to 12 age group are 2.8 times more likely to have current contact than those aged 16 or over. Females are 2.2 times more likely to have current contact than males (significant at 0.00 level).
- **The relationship between offending and current Children’s Services contact** – as with the model outlined above, when demographic variables are controlled for, young people with more than 10 offences recorded are more likely to have current contact (statistically significant). Young people with more than 10 offences recorded are more than five times more likely to have current contact than those with one offence recorded (for *any* contact the odds ratio is 14:1).
- **The relationship between *Asset* scores and current Children’s Services contact** – as with the model above, living arrangements, family issues, motivation and mental health issues are strongly associated with current contact. Young people with high risk scores for family issues are 3.8 times more likely to have Children’s Services contact than those with low scores (the same odds ratio as in the model above), those with high risk scores for mental health issues and motivational issues are nearly twice as likely to have current Children’s Services contact, while those with living issues are 1.4 times more likely.

A summary of the final model for the relationship between these independent variables and current Children’s Services contact is outlined in Table 4.9. As with the model for any Children’s Services contact (see Table 4.8), a number of variables are closely associated with the odds of having contact. In both models:

1. Being in the 10 to 12 age group increases chances of Children’s Services contact (as opposed to being in the 16 or over age group) by three to one.
2. Being female (as opposed to male) doubles the chance of Children’s Services contact.

3. Young people with more than 10 previous offences recorded on *Asset* are three times more likely to have current Children's Services contact than those with one offence recorded (for any contact, the odds are 9:1).
4. For young people with current Children's Services contact, the risk factors that are most commonly associated with contact are family issues, motivational issues and mental health issues. For models, family and mental health issues were significantly related to Children's Services contact.

**Table 4.9: Final model summary of factors most strongly associated with current Children's Services contact**

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Statistical significance</b>	<b>Increased odds of current Children's Services contact (figures in brackets are odds for any Children's Services contact)</b>
Being in the 10 to 12 age group	***	3.4 (3.2)
Being in the 13 to 15 age group	***	2 (1.9)
Being female	***	2.2 (2.4)
More than 10 offences	***	3.1 (9.4)
Six to 10 offences	***	3.2 (4.1)
Two to five offences	ns	1.7 (1.9)
Motivation	***	1.8 (ns)
Family	***	3.3 (3.3)
Education	*	.733 (1.3)
Mental health	***	2 (2.4)

\*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

#### 4.5 Young people at-risk and Children's Services contact

Overall, a total of 3,102 prevention cases were collected. Of these, 121 were collected from area one, 1,225 from area two, and 1,756 from area three. A total of 10% (n=295) of the sample had any contact with Children's Services recorded in their social care history in Onset (or had a social security number on YOIS).<sup>48</sup> This percentage is lower than for the sample of convicted/remanded young people collected in YOIS (which was 43%). This suggests that young people who are referred to the YOT because they are deemed to be at risk are either less likely to have ever had any contact with Children's Services or that the relevant data on Children's Services contact are not fully recorded.

Despite the low prevalence rate of Children's Services contact for the at-risk sample, there are some similar patterns in the characteristics of the sample as compared with the convicted group. In relation to key demographic data (ethnicity, age and gender), it is observed that:

1. **Ethnicity** – Asian young people at risk were the ethnic group *least* likely to have Children's Services contact. A total of 4% (n=17) of the Asian sample had Children's Services contact recorded, compared with 8% (n=17) of those classified as black and 10% (n=174) of those classified as white. This pattern is similar to the one observed for the convicted sample – the base sample of cases was 2,283 and data are significant at the 0.001 level.
2. **Age** – the percentage of at-risk young people entering the YOT with Children's Services contact falls with age – again, similar to the pattern observed for the convicted sample. Overall, 18% (n=64) of the at-risk sample in the 10–12 age group had Children's Services contact recorded in UMIS. This is compared with 10% (n=56) for the 13–15 age group and 5% (n=40) for those aged 16 or over – the base sample of cases was 1,760 and data are significant at the 0.001 level.
3. **Gender** – at-risk females are more likely to have Children's Services contact recorded than males – again, similar to the convicted sample. Overall, 11% (n=160) of females had Children's Services contact recorded on UMIS compared with 9% (n=53) of males – the base sample of cases was 2,323, although data are not statistically significant.

Data were also collected on the Onset assessment of risks. This makes an assessment of risk and need across a number of factors, including neighbourhood factors, lifestyle, substance misuse, physical health, mental health, perceptions, thinking and behavior, attitudes to offending and motivation to change. As with *Asset* assessment, a score is given from zero to four to indicate the likelihood of the factor being associated with further offending. Table 4.10 presents a comparison of the percentage of young people at risk and classified as being at high risk in each of the main Onset assessment categories with Children's Services contact with those with no contact.

<sup>48</sup> A total of 19% (n=23) of the sample in area one had contact with Children's Services recorded, 11% (n=131) in area two, and 8% (n=141) in area three.

**Table 4.10: Percentage of young people at risk with Children’s Services contact classified as being at high risk in each of the main Onset assessment categories compared with those with no Children’s Services contact**

	Percentage of young people classed as high risk with Children’s Services contact	Percentage of young people classed as high risk with no Children’s Services contact	Statistical significance	Base sample
Thinking and behaviour	42	35	***	2240
Neighbourhood	40	35	Ns	2252
Lifestyle	37	29	*	2238
Mental health	36	18	***	2241
Perceptions	24	21	ns	2241
Substance	22	15	ns	2245
Motivation	13	11	ns	2224
Attitudes	18	17	ns	2232
Physical health	7	9	**	2240

NB: data were missing for living arrangements, family and education. \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level; \* significant at 0.05 level.

The table highlights that young people with Children’s Services contact recorded were more likely to be classified as high risk across all Onset groups except physical health. They were statistically significantly more likely to be rated as high risk in relation to thinking and behavior, lifestyle and mental health issues. A total of 42% (n=89) rated as high risk in relation to thinking and behavior had Children’s Services contact compared with 35% (n=629) in the same category with no Children’s Services contact (statistically significant at the 0.001 level), 37% (n=79) rated as high risk in relation to lifestyle had Children’s Services contact compared with 29% (599) in the same category with no Children’s Services contact (statistically significant at the 0.05 level), and 36% (n=76) rated as high risk in relation to mental health had Children’s Services contact compared with 18% (n=401) in the same category with no Children’s Services contact (statistically significant at the 0.001 level). It is also interesting to note that thinking and behaviour was the *Asset* category in which convicted young people with Children’s Services contact were most likely to be ranked as high risk, and lifestyle was the third highest – also the same as the at-risk sample.

## 4.6 Summary

The data show that a high proportion of young people who are remanded/convicted have Children's Services contact and that there are statistically significant associations between the demographic characteristics of young people, risk factors as measured in *Asset* and Children's Services contact. In summary:

- **The proportion of young people within the Youth Justice System receiving Children's Services assistance** – previous research suggests that young people with Children's Services contact have a higher risk of having contact with the criminal justice system than young people who do not have any Children's Services contact. Case file data analysis of more than 7,000 cases from across 14 YOT areas shows that a high proportion (43%) of young people who are known to YOTs have had Children's Services contact at some point in their lives. The data also show that 15% are thought to have current Children's Services contact. In the sample, the young people with Children's Services contact were most likely to have an accommodation by voluntary agreement, be on the child protection register, or have a care order in place.
- **The measurement of risk for young people with Children's Services contact** – young people with Children's Services contact tended to be more likely to record higher scores in *Asset* than young people who did not have any contact. It is impossible to know if these high risks factors lead to Children's Services contact or if the knowledge of Children's Services contact helps to increase the scores which are put into *Asset* by caseworkers.
- **The characteristics of young people in the Youth Justice System in need of social service provision** – young people with previous or current Children's Services contact have a number of clearly identifiable characteristics. The case data analyses show that there is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics such as age and gender and the likelihood of children's services contact. The number of previous offences committed is also significantly related to the likelihood of contact, as are having high *Asset* scores recorded in relation to family issues, mental health issues, living arrangements and education, training and employment. The profile of somebody recorded on YOIS as having Children's Services contact is likely to:
  - be in the 10–12 age group
  - be female
  - have committed more than 10 offences
  - have a high *Asset* score in the categories of family, mental health, living arrangements and ETE.

The sample of at-risk cases also suggests that a relatively high proportion of young people who are referred to YOTs for prevention interventions are also likely to have had Children's Services contact at some point in their lives. However, questions remain over the quality of prevention data, particularly whether social care fields on Onset are completed by caseworkers.

## 5.0 Practitioner views about the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services

A number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners in five YOT areas. These interviews built upon the quantitative work presented in the previous chapters by considering the views of practitioners with specific experience of working within YOTs and Children's Services. In particular, the interviews were designed to probe into:

1. **Strategic issues** – this included discussion in relation to the following key themes with practitioners:
  - perspectives on strategy
  - the local authority structure and location of YOTs in that structure
  - protocols between YOTs and Children's Services
  - shared objectives between the agencies.
2. **Operational issues** – this was primarily focused upon the types of interaction between YOTs and Children's Services (and key issues/challenges resulting from this interaction) and how effectively respondents thought the two organisations work together. Specific areas of discussion focused upon:
  - information exchange between YOTs and Children's Services
  - communication issues between the agencies
  - referrals and assessment of young people
  - quality of service provision
  - working with young people in need of Children's Services intervention/support
  - the corporate parenting role and who should take responsibility for this.

As part of the agreement to participate in the research, most of the respondents required assurances that the findings would remain confidential and that specific comments would not be attributed to their area. Many were keen to stress that they were keen to offer candid responses in interviews, though, as they have to work with YOTs/Children's Services, both the area and the individual should remain anonymous. Therefore, the findings are presented across a number of key themes that emerged from the interviews and do not identify the locality. It should also be noted that the findings presented below are not meant to be generalised to all areas in England and Wales, although they are considered to be indicative of the key challenges that are likely to be faced across many YOTs.

### 5.1 Area profiles

The five YOT areas included in the sample had all taken part in the online survey and had indicated differing strengths and weaknesses in their relationship with Children's Services. A synopsis of the scores for some of the key issues considered in the online survey is presented in Table 5.1. A score is given for each YOT for each issue according to whether they said that the issue was rated five (for very good) to one (for very poor). This gives a total potential score

of 65, with the YOTs that view their relationship with Children's Services most positively having the higher scores. An overall percentage score is given in the bottom row of the table.

Overall, there were large differences in the views that YOTs had about a number of aspects of their relationship with Children's Services. Area S had the highest percentage score (at 91), and area M had the lowest (at 47). In particular, the table highlights areas of variation over specific issues. This suggests that provision in relation to appropriateness of referrals from Children's Services to YOT prevention services was viewed as being good, indicated by a score of four. However, issues such as the Children's Services ability to provide appropriate remand facilities and the effectiveness of Children's Services in discharging PACE remands were perceived as being fair or poor, indicated by scores of 1.6 and 3 respectively. Area M gave the highest number of lower scores and rated the effectiveness of Children's Services to discharge its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands and the ability of Children's Services to provide appropriate remand facilities as very poor. Two other areas (B and C) also rated the ability of Children's Services to provide appropriate remand facilities as very poor, and area B rated sentence planning for looked-after children in the community as poor.

**Table 5.1: YOT managers' views about key aspects of their relationships with Children's Services (five YOT areas selected for interview)**

YOT area	L	M	S	B	C	Average score
Appropriateness of LAC referrals from Children's Services to YOT prevention services	3	*	5	*	4	4
Ability of YOT to access services located in Children's Services department	3	3	5	3	3	3.4
Exchange of information	4	2	5	4	3	3.6
Children's Services providing appropriate information to court team	4	2	5	4	3	3.6
Collaboration of YOT/Children's Services in terms of PACE remands	2	2	5	4	4	3.4
Effectiveness of Children's Services discharging responsibilities in respect of PACE remands	2	1	5	*	4	3
Children's Services providing appropriate remand facilities	3	1	2	1	1	1.6
SP: Children in need (custody)	3	2	4	5	3	3.4
SP: Children in need (community)	3	3	5	3	3	3.4
SP: LAC (custody)	4	3	5	2	3	3.4
SP: LAC (community)	4	3	5	1	3	3.2
SP: Vulnerable children (custody)	3	2	4	3	4	3.2
SP: Vulnerable children (community)	3	4	4	*	3	3.5
<b>Total area score (out of 65)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	
<b>Percentage score</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>63</b>	

Note: \* indicates that no answer was given or the respondent replied 'don't know'. For the YOTs where data are missing, the percentage score is calculated across the total cells where a score is available. Therefore, for area two, the percentage score is calculated out of 60 (as one cell of data is missing).

## **5.2 The interaction between YOTs and Children's Services**

The semi-structured interviews revealed a number of key themes that characterised the relationships and levels of interaction between YOTs and Children's Services departments. The interviews covered both the strategic and operational relationships between the two services. In general, managers' perceptions of the working relationship and the strategic framework that supported this were more positive than those of practitioners. The practitioners were more likely to indicate that at an operational level there were some significant issues with many of the protocols for joint working not being followed or simply being inadequate. A summary of the main themes that emerged from the interviews is presented below.

### 5.2.1 Overview of strategic perspectives

YOT managers and Children's Services managers across all areas presented a generally positive view of the strategic relationships between YOTs and Children's Services. There was a commonly held view that YOTs and Children's Services have different roles to play – Children's Services have a welfare function and YOTs have a justice function – although the two should complement each other. A YOT social worker succinctly stated her view of the respective roles of YOTs and Children's Services:

*“YOTs' and Children's Services' objectives are very different – but they are meant to be. The two are meant to complement each other through the court system.”*

Across most areas, there were a number of strategic alliances which incorporated young peoples' services and YOT services for discussion and collaboration. Both YOT managers and the directors of Children's Services suggested that YOTs and Children's Services relationships were largely favourable<sup>49</sup> and, aside from some inevitable protectiveness around respective budgets, there was a significant level of understanding around the respective roles of each agency. The development of authority wide Children's Plans and Youth Justice Plans were reported to have consolidated the strategic objectives across the two agencies and brought in other agencies for better multi-agency working overall. For example, in one area:

*“The multi-agency TYSS [Targeted Youth Support Services] does most of the prevention work and is coming together very well. It is resourced from a pooled budget between the YOT and Children's Services.”*

### 5.2.2 Local authority structure

In relation to the local authority structure, it was indicated above (see Table 5.1) that the five YOT areas reflected a range of models for positioning the YOT within the local authority structures, essentially within Children's Services, Community Safety or the Chief Executive's Department. In discussing the impact of this on Children's Services provision for YOT clients, it was suggested in those YOTs within Community Safety Departments and Chief Executive's Departments that Children's Services provision might be better if the YOT was situated within Children's Services. Similarly, those more clearly situated within or alongside Children's Services felt this to be an advantage. However, the same issues were raised across the different models suggesting that this is a perception that is not necessarily borne out in practice. Overall, access to a range of services was considered to benefit from agencies being housed within the same office/building rather than simply within the same directorate, particularly at operational level. As one YOT manager pointed out:

*“It may be that the YOT should be within Children's Services as we have strategic links with the Children and Young Person's Trust. However, we also have strong links with crime reduction and the key requirements for information sharing and joint ways of working can be developed without changing the structure.”*

<sup>49</sup> Even in areas in which the online survey results suggested that the overall relationship was “fair” (see Table 2.4), both YOT managers and Children's Services directors were largely positive in interview.

### 5.2.3 Protocols

The online survey revealed that protocols existed across a number of areas. The interviews with managers confirmed that protocols exist for a range of areas of joint working, although staff had not necessarily been made aware of and/or trained in the practice of them. In three of the areas, new protocols were being developed and existing protocols were being reviewed in light of practice issues. Specific protocols around looked-after children were referred to by managers and included a Service Level Agreement for Looked-After Children (LAC), and a “revamped” LAC protocol on the status of remanded young people. There were few areas in which additional protocols were said to be needed but those that did included protocols to deal with high-risk young people and for young people involved in sexual offending.

There were some general differences reported in relation to knowledge about protocols between managers/directors of service and practitioners. When probed, practitioners often thought they had heard about protocols for specific arrangements/working practices, but they had rarely seen or read them, and in some cases respondents were completely unaware of them. Social workers were more likely to be unaware of the protocols relating to joint working than YOT workers. It was reported that in crises there was sometimes a desperate bid to identify and locate a relevant protocol. Overall, the response of practitioners to the existence of protocols suggested that they did not form the bedrock of practice and that this was not a priority for them. Managers supported the idea that further training in relation to joint protocols would be of benefit to joint working practices.

### 5.2.4 Shared objectives

There was general agreement between YOT and Children’s Services managers and staff that the objectives of both agencies were more or less in line, bearing in mind the relative focus on offending and welfare. Shared objectives were evidenced, for example, by the joint adoption of performance indicators around reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. However, while the development of Children’s Plans had presented a positive step for integrating objectives, it was stated by one respondent that:

*“The integration of funding to reach these targets has been more problematic.”*

There was consensus among the interviewees that the two agencies commonly focused on slightly different age groups, with YOTs concentrating on older children and Children’s Services on younger ones. This particularly applied to the referral and assessment teams and long-term teams, although 16+ teams would be more likely to have shared responsibility for YOT clients.

Children’s Services staff also thought that the focus of YOT staff was more specialist and focused on administering court orders, while Children’s Services staff had a broader welfare responsibility. Conversely, YOT staff sometimes felt that they took a more holistic approach while Children’s Services staff focused on their statutory responsibility. However, in one area it was reported that:

*“The focus for both is now more on welfare and the emotional resilience of young people.”*

Both groups agreed that some interventions were more appropriately delivered by YOTs. However, there was a view among Children’s Services staff that YOT caseworkers overstepped their brief on occasion and took on an advocacy role for young people, demanding services that Children’s Services were not in a position to provide, such as pushing for a young person to be accommodated when this might not be in the interests of the young person and when it might discourage the young person from taking responsibility for him or

herself. This could sometimes cause resentment between staff from each agency and place a strain on working relationships.

In practical terms, examples were given of social workers and YOT workers sharing the responsibility for statutory visits, e.g. boarding out visits to homes for LAC, which was thought to be a helpful deployment of resources. Under Fostering Regulations 2002, it is expected that the child will usually be visited within the first seven days of placement and cases are reviewed within 28 days. There was evidence from the interviews that there was often close liaison in respect of such visits and YOT caseworkers took a close interest in the outcome of such visits.

#### **5.2.5 Information exchange**

The mechanisms for accessing information in relation to young people varied across the YOT areas. For example, in one area, YOT admin workers had access to the Children's Services case management system (Care First), in another area, there was no access to a case management system but there was a borough-wide information system in place that held key data on individuals and which was made available to all relevant agencies. Interviewees felt that it would be beneficial to have access to each other's case management systems, although they recognised that there would need to be protocols around confidentiality. There was sometimes a need to "dig around" to establish whether a young person was involved with other agencies, and workers from both agencies would welcome systems that made this information available from the outset as this would speed up the process for dealing with cases.

In most areas, the view was that information on young people was made readily available to each agency, usually on request. However, in two areas, interviewees did suggest that on occasion obstacles were put in the way of accessing information. For example, it was common for referring requests to be passed up to management, to be refused access to hard-copy case files or for obstacles to be placed in the way of sharing information generally. These complaints came from both Children's Services and YOTs. As one respondent commented:

*"I'm a persistent chaser so I always get the information I need, but others might not because the information systems aren't always adequate and information is not always up-to-date."*

A point was also raised by interviewees about the format in which information is exchanged. It was mentioned that information was not always presented in a consistent format. Sometimes a very useful summary of a young person's background was produced while at other times the receiving worker had to wade through reams of unedited material. In either scenario, there would be a requirement on one party to spend time identifying the relevant information. Overall, there was little concern about the accuracy of the information provided by either agency.

#### **5.2.6 Liaison and communication**

Most contact between YOT caseworkers and Children's Services social workers was conducted via telephone and email exchange. Though referral forms existed in the areas, it was not uncommon for these to be bypassed in favour of informal approaches such as email. The effectiveness of communication was said to rely on the quality of the relationships between individual workers with some workers being considered to be significantly more helpful than others. Unsatisfactory communication was more commonly reported by YOT caseworkers but was also a concern of some social workers and was characterised by:

- difficulty of access (telephones unanswered, no mobile numbers given out)

- gate-keeping at administrative/reception level
- poor relaying of messages
- none or tardy response to messages or requests for information
- insufficient feedback between parties on decisions taken
- high staff turnover and long-term sickness.

More formal points of contact included multi-agency meetings such as “Professional’s Meetings”, “Complex Needs Panels”, “Case Conferences”, “Core Group meetings”, “Case Planning Meetings” and “LAC reviews” as well as “Early Intervention Groups”. In one YOT it was reported that “Strategy meetings” with the police should involve the YOT if the young person under discussion is over 14, regardless of whether any offending has taken place. However, the YOT had never attended any of these meetings, and it was unknown whether this was due to a failure to invite them or a failure on their part to attend. There was also some uncertainty as to whether the systems for advising non-present agencies of outcomes from the multi-agency meetings were being followed effectively. Similarly, in one area, the requirement for a central contact centre to report back on progress with referrals to Children’s Services within 24 hours was regularly not met.

It was suggested by a number of practitioners that joint training would help to iron out some of these difficulties, as would the opportunity for shadowing and reciprocal secondments between the two agencies.

### **5.2.7 Referrals and assessment**

Referrals directly from Children’s Services to YOT prevention programmes were relatively rare according to the interviewees, and social workers were not always aware of which prevention programmes were available. Indeed, in one area, prevention work was not provided by the YOT. However, mention was made in other YOT areas of specific local programmes that were highly thought of and recommended to parents by social workers. Additionally, there was evidence in all areas of the recent development of locality-based referral mechanisms across local authority areas designed to identify young people at risk of anti-social behaviour and offending and provide a multi-agency response, e.g. Referral Action Group, Area Casework Panels and the Targeted Youth Support Service. These developments are in line with national policy developments and have succeeded in providing a more robust framework for the multi-agency consideration and signposting of referrals. Where multi-agency referral mechanisms existed within local areas, Children’s Services were part of this system. However, in one area it was reported that there was a stigma within Children’s Services and schools about referring non-offenders to YOTs. It was suggested that this could only be overcome if there were closer links between YOTs, Children’s Services and the local education authority, and if there was a clear understanding of what prevention work was designed to achieve. As one respondent stated, the principal challenges for prevention work are:

*“Communication, clear delineation of responsibilities and priorities, and the management of young people’s expectations.”*

Referrals from YOTs to Children’s Services were more common, although YOT caseworkers did have some concerns in this area. Thresholds for Children’s Services intervention were considered to be very high in all areas and both YOTs and Children’s Services workers agreed that they generally exceeded the level at which intervention was considered necessary or beneficial by YOTs. Thresholds were particularly high for children in need. Through experience,

YOTs were cognisant of Children's Services thresholds in their local area and targeted their referrals accordingly. While this kept the number of inappropriate referrals to a minimum, it increased the possibility of some young people being denied access to services.<sup>50</sup> It was suggested by some Children's Services respondents that there was insufficient acknowledgement that resources had been diverted away from Children's Services with an increasing focus on early intervention and that this cutting away of Children's Services budgets had led to higher and higher thresholds.

The employment or secondment of social workers within YOTs was also considered to be vital for promoting common understanding of the opportunities and constraints around Children's Services provision. This was also felt to have been significant in examples where YOTs had successfully referred concerns around child protection to Children's Services and/or conducted work with siblings. In one case, a YOT-employed social worker had made an s47<sup>51</sup> referral after a home visit during which a father struck his daughter. The daughter was subsequently taken into care. Having dedicated or seconded social workers within the YOT also provided a natural bridge and increased the quality of liaison between the two agencies. Those areas that did not have this in place indicated that this would be a significant improvement to the service. In one area, a new LAC social worker post had been set up within the YOT with the specific remit to:

- Reduce the number of looked-after children entering the criminal justice system and to reduce the level of LAC re-offending.
- Take an overview of all looked-after children engaged with the YOT and try to strengthen relationships between the relevant YOT caseworker and the Children's Services social worker.
- Build up the referrals relationships as both agencies have a weak understanding of the other's remit.
- Identify gaps in focus, such as those who are in foster care rather than in a residential unit.

Less common but equally valuable, one area had YOT workers seconded to the LAC social work team.

Participants were asked about the impact of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) on joint working and assessment. In most areas, CAF was not fully operational so the final impact was not known. There had, however, been some teething difficulties with the introduction of CAF, such as a lack of understanding about how to use it effectively and a concern that most YOT clients are "beyond" CAF stage. There were also some concerns about the potential for duplication of information across CAF and Onset/Asset. In one area, there had been a pilot

<sup>50</sup> It was also mentioned by one YOT member of staff that it was particularly difficult to deal with young offenders who were in the UK illegally as access to social care for this group is limited.

<sup>51</sup> Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries into the circumstances of children considered to be at risk of "significant harm" and, where these enquiries indicate the need, to undertake a full investigation into the child's circumstances.

project to copy information across from Onset/Asset into CAFs, but this had not been widened out across the entire local authority area. More positively, an example was given of the YOT using CAF with reprimand/final warning cases to allow a multi-agency response rather than a three-month order. This had helped to keep Children's Services involved in cases from which they would otherwise have backed off.

### **5.2.8 Quality of service provision**

It was recognised by both YOT caseworkers and social workers that resource restrictions had a significant impact on the breadth and quality of provision. This mutual understanding ameliorated potential conflict between the two agencies over this issue, but was nevertheless a source of frustration among YOT caseworkers.

YOT caseworkers were concerned that Children's Services support for YOT clients was often reactive and consisted of the minimum practical support around money, benefits and accommodation, and did not encompass the full range of welfare and emotional support which their clients needed. Requests for additional interventions, e.g. around sexual abuse, can be made but it is difficult to ensure that it takes place. Action was often prompted only by a crisis, and social care plans were not always followed as they should be. Where accommodation was provided, it was not always considered to be appropriate or of sufficient quality. It was also mentioned that there was often particular pressure on secure placements and YOTs and Children's Services did not necessarily agree over court decisions to make these placements – YOTs sometimes held their own budgets for this. Remand into local authority accommodation was always provided when required but commonly involved a placement with family or friends. Overall, accommodation was a significant issue that primarily reflected a lack of local resources such as dedicated custody and remand facilities as well as suitable alternatives to custody. One area mentioned the need for more independent accommodation for over 16s. This is clearly a difficult area and one that undermines the quality of service provision. As one Children's Services respondent pointed out:

*“The criteria should be well-shared and services driven by evidence of what has a positive long-term impact rather than short-term crisis management.”*

Similarly, a YOT worker reported that:

*“In one case a young person was accommodated only because of the Judge's intervention. The system should work better than this.”*

It was mentioned by one YOT worker that support was provided for young people in relation to prevention and for those on orders, but not for young people on bail. In addition to this, substance misuse was also mentioned as another poorly resourced area, given the scale of the problem among YOT clients. In one area, YOT staff felt that neither they nor Children's Services staff were adequately trained to deal with this aspect of the work. In another,

however, a resettlement aftercare provision team<sup>52</sup> provides resources for young people given custodial or community sentence and has proven to be very successful, particularly in negotiating access to accommodation.

Timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and prevarication over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. There was a concern that situations were allowed to deteriorate in the intervening periods between referrals and action. Similarly, though sentence planning and pre-sentence reports were usually based on the YOT assessments, there was an occasional complaint that, when Children's Services input was required, it was not always produced in time. One social worker did, however, suggest that in her area the views of social workers were often overlooked in relation to sentence planning and in particular pre-sentence reports. As she stated:

*"There is a general feeling that YOTs do not fully consider the recommendations of social work in pre-sentence reports."*

YOTs were particularly frustrated by an inability to access support around mental health, sexual abuse and offending, and other complex psychological and emotional needs. These were areas where there were not only insufficient resources, but also a lack of clarification on relative roles and funding responsibilities, sometimes leading to conflict between the two services. YOTs also felt that the Children's Services provision for young people from outside the area was not good and that it was often the more complex and needy cases that moved around, particularly following consecutive breakdowns in placements. One social worker also commented that:

*"transfer into [their] area often placed a severe strain on resources."*

In some instances, staff shortages within both YOTs and Children's Services were also a source of poor quality service provision, particularly when this resulted in regular changes in a young person's caseworker. Examples were also given of social workers' willingness to help going unsupported by Children's Services management. Budgetary constraints were considered to be the cause of these difficulties and YOT workers were mindful of the pressure that social workers were under. Also, despite the issues raised, YOT and Children's Services workers were satisfied that effective joint working did happen and that there were some very successful initiatives and protocols in place.

One YOT worker summarised what was required to promote effective working as:

<sup>52</sup> This is a part of the national Resettlement and Aftercare Programme which aims to provide ongoing support for young people in prison or on licence, support and help with employment and housing issues, and to help young people reach their goals and escape the re-offending cycle.

*“Meeting as joint teams, educating Children’s Services about what YOTs do and vice versa, explaining the different orders and why they are used and greater transparency about what happens and why.”*

The nature of the local authority area also presented difficulties that impeded the provision of services. This ranged from significant levels of deprivation and transient populations in the urban and metropolitan areas to the magnification of costs involved in providing services across a diffuse and sparsely populated area.

### **5.2.9 Working with young people**

Some of the interviewees highlighted differences in the way that the respective agencies worked with young people. YOTs were keen to promote work around restorative justice, mediation, peer mentoring and victim-focused work. Examples were given of successful initiatives taking place within children’s homes where, in general, there is a concern that behaviour management relies heavily on sanctions and restrictions on behaviours and not on reparation or a more cognitive approach. Also, there was a view that there are not the same expectations in relation to the parenting initiatives that young people (and their parents) in children’s homes should receive as compared with other young people who might not be looked after. Therefore this group of young people were thought to be missing out where others were benefiting from parenting initiatives.

There was also a view expressed from some Children’s Services interviewees that YOT workers had insufficient professional boundaries in their work with young people and actively promoted a “good cop, bad cop” division between the two services. As one respondent stated:

*“Sometimes there is a sense that the YOT encourages young people to play the system and this is not always in the interests of the system.”*

Overall, there was a concern about the robustness of risk assessment, risk management and joint planning around offending behaviour and other areas. This was more of an issue with, for example, children in need than with looked-after children where there was a greater sense of planning.

### **5.2.10 Corporate parenting**

Interviewees were generally clear on the statutory responsibilities each agency had for young people. For young people on an order, the YOT has a clear responsibility to manage the order while Children’s Services had statutory responsibility for the management of care orders, looked-after children and those on the child protection register. There was less agreement over the non-statutory aspects of supporting young people and regarding children in need.

A common perception among YOT caseworkers was that Children’s Services would actively withdraw their support once a young person came under the authority of the YOT, with the expectation that the YOT would pursue access to a range of support services such as education support and substance misuse services. As one YOT worker stated:

*“Most of the time we just want to work collaboratively and get interventions and help for the young person but it feels like the YOT is expected to deliver all of this.”*

This was reported to be the case even if the welfare needs were great and the offending behaviour was relatively minor. An example given to support this regarded a young woman with complex needs whose minor offending was entirely related to her behaviour within a children’s home, which was, in their view, the root of the problem. Addressing the relationship between care and offending was a stated aim in some of the areas and, in at least one area,

there had been joint working between the police, the YOT and Children's Services to bring down first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. There is a particular focus here in relation to first-time entrants among looked-after children, regarding incidents that result in police action within a care setting that could actually be resolved within the family without intervention.

The view of Children's Services social workers was that it is entirely appropriate for the YOT to take the lead with young people on orders unless there are significant child protection concerns. YOTs were considered to have greater resources at their disposal to support young people in a wide range of areas and often had more regular contact with the young person. There was considerable dispute around looked-after children. Some YOT staff felt that Children's Services should take the lead on these, whereas Children's Services staff felt that this was essentially an administrative issue and there were not sufficient grounds for the YOT to move overall responsibility on to Children's Services.

Some YOT staff also had some further concerns that once a young person was in custody, Children's Services did not always discharge their responsibilities for conducting looked-after children's reviews. It was mentioned that, occasionally, attempts to involve social workers in meetings at YOTs were unsuccessful. It was suggested that YOTs and Children's Services should engage in more joint planning which would provide a clearer framework for support and reduce disputes over relative responsibilities. On a positive note, in one area, the YOT manager reported:

*"There has been much debate about whether young people coming out of custody are children in care. The council has now agreed to take these on, and Children's Services have been very accommodating in this area."*

### **5.3 Young people's experiences of YOTs and Children's Services**

In addition to the interviews that were completed with practitioners, a small number of supplementary interviews (n=6) were also completed with young people who had current experience of children's services contact. These interviews considered:

- types of contact with YOTs and Children's Services
- relationships with YOTs and Children's Services
- prevention work
- leaving care arrangements.

The young people interviewed had mixed views about their experience of YOTs and Children's Services. The sample (though small) consisted of a mixture of young people who had served community and custodial sentences and all had been looked-after children at some point in their lives.

All of the young people interviewed had clear ideas why they were involved with Children's Services and the YOT, though most had differing perceptions of Children's Services compared with YOTs. Generally, young people reported having better relationships with YOT caseworkers than with social workers. Three of the young people mentioned "honesty" and suggested that they felt that the YOT caseworkers had always been "honest" with them and were "interested in their situation". The view towards Children's Services could sometimes be less favourable. Here it was felt that Children's Services often move people from home to home with little warning and abandon them at the age of 16. As one young person succinctly put it:

*“They lie about arrangements, they say one thing about where you are going and visits to parents and then you move around [from home to home] and do something else.”*

There were, however, also positive reports from one young person about the way that the leaving care team in his area had helped him to secure accommodation. Though young people often did report a level of confusion about what was happening in terms of accommodation, it was also reported that they had looked-after children’s reviews every six months, and one person reported that his social worker was always available and happy to deal with problems at any time. As he stated in interview:

*“My big need was housing and the step from looked-after child to independent living. I got great help with moving out of foster care and setting up accommodation. Social services sorted out all the problems with foster care and moving.”*

There was also a view among the young people that while they realised why they had been served a community or custodial sentence, they often did not understand why they had to do specific prevention/intervention activities. One respondent summed up the general attitude towards prevention programmes when she said that a programme with the local fire brigade was “good fun”. When probed further in relation to why she was attending the course or what she hoped to achieve from the course, she was unsure. Another respondent was more reassuring in his view towards the prevention work he did with the YOT. He said that at the time he didn’t know why he was doing the work, but then (with hindsight) realised how it helped him start to think about his attitudes and views. As he stated in interview:

*“I liked the YOT programme work, I done prevention work which was useful ... I wasn’t sure at the time why I had to do these programmes at first, but then it got clearer.”*

The young people had difficulties in recalling the names of any of the courses/programmes that they had attended as part of prevention work or as a requirement of a sentence, and though some courses were described as fun (see above) the actual components of a course or any key learning outcomes were rarely remembered. What was of particular interest about the views of most of the young people in relation to contact with Children’s Services and YOTs was that they suggested that the experience with both agencies can improve over time. The key to this appeared to be based around forging good relationships with a key contact person in each agency. The young people often spoke more highly about specific individuals within agencies than any courses or activities they had done. What really appeared to matter to the young people was being able to trust the people they were dealing with, feeling that they were listened to and being clear about their accommodation arrangements.

## **5.4 Summary**

A summary of the main points from the interviews with practitioners are outlined below.

- 1. Strategic perspective** – YOTs/Children’s Services’ relationships were largely favourable and, aside from some inevitable protectiveness around respective budgets, there was a significant level of understanding of the respective roles of each agency.
- 2. Local authority structure** – the five YOT areas reflected a range of models for positioning the YOT within the local authority structures. It was suggested that access to a range of services was considered to benefit from agencies being housed within the same office/building rather than simply within the same directorate.

3. **Protocols** – protocols exist for a range of areas of joint working, though staff had not necessarily been made aware of and/or trained in the practice of them. There was sometimes also a view that protocols were not considered to be “the bedrock of practice” and were overlooked.
4. **Information sharing** – the mechanisms for accessing information varied across the YOT areas. Interviewees felt that it would be beneficial to have access to each other’s case management systems, although they recognised that there would need to be protocols around confidentiality. There appears to be a clear need for standardised and up-to-date record keeping that can be shared across YOTs and Children’s Services.
5. **Liaison and communication** – most of the contact between YOT caseworkers and Children’s Services social workers was conducted via telephone and email exchange. Though referral forms existed in the areas, it was not uncommon for these to be bypassed in favour of informal approaches. The effectiveness of communication was said to rely on the quality of the relationships between individual workers. More formal points of contact included multi-agency meetings such as “Professionals Meetings”, “Complex Needs Panels”, “Case Conferences”, “Core Group Meetings”, “Case Planning Meetings” and “LAC Reviews” as well as “Early Intervention Groups”.
6. **Referrals** – referrals directly from Children’s Services to YOT prevention programmes were relatively rare and social workers were not always aware of which prevention programmes were available. Recent developments in locality-based targeted youth work and addressing anti-social behaviour had improved multi-agency involvement in working with at-risk individuals in all of the areas. Referrals from YOTs to Children’s Services were more common, though thresholds for Children’s Services intervention were considered to be very high (and, therefore, exclusive) in all areas. The employment or secondment of social workers within YOTs was also considered to be vital for promoting common understanding of the opportunities and constraints around Children’s Services provision and should be encouraged.
7. **Quality of service provision** – it was recognised by both YOT caseworkers and Children’s Services social workers that resource restrictions had a significant impact on the breadth and quality of provision. This mutual understanding ameliorated potential conflict between the two agencies over this issue, but was nevertheless a source of frustration among YOT caseworkers. YOT caseworkers were, however, concerned that Children’s Services support for YOT clients was often reactive and consisted of the minimum practical support around money, benefits and accommodation. There was particular pressure on secure placements and YOTs and Children’s Services did not necessarily agree over court decisions to make these placements. Timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and prevarication over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. There was a concern that situations were allowed to deteriorate in the period between referral and action. In relation to service provision for those young people leaving care, there was evidence of good practice in relation to the development of resettlement aftercare provision teams which have been funded as part of the national Resettlement and Aftercare Programme.
8. **Shared objectives** – YOT and Children’s Services managers and staff felt that the objectives of both agencies were more or less in line, bearing in mind the relative focus on offending and welfare. Shared objectives were evidenced, for example, by the joint

adoption of performance indicators around reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system.

- 9. Working with young people** – differences were highlighted in the way that the respective agencies worked with young people. YOTs were keen to promote work around restorative justice, mediation, peer mentoring and victim-focused work. Children’s Services sometimes felt that YOT workers had insufficient professional boundaries in their work with young people and actively promoted a “good cop, bad cop” division between the two services. There was also a concern about the robustness of risk assessment, risk management and joint planning around offending behaviour and other areas. This was more of an issue with, for example, children in need than with looked-after children, where there was a greater sense of planning.
- 10. Corporate parenting** – interviewees were generally clear on the statutory responsibilities each agency had for young people. For young people on a court order, the YOT has a clear responsibility to manage the order while Children’s Services had statutory responsibility for the management of care orders, looked-after children and those on the child protection register. There was less agreement over the non-statutory aspects of supporting young people and regarding children in need.

The interviews with looked-after children revealed that:

1. Young people tended to view the YOTs more favourably than Children’s Services. There was a feeling from young people that Children’s Services abandon young people at the age of 16. Despite this, one young person was very positive about the leaving care support he received.
2. The young people had limited recollection of the prevention programmes or interventions they had completed.
3. Key to the relationship between young people and the YOT/Children’s Services appeared to be the strength of personal relationships that could be forged between children and key workers based in these agencies.
4. It was also particularly important for young people to “know where they stood” in terms of accommodation placement.

## 6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

The previous sections of this report present the evidence collected from the online survey, the case file analysis and the interviews with practitioners and with young people themselves. In this section, that evidence is discussed and drawn together in a conclusion. In doing so, the discussion seeks to address gaps in the YJB's current knowledge of this area, and in particular to estimate the proportion and characteristics of young people within the YJS who receive, or are in need of, social service provision. Further, the discussion will touch on the interaction between Children's Services and YOTs and how the respective organisations provide for young offenders, young people on remand and young people at risk of offending, identifying good practice and gaps in provision. A series of recommendations are also made on the basis of this discussion of the collected evidence.

### 6.1 Discussion

The evidence generated by this research study indicates that YOTs and local Children's Services departments are working together in the interests of children and young people, although there are some areas of practice where this relationship does not run smoothly. In examining this effort, the discussion will seek to identify what is being done jointly at a strategic level in terms of development of plans and protocols and also what is being achieved day-to-day at an operational level. This discussion, and the recommendations that follow, will highlight areas of good practice and areas where the relationship can be improved upon. However, before examining how the relationship is founded and put into effect, the need for a closer relationship is discussed with reference to the analysis of the research evidence.

#### 6.1.1 The need for a closer relationship

One of the main aims of this research was to identify the proportion and characteristics of young people within the YJS who receive or are in need of social service provision. This is an important question since previous research suggests that children who are perceived as being in need, looked-after or vulnerable are more likely to enter the criminal justice system than children outside these groups. Further, such children and young people also possess a number of identifiable risk factors that promote the likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system. For example, Fielder (1997) highlighted that 20% of young people in custody were looked-after or recent care leavers and Pitts (2004) suggested that risk factors such as a lack of parental support, emotional problems and drug/alcohol use were commonly identified in looked-after children.

The focus of the current research was specifically to look at the proportion of young people within the YJS who were receiving assistance from Children's Services. Not surprisingly, the analysis of the case files broadly confirms the findings of previous research, and shows that a high proportion (43%) of young people who are known to YOTs have had Children's Services contact at some point in their lives. The data also show that 15% are thought to have "current" Children's Services contact.

Having identified the proportion of young people in the youth justice system that have had contact with Children's Services, it was possible to examine their characteristics. Again, looking at the characteristics of the young people from their case files, there is a statistically significant relationship between demographic characteristics such as age and gender and the likelihood

of Children's Services contact – the profile of a young person recorded on the YOT case management system in contact with Children's Services is most likely to be in the 10–12 age group, female, having committed more than 10 offences,, and having high *Asset* scores recorded in relation to family issues, mental health issues, living arrangements and education, training and employment.

Given that a high proportion of young people in the YJS are known to both YOTs and Children's Services and that they score highly on a number of risk factors associated with offending behaviour, it is important to understand the interaction between the two agencies and how it works in the interests of the children and young people concerned. In examining this interaction, the discussion will first look at how the relationship is formally founded (in terms of location of the YOT, strategic planning and development of protocols) and how it takes effect on a day-to-day basis.

### **6.1.2 How is the relationship founded?**

With regard to the location of the YOT, it is apparent that there has been a great deal of movement of YOTs across various departments in the past five years, with many YOTs being relocated into Children's Services departments for planning, partnership and operational reasons. Within a range of models for positioning the YOT in local authority structures, it was considered that physical co-location in the same office or building was more important than simply situating the YOT in the same directorate as Children's Services. Such physical co-location was said to improve access to services between the organisations and to make working relationships better and closer.

However, regardless of location, there is a great deal of interaction between YOTs and other agencies, including Children's Services, at a strategic level. Importantly, of all the statutory agencies that oversee the business of the YOTs, YOT managers reported that the attendance of Children's Services was particularly beneficial. This beneficial involvement became apparent in the development of strategic plans and operational protocols. There was a widespread consensus that YOTs and Children's Services closely shared common objectives in relation to the reduction of youth crime, and this was reflected in the number of YOTs stating that the Youth Justice Plan was reflected in the Children's Services' strategic planning documents, including the Children's Services Plans. It is, perhaps, not surprising that YOT and Children's Services managers and staff felt that the objectives of both agencies were more or less in line, bearing in mind the relative focus on offending and welfare. However, such relationships are often a statutory requirement: for young people on a court order, the YOT has a clear responsibility to manage the order, while Children's Services had statutory responsibility for the management of care orders, looked-after children and those on the child protection register. Respondents in interview were generally clear on the statutory responsibilities each agency had for young people and there was agreement over the non-statutory aspects of supporting young people and children in need.

Often the close links, joint planning and shared objectives were translated into protocols for day-to-day practice with young people on bail or remand, sentence planning for young offenders and referral to prevention programmes. It is evident from the research that YOTs and Children's Services were more likely to have protocols for young people on bail or remand: 87% of respondents reported that protocols existed for court bail and remands, 82% for PACE bails and remands. This is not surprising given the importance of securing accommodation for young people on remand and bail. However, it is notable that fewer respondents reported that there were protocols in place for sentence planning for young offenders for whom Children's Services had some responsibility – only 59% of respondents reported that they had protocols

dealing with sentence planning for looked-after children, while 45% and 43% of respondents reported that they had such protocols for children in need and vulnerable children respectively. Very few (39%) respondents reported having protocols to govern referrals of looked-after children to prevention programmes of the YOT.

### **6.1.3 How does the relationship work?**

Formal plans and written protocols aside, the day-to-day practice of YOT workers suggested that there are close working arrangements with Children's Services and reports of good practice. While relations between the respective organisations were reportedly favourable, there were shortcomings identified on a day-to-day basis of working, particularly with regard to the operation of the protocols, information sharing and the provision of services.

At the operational level, despite the widespread existence of protocols to cover areas where cooperation was necessary (particularly bail, remand and sentence planning), there was no universal knowledge of the protocols where they existed. Furthermore, where individuals were aware of the protocols, there were reports that they had not been trained in their implementation. This lack of awareness might have resulted in mixed reports of collaborative working, specifically, the appropriateness of referrals from Children's Services to YOT prevention services, the ability of YOTs to access Children's Services, and collaboration in relation to providing appropriate remand facilities.

A particular concern relating to day-to-day working was information sharing and liaison/communication. The mechanisms for accessing information varied across the YOT areas and some respondents suggested it could be difficult to access information on key individuals from the other agency. It was felt that it would be beneficial to have access to each other's case management systems, though it was recognised that there would need to be protocols around confidentiality. In relation to liaison and communication, it appeared that most of the contact between YOT caseworkers and Children's Services social workers was conducted via telephone and email exchange. Though referral forms existed in the areas, it was not uncommon for these to be bypassed in favour of informal approaches. The effectiveness of communication was said to rely on the quality of the relationships between individual workers, so to standardise matters, more formal points of contact were suggested. These included multi-agency meetings such as "Professionals Meetings", "Complex Needs Panels", "Case Conferences", "Core Group Meetings", "Case Planning Meetings" and "LAC Reviews" as well as "Early Intervention Groups".

Such improved communication might lead to better service delivery for young people. YOT caseworkers were concerned that Children's Services support for YOT clients was often reactive and consisted of the minimum practical support around money, benefits and accommodation. There was particular pressure on secure placements and YOTs and Children's Services did not necessarily agree over court decisions to make these placements. Timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and delay over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. There was a concern that situations were allowed to deteriorate in the intervening periods between referrals and action. Some differences were also highlighted in the way that the respective agencies worked with young people. YOTs were keen to promote work around restorative justice, mediation, peer mentoring and victim-focused work. Children's Services sometimes felt that YOT workers had insufficient professional boundaries in their work with young people and actively promoted a "good cop, bad cop" division between the two services. There was also a concern for the robustness of risk assessment, risk management and joint planning around offending behaviour and other areas.

This was more of an issue with, for example, children in need than with looked-after children where there was a greater sense of planning.

## 6.2 Conclusion

The key conclusion of this report suggests that although there are clearly a number of issues that appear to impact on the smooth running of the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services, it is generally thought that both agencies are able to work together efficiently and effectively to deliver services, both to young people at risk of offending and to those who have been convicted and need Children's Services. It is, of course, important to remember that since 1997 there has been significant re-organisation of the YJS and Children's Services (with the creation of YOT or YOTs and Children's Services authorities) and thus the partnership arrangements in place between these agencies are still relatively new. Previous research has suggested that the role of YOTs within local Children's Trusts Authorities has not always been clear and that the organisation and management of their relationship is subject to much local discretion (see for example Nacro, 2003; Fielder *et al*, 2007).

In line with the findings of previous research, the findings of this study confirm that the management of the YOT/Children's Services relationship does vary according to local contexts, and that local practitioners generally view this as being necessary to meet local service demands. Many of the issues that have been identified in previous research as a source of tension between YOTs and Children's Services are still in evidence today – such as securing places for young people remanded into Local Authority Accommodation and issues over sentence planning – though there is strong evidence of strategic and operational integration of YOTs and Children's Services in Children and Young People's Plans, Children's Services Plans, the development of joint protocols and through staff placements.

## 6.3 Recommendations

This study has shown that there is a great deal of joint strategic and operational work done by YOTs in partnership with Children's Services. Most (though not all) YOTs and Children's Services appear to have strong strategic relationships and there is clear evidence of the two agencies working together in integrated teams with Children's Services practitioners commonly working within YOTs. It is however apparent that there are weakness in relation to operational practices and it is on these that the recommendations primarily focus. The recommendations made are considered to be both achievable and within the clear resource constraints that all YOTs and Children's Services face:

1. **Completeness of assessment data in relation to social care history** – the study has highlighted that social care fields in both *Asset* and *Onset* assessments in relation to young people convicted/on remand and those considered to be at risk, respectively are often incomplete or have data missing. If the needs and characteristics of young people with a social care history or with social care needs are to be identified across YOT areas, then it is necessary to have robust data to hand. Caseworkers responsible for completing such assessments need to be made aware that these data are essential for understanding the risks and needs of young people with a social care history and thus records need to be complete. It is also essential that both *Onset* and *Asset* records are recorded electronically to allow easy access for caseworkers.
2. **Knowledge and operation of protocols** – YOTs and Children's Services need to have greater clarity over what protocols they have in place, where new protocols need to be

developed and to ensure that once a protocol is in place, there is widespread knowledge among management and operational staff. The results from the interviews suggest that there is a need for protocols around lead responsibilities for looked-after children, children in need, children leaving care and children leaving custody across all areas. One might have also expected to see a higher number of YOTs/Children's Services with protocols in relation to sentence planning for children in need and vulnerable young children. To achieve this, YOTs and Children's Services need to make a full audit of what protocols they have in place – a dedicated member of staff could do this from each relevant agency. Once this has been completed, all of the existing protocols should be compiled into a "handbook of joint working" across YOTs and Children's Services, which would be made available to all staff. This would provide a vital reference point for which protocols exist, allow staff to view them easily (and increase knowledge) and allow gaps to be identified easily.

3. **Information sharing across agencies** – both agencies require real-time information in relation to cases where they both have an input so that they have clear and up-to-date information on young people. At present, data on young people who have a care history and come to the attention of the YOT can be held in a variety of data systems and it is possible for one young person to have had a common assessment framework assessment (completed by Children's Services), an Onset assessment, and *Asset* assessment (completed by the YOT). There needs to be transparency across agencies about what data are held on young people and each agency should be allowed access to information. At present, tensions arise with YOTs requesting information from Children's Services which takes time to collate and pass back to the YOT. Much of this tension could be alleviated if there was common YOT/Children's Service access to systems. This could be achieved by allowing real-time access to these systems on shared secure networks. The success of this would obviously be dependent on the existing systems being updated by the relevant caseworkers.
4. **Joint planning across agencies** – all agencies involved with looked-after children, children in need, children leaving care and children leaving custody need to be involved in joint planning in relation to young people. There is close planning between YOTs and Children's Services, but there is a need for greater involvement of the local education authority (LEA) in relation to prevention issues with looked-after children. Encouraging the LEA to play a greater role in planning could be achieved by integrating Youth Justice Plans into local educational development plans, encouraging attendance to existing steering group meetings (and holding sessions on joint planning) or by holding dedicated half-day events with YOTs and LEAs. Such events would encourage dialogue in relation to planning and would place the issue on the agenda of all agencies concerned.
5. **Effective use of Children's Services knowledge** – caseworkers from Children's Services often feel that YOTs do not value or use their input in relation to looked-after children in pre-sentence reports/court reports. This is a key issue, as Children's Services caseworkers have specific experience of working with looked-after children and are aware of their specific welfare needs, which would appear to be essential at the pre-sentence report stage. Where a young person is being looked-after/has been looked-after or has close involvement with Children's Services, it would be advisable for a person with detailed knowledge of the young person's care history to have input into the pre-sentence report (PSR). It is acknowledged here that the preparation of such reports is time-consuming and requires a significant amount of YOT caseworker time. However, it would be in the best interests of the young person if there was a requirement to at least engage with somebody

with detailed knowledge of the young person's care history and include these details in the PSR.

6. **Transparency and understanding of roles generally** – there is a need for more transparency and understanding about what each agency does at a strategic and operational level, e.g. explaining YOT orders to Children's Services staff, details of care plans and clearer explanations to YOT staff of options that exist for support of young people that possibly do not reach the thresholds for Children's Services intervention. Both management and operational staff need a clearer understanding of what the overall strategic role of each organisation is and what involvement they might be expected to have in each other's business at an operational level. This might be achieved through management meetings or half-day "show and tell" conferences between the relevant people in each agency in each local authority.
7. **Greater YOT and Children's Services understanding of individual cases and what contact each agency has had with the young person concerned** – there is a need for more face-to-face contact between YOTs and Children's Services staff to understand their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to *specific* cases that involve YOTs and Children's Services input. It is apparent that the size of caseloads held by YOT and social workers make it difficult for staff to regularly maintain contact in these cross-agency cases. However, shared data systems (as long as they are regularly updated) could enable caseworkers from both agencies to access case records in real time (see information sharing above).
8. **Review thresholds for Children's Services interventions** – there is a requirement to conduct more research to review the thresholds in place for Children's Services interventions and to understand the differences in practice nationally. There was clear evidence in the interviews with practitioners that, although referrals from YOTs to Children's Services were fairly common, often the thresholds for Children's Services intervention were considered to be very high and, therefore, exclusive. In all areas there are strict assessment criteria in place in relation to those young people considered high, medium and low-risk. Tensions arise in relation to the low-risk groups (those with a common assessment framework assessment and in need of early intervention) rather than the medium-risk (S17 group: child in need) or the high-risk (S47 group: child protection). Where a case is considered to be below the threshold, Children's Services will provide information on other suitable services. There is evidence, however, that the criteria are not consistent from area to area and this requires further investigation.
9. **Timeliness of provision** – timeliness of provision was also an area of concern. YOT caseworkers reported waiting many months for core assessments to take place and prevarication over provision for young people approaching 18 years of age. Policy review is required here as it is important for the welfare of individuals for assessment and intervention to be timely. It is recommended that all assessments should be completed within strict timeframes and that this message needs to be filtered down to Children's Services.
10. **Leaving care support for looked-after children** – support for looked-after children leaving care appeared to be patchy from area to area. There is a need for greater clarity from leaving care teams about the level and type of support that young people can expect from Children's Services on leaving care. It is understood however that a number of issues identified here are being addressed in the national Resettlement and Aftercare Programme.

# Annex A: Review of Protocols between YOTs and Children's Services Authorities

## *Introduction*

The online questionnaire was developed by reviewing previous research literature in relation to links between YOT and Children's Services – see for example Every Child Matters and National Children Bureau Report of 2007 – conducting a brief telephone interview with a selection of YOTs and reviewing any documentation that YOTs were able to supply that set out any protocols/policies with their local Children's Services authority. This brief report outlines the protocols that were available across each area.

One YOT was selected across each government region, nine in England and one in Wales. The sample was also selected in order to provide a mixture of areas with high/low caseloads and an urban/rural mix. All YOTs were contacted by email and telephone. Of these ten YOTs that were contacted, seven YOT managers responded positively and supplied copies of protocols/policies that are in place with the Children's Services authority – the other three YOT managers did not respond to regular email and telephone messages. The policy documents/protocols reviewed are outlined in Table A1.

All of the documents available were written by local practitioners and there appeared to be little regional or national standardisation. It was common for protocols to be binding across a number of partners including the council, police and probation service, occasionally local primary care trusts were also included. A standard starting point for many protocols was the legislation that set out statutory requirements for YOTs and Children's Service. Legislation commonly mentioned included:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Children & Young Person's Act 1969
- Criminal Justice Act 2003.

**Table A1: Protocols and policy documents reviewed**

YOT area	Protocols reviewed
1	Joint Working Protocol (Social Care and Youth Offending Service)
2	Protocol between Youth Offending Service, Police and Young People's Social Care in respect of incidents in looked-after placements which might result in police intervention and action Service Level Agreement for Social Workers within Youth Offending Service
3	Youth Offending Team Partnership Protocol Remands to Local Authority Accommodation Protocol between Lewisham YOT and Children's Social Care
4	Practice Guidance: Promoting Outcomes for children and young people Partnership Working between Children's Services and the YOS The Protocol between YOS and Children's Services
5	Service Level Agreement between Children, Families and Social Care and youth offending team
6	Protocol between YOT and Children's Services Directorate Children's Services Section
7	YOS and Children and Education Department (Children and Families Section) Protocol

There were three areas where protocols could not be obtained.

### **Protocol outline**

Table A2 presents an outline of the types of areas covered in the protocols reviewed and this also provides a definition of the key areas and subgroups included in the protocols. These can be split into three broad areas:

1. **Strategic issues** – issues relating to overall management of the protocol agreement, including steering group arrangements, financial contributions of individual agencies to the arrangement, the overall referral process between YOTs and Children's Services and issues in relation to information exchange.
2. **Operational/practice/service provision issues** – these relate to the day-to-day running of the partnership between YOTs and Children's Services. For example, issues in relation to court attendance for looked-after children, preparation of pre-sentence reports and detailing with bail/remand for looked-after children.
3. **Staffing issues** – some protocols also deal with issues in relation to staffing and in particular staff secondment from Children's Services to the YOT.

**Table A2: Definitions of types of activities referred to in protocols**

<b>Main group</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Strategic</b>	Strategic management/steering groups	Details of any steering group or strategy group to overview the protocol
	Finance/Financial contributions	Details of any financial arrangements stated in the protocol
	Referrals to/from YOT	How referrals are made to and from the YOT
	Information exchange	How information/data are exchanged between the agencies
<b>Operational/practice issues/service provision</b>	Assessment of YP (including <i>Asset</i> and vulnerability <i>Asset</i> assessments)	How assessment is made to refer young people to Children's Services or from Children's Services to YOT
	YP interviewed at the police station	Provision made between YOT and CS when looked-after young person is interviewed at police station
	YP bail and Remands into Local Authority Accommodation	Arrangements in relation to bail, remand accommodation (both local authority and non LA) for looked-after children
	YO appearing in court	Arrangements for roles of YOT and CS in attendance at court
	Pre-sentence reports	Roles of YOT and CS in generating a PSR
	Young people already involved with YOT	How YOT and CS deal with young offenders already in custody who might be in need of protection
	Managing young people in custody	General division of management roles between YOT and CS in managing YP in custody
	Managing young people on release from custody	Provision for management of looked after young people
	Providing interventions	Provision for joint YOT/Children's Services interventions
Managing cross-border offences	Provision for actions taken if YP offends in a different area while in looked-after placement	
Incidents occurring in placement	Provision for actions taken if YP offends while in looked after placement	
<b>Staffing issues/secondment of staff</b>	Placement of social workers in the YOT	Provisions for secondment of social workers to the YOT

All of the protocols reviewed opened with a mission statement. These statements generally assert the importance of partnership working and outline the statutory obligations of the key partners involved in the protocol. For example, in area 1 the mission statement states that:

*“OCYPS YOS and Social Care staff have an overarching commitment to work jointly and share information on young people that offend to assist in the reduction of risk of re-offending, harm and vulnerability.”*

Some other protocols not only present mission statements but also go into detail about the statutory duties of each agency in the protocol. For example, area 5 presents an outline of statutory duties placed on the local authority under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). It goes on the outline the aims of the YJS (stated in section 37 of the same Act) and the duties of Children, Families and Social Care as specified in the Children Act 1989.

The actual content of the protocols varied across each area. There are obviously variations in length and style, though the focus of the protocols also varied significantly. Table A3 presents an overview of the types of issues that were covered in the seven protocols reviewed.

**Table A3: Content analysis of protocols**

Main group	Subgroup	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Strategic</b>	Strategic management/steering groups			Y	Y			
	Finance/Financial contributions			Y				
	Referrals to/from YOT				Y	Y	Y	Y
	Information exchange			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Operational/ practice issues/ service provision</b>	Assessment of YP (including <i>Asset</i> and vulnerability <i>Asset</i> assessments)	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	YP interviewed at the police station	Y				Y	Y	Y
	YP bail and Remands into Local Authority Accommodation	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	
	YO appearing in court	Y		Y			Y	Y
	Pre-sentence reports	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Young people already involved with YOT	Y				Y		
	Managing young people in custody	Y			Y	Y		
	Managing young people on release from custody	Y			Y			
	Providing interventions	Y						
	Managing cross-boarder offences	Y						
<b>Staffing issues/second -ment of staff</b>	Incidents occurring in placement		Y			Y		
	Placement of social workers in the YOT		Y		Y			

This highlights that in relation to strategic issues:

- Two areas (3 and 4) focused fairly heavily on strategic issues. Both areas outlined provisions for management of the relationship between the YOT and CS, and for information exchange. Area 4 also clearly outlined a policy for referrals to and from the YOT. Area 3 was the only area where funding arrangements between partners were mentioned in the protocol.
- Four areas mentioned referrals to and from the YOT in their protocols (3, 5, 6 and 7).
- Five areas had a policy for information exchange (3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).
- Two areas (1 and 4) hardly focused on strategic issues at all.

In relation to operational/practice/service provision issues:

- All areas (except 2) focused upon a number of issues in relation to operation/practice/service delivery. Through little was mentioned about strategy, area 1 focused heavily on operational issues and outlined their protocol as a series of steps from police interview through to release from custody.
- All areas (except 2) outlined how an assessment of YP is made through Asset and how assessments of vulnerable young people are made. All areas (except 2) also outlined provisions for making pre-sentence reports and provisions in relation to bail and remand in local authority accommodation.
- Four areas (1, 5, 6 and 7) outlined arrangements between the YOT and CS for when young people were interviewed at the police station. Four areas (1, 3, 6 and 7) also made arrangements for young people appearing in court.
- Three areas (1, 4 and 5) had made arrangements for managing young people in custody.
- Two areas (1 and 5) had a protocol agreement for dealing with young people already involved in the YOT who might need protection. Two areas (1 and 4) also had arrangements for managing young vulnerable people on release from custody; and two areas (2 and 5) also had a protocol for incidents that occurring while young people were in placement.

There were only two areas where issues in relation to staffing issues were mentioned. These were 4 and 2.

## **Summary**

A number of summarising comments can be made about the protocols:

- All of the protocols appear to have been drafted as a response to try and improve service delivery (partly due to statutory requirements).
- The protocols are not in any standardised format and there is significant variation in style and length.
- Some protocols focus heavily on strategy, whereas others focus more on operational issues and the day-to-day running of YOT/CS business.

- The specifics of the protocols vary significantly. Some protocols cover lots of process in detail, whereas others fail to mention a number of issues.
- Many of the issues covered in protocols are likely to have been driven by local priorities or tensions in local partnership working.

## Annex B: YOT online survey

### *Purpose of the questionnaire*

The questionnaire is being developed to answer three research questions that have been posed by the YJB, namely:

- What is the interaction between Children's Services Authorities (Children's Services) and YOTs?
- How effective are Children's Services in dealing with young offenders or young people at risk of offending?
- What are examples of good practice in their ways of working together?

The questionnaire has been developed following a review of recent research literature and initial contacts with six (out of 10) selected YOTs. These latter sources have been invaluable to understand the relationship between the YOT and Children's Services, although it is likely that the relationship can take a myriad of forms not found in the small sample that was chosen for the development of the questionnaire.

Following approval by the YJB, this version of the questionnaire will be piloted prior to going on-line nationally.

### *Section A: Respondent information*

**Overview:** Provide here the respondent information etc

1. Name of Respondent
2. Job title
3. Name of YOT
4. E-mail address
5. Telephone Number

### *Section B: Background to the YOT*

**Overview:** The questions contained in this section provide some background to the YOT, its location and governance. It seeks questions about the members of the YOT, including Children's Services in order that the role and input of Children's Services can be compared with other member agencies. In looking at the interaction with the Children's Services and the YOT, it will be important to compare it to other agencies.

### **Description of YOT**

1. What type of local authority does the YOT serve?
  - Unitary authority
  - County council
  - Metropolitan council

Cross authority YOT covering county and unitary authorities

2. How many local authority areas does your YOT cover?

3. Where is the YOT located?

Department for children and young people

Department for young people only

Department for community safety

Department for both children/young people and community safety

A freestanding YOT at arms length from departmental structures

Chief Executive's Department

Other (specify)

4. Has the location of the YOT changed in the past five years?

Yes/No

4a. If yes, where was it located in the past?

Department for children and young people

Department for young people only

Department for community safety

Department for both children/young people and community safety

A freestanding YOT at arm's length from departmental structures

Chief Executive's Department

Other (specify)

5. Are there plans to change the location of the YOT over the next five years?

Yes/No/Don't know

5a. If yes, where is it to be intended to be located?

Department for children and young people

Department for young people only

Department for community safety

Department for both children/young people and community safety

A freestanding YOT at arm's length from departmental structures

Chief Executive's Department

Other (specify)

6. What is the rationale for the current location of the YOT? (*tick more than one*)

For reasons of geography

For cost/budget considerations

To reflect age of the client group

To maximise planning and partnership working

For operational reasons

To better reflect the reduction of re-offending aim of YOT

To better reflect the welfare aim of Children's Services.

To better reflect both reduction of re-offending and welfare aims

Enables better joint commissioning of services

Other (specify)

### **Governance of the YOT**

7. Which of the following best describes the current management of the YOT?

YOT is managed by a stand alone inter-agency steering group

YOT is managed by the Children's Services

YOT is managed by the CDRP

YOT is managed by another agency (specify)

8. Who chairs the steering group that manages the YOT?

Local authority chief executive?

Child services representative

Education representative

Police representative

Other (specify)

	<b>9. Which local agencies are represented on the steering group that manages the YOT</b>	<b>10. What is the level of representation of each agency?</b>	<b>11. Rate the benefit to the YOT of the agency's membership of the steering group</b>	<b>12. Rate attendance of the particular agency at the steering group</b>
	Tick all that apply below	<b>Drop-down menu:</b> Director Assistant Director Service Manager Other	<b>Drop-down menu</b> much benefit/ some benefit/ little benefit/ doesn't attend	<b>Drop-down menu:</b> very good/ good/ fair/ poor/ doesn't attend
Police				
Probation Service				
Child Services				
Primary Health Care Trust				
Education				
Drugs & alcohol service				
Housing department				
Connexions				
Youth Court				
Other (specify)				
Other (specify)				

### **Budget and funding**

13. What is the size of your YOTs total budget?

<b>14. How would you rate the financial contribution from each of the statutory partner agencies:</b>	<b>Very satisfactory/ Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory/ Very unsatisfactory</b>
Police	
Probation Service	
Child Services	
Primary Health Care Trust	
Education	

## Planning and partnership working

15. Do the statutory agencies share a common objective for preventing and reducing youth crime?

Yes/No

15a. If no, which of the statutory agencies do not share this objective?

Police

Probation Service

Child Services

Primary Health Care Trust

Education

16. In what plans has the Youth Justice Plan been integrated?

Local Crime & Disorder Plan

Children and Young People's Plans

Health Improvement Plan

Education Development Plan

Other (specify)

17. Does the Youth Justice Plan encompass all the agencies working for young people in the area?

Yes/No

17a. If no, which agencies are not encompassed within the Youth Justice Plan?

Police

Probation Service

Child Services

Primary Health Care Trust

Education

Drugs & alcohol service

Housing department

Connexions

Youth Court

Other (specify)

18. How is the YOT linked to the Children's Trust?

YOT manager is part of the CT executive group.

YOT manager is on CT partnership board

YOT manager is part of the stakeholder network

YOT is involved in working groups

YOT attends the CT

Other strategic links

### **Section C: Relationship with child services**

**Overview:** Having established the relative roles of the members of the YOT, this section looks more particularly at the interaction between the Children's Services and the YOTs and also seeks information about the effectiveness of Children's Services in dealing with young offenders and people at risk of offending (together with seeking examples of good practice).

The section has been divided into a number of key themes, namely:

- The YOT/Children's Services Partnership
- Assessment and Referral
- Young People at Risk
- Remand and Bail Services
- Court Reports
- Custody and Leaving Custody
- Delivery of Community Sentences
- Conclusion

#### **The YOT/Children's Services Partnership**

1. How well do you think the Children and Young Persons' Plan is aligned to the YOTs Youth Justice Plan?

Well aligned/poorly aligned/not aligned/don't know

2. How many "social workers" are employed by/seconded to the YOT?

3. How are they distributed to the following activities? (give number for each activity)

Court reporting

Remand work

Custody & Sentence Planning

Delivery of Community Interventions

Other (specify)

**Protocols**

4. Does the YOT have a protocol with Children’s Services to cover:

	Yes/No	If yes, date/year when this protocol was agreed?	Date when this protocol is due for renewal?
Roles and responsibilities of “social worker” posts in the YOT?			
Competencies required to meet agreed roles and responsibilities?			
Ensuring that “social workers” in the YOT have training needs met?			
Does a formal <i>information sharing protocol</i> between the YOT and Children’s Services exist locally to facilitate assessments?			
Does a formal protocol exist for <i>referring young people between Children’s Services and YOT</i> ?			
Does a protocol exist between the YOT and the Children’s Services to refer <i>looked-after children</i> to prevention programmes run by the YOT (e.g. parenting)			
Does a protocol exist between the YOT and the Children’s Services in respect of PACE bail and remands?			
Does a protocol exist between the YOT and the Children’s Services in respect of court bail and remands (e.g. for looked-after children, children in need and children not known to Children’s Services)?			
Is there a protocol between the YOT and the Children’s Services to allow for the exchange of information on young people who are subject of court reports (e.g. PSRs, Specific Sentence Reports, etc.)			
Do the YOT and Children’s Services have a protocol in place that deals with the sentence planning of the following groups of young people whilst in custody? *Children and young people assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable.			
*Looked-after children			
*Children in Need			

**Assessment and Referral**

5. How would you rate the exchange of information on young people between the YOT and Children’s Services?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don’t know

6. How would you rate the ability of the YOT to access services located within the Children’s Services (e.g., accessing LAC places, accommodation advice etc)?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don’t know

**Young People at Risk**

7. What prevention programmes does the YOT operate for young people at risk:

Youth Inclusion Programme

Youth Inclusion and Support Panels  
Safer Schools Partnerships  
Parenting Programmes  
Mentoring Programmes  
Splash Cymru  
Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)  
Positive Futures  
Other (specify)

8. How would you rate the appropriateness of referrals from the Children's Services to prevention services for LAC that are located within the YOT?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

### **Bail and Remand Services**

#### *PACE*

9. How would you rate the collaboration between the YOT and Children's Services in respect of PACE remands?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

10. How effective do you think the Children's Services is in discharging its responsibilities in respect of PACE remands (e.g. identifying appropriate PACE accommodation)

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

#### *Court Bail*

11. What remand facilities are available within the YOT area:

Local authority care homes  
Voluntary sector care homes  
Secure care home  
Remand fostering  
Secure Training Centre  
Young Offenders Institute

12. How would you rate the Children's Services at providing appropriate remand facilities within the YOT area?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

13. Which agency holds the budget for the RILAA costs?

All by the Children's Services  
Budget delegated to YOT

**Court Reports**

14. How many YOT workers are there in the court team?

15. Please specify how many individuals are in the court team by background:

Probation Officer

Qualified Social Worker

Youth Worker

Other qualified worker (specify)

Non-qualified worker

16. How do you rate the ability of the Children's Services to provide information on a young offender to the court team (e.g., timely provision of information, relevant information)

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

**Custody and Leaving Custody**

17. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *Children in Need who are in custody*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

18. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *looked-after children in custody*

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

19. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children and young people in custody who are assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

**Delivery of Community Sentences**

20. How many workers are employed by/seconded to the YOT to deliver sentences in the community?

21. Please specify how many individuals in the YOT team -by background:

Qualified Social Worker

Youth Worker

Probation Officer

Other qualified worker (specify)

Non-qualified worker

22. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children in need who are serving a sentence in the community*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

23. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *looked-after children serving a sentence in the community*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

24. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children and young people serving a sentence in the community who are assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor/don't know

### **Conclusion**

25. How would you rate the relationship between the YOT and Children's Services on areas of common interest (e.g. key legislation, policy changes, practice and procedure)?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

26. How would you rate the success of the YOT and Children's Services in working together to identify resource requirements to be made by the respective agencies?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

27. Overall, how do you rate the relationship with Children's Services?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

28. List up to five factors that have been critical to the answer given above

29. List up to three examples of good practice that that the YOT and Children's Services have promoted.

30. General comments

## **Annex C: Children's Services online survey**

### ***Section A: Respondent information***

**Overview:** Provide here the respondent information, etc.

1. Name of Respondent
2. Title
3. Name of local authority
4. Name of Children's Services
5. E-mail address
6. Telephone Number

### ***Section B: Background to the children's services***

1. What type of local authority?
  - Unitary authority
  - County council
  - Metropolitan council
  - Cross authority YOT covering county and unitary authorities
2. Do you represent the Children's Services on the YOT?
3. Do you represent the Children's Services on the Children's Trust?

### ***Section C: Relationship with YOT***

#### **The YOT/Children's Services Partnership**

1. How does the YOT link to the Children's Services?
  - YOT line managed within Children's Services
  - YOT attendance at Children's Services management meetings
  - YOT has ad hoc meetings with Children's Services
2. How well do you think the YOTs Youth Justice Plan is aligned to the Children and Young Persons' Plan?
  - Well aligned/poorly aligned/not aligned

#### **Assessment and Referral**

3. How would you rate the exchange of information of information on young people between the services
  - Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

3a. Overall, how would you rate the appropriateness of referrals made by the YOT to the Children's Services?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

#### **Young People at Risk**

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Children's Services in being able to access prevention services for LAC that are located within the YOT?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

#### **Bail and Remand Services**

5. How would you rate the collaboration between the YOT and Children's Services in respect of PACE remands?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

6. How effective do you think the YOT is at providing a remand management service for young people (e.g., provision of appropriate adults, bail information, supervision and support)

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

7. How effective is the YOT at notifying the Children's Services of young people in court who are at risk of being remanded in local authority (RLAA)?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

#### **Court Reports**

8. How do you rate the ability of the YOT to notify the Children's Services that they are dealing with a young person who is known to the authority?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

#### **Custody and Leaving Custody**

9. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children in need who are in custody*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

10. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *looked-after children in custody*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

11. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children and young people in custody who are assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

#### **Delivery of Community Sentences**

12. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children in need who are serving a sentence in the community*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

13. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *looked-after children serving a sentence in the community*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

14. How well do you think the Children's Services and YOT work together in relation to sentencing planning of *children and young people serving a sentence in the community who are assessed by the YOT as being vulnerable*?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

### **Conclusion**

15. How would you rate the relationship between the YOT and Children's Services on areas of common interest (e.g. key legislation, policy changes, practice and procedure)?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

16. How would you rate the success of the YOT and Children's Services to work together to identify resource requirements to be made by the respective agencies?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

17. Overall, how do you rate the relationship with the YOT?

Very good/good/fair/poor/very poor

18. List up to five factors that have been critical to the answer given above

19. List up to three examples of good practice that that the YOT and Children's Services have promoted.

20. General comments

## Annex D: Main data collection variables – ‘at risk’ sample

Onset Section	Specific question	Codes
Referral number		Add referral number
Age		Age of young person
Ethnicity		Ethnicity code
Gender		Male or Female
Offending history	Age at first contact with police	Age of young person
Care history	Is child or siblings known to Children’s Services	1=yes 2=no
Type Children’s Services contact	Type contact	1= Currently accommodated by voluntary agreement 2=Previously accommodated by voluntary agreement 3=Currently subject to care order 4=Previously subject to care order 5=Currently on child protection register 6=Previously on child protection register
Education details	Educational situation	1=Mainstream school 2=Special school 3=Pupil referral unit 4=Other special unit
Accommodation	Is current accommodation suitable?	1=Yes 2=No
<b>Each of the following sections are rated to the extent that they are associated with the likelihood of offending or serious anti-social behaviour in the future.</b>		
Association with likelihood of offending	Neighbourhood	Insert Onset risk score 0 to 4 for all categories
	Lifestyle	
	Substance misuse	
	Physical health	
	Emotional and mental health	
	Perception of self and others	

	Thinking and behaviour	
	Attitudes to offending	
	Motivation to change	

## Annex E: YOT managers (semi-structured interview guide)

**Aim of interview: YOT manager (or similar rank<sup>53</sup>) in each area** – the main purpose of this interview is to consider issues in relation to joint policies with Children’s Services (and strategies for dealing with looked-after children), operational relationships with Children’s Services and other issues that arise within working relationships. These interviews will be tailored according to the responses given in the online survey and findings of the stage two findings. The interview also needs to probe into potential tensions that can arise between the Children’s Services ‘welfare’ function and the primary YOT function of preventing criminality for those aged 10–17.

### **A. Main background details**

1. Name of respondent
2. Job title and brief outline of main duties
3. Number of years in post
4. Key background details from online survey

### **B. History of YOT/Children’s Services/movement of the agencies and current location**

1. Where does the YOT sit in relation to the Children’s Services in the Local Authority structure?
2. How long has this set up existed?
3. What are the reasons for this set up?
4. Would you like to see this structure altered? (why?)

### **C. The Children’s Services/YOT relationship, common objectives and the key contact points**

1. What are the *formal* contact points between Children’s Services and YOTs in the everyday business of the agencies? (i.e. are the agencies represented on joint boards or panels, are there formal contact points when making referrals, etc.)
2. What are the *informal* contact points between Children’s Services and YOTs in the everyday business of the agencies? (i.e. informal contact over casework.)

<sup>53</sup> Where possible we would interview the YOT manager, though due to the tight timescale of the work and the likelihood that some YOT managers could be difficult to pin down for an interview we would also consider interviewing other people of similar rank.

3. How are social workers represented within the YOT? Social worker posts/secondments?
4. What impact has the Common Assessment Framework on the working relationship between the Children's Services and YOTs?

#### ***D. Prevention work with YOTs (identifying those at-risk)***

1. What involvement does the Children's Services have in prevention work with those at risk of offending?
2. How are those young people identified as being at-risk?
3. How close would you say the strategic aims of the YOT and Children's Services are in relation to children at risk of offending? (i.e. identifying those at risk and providing interventions)
4. What protocols exist between the Children's Services and the YOT in relation to dealing with young people at risk?
5. Would you say that additional protocols are required? If so where?
6. What are the particular challenges of prevention work for the Children's Services and YOT?

#### ***E. Service Delivery Issues***

1. How are young people referred from Children's Services to YOT and vice-versa? What are key issues/problems with the process?
2. In your opinion does anybody fall through the gap? Why do they fall through the gap?
3. What are the key facilities/services you require from YOTs? Which of these are the most difficult to access? Are there any issues around eligibility criteria?
4. How are assessments made for accommodation?
5. What issues (if any) arise in terms of providing:
  - a. Remand facilities, i.e. as an alternative to secure estate accommodation?
  - b. Overnight accommodation under s38 (6) of PACE?
  - c. Accommodation following transfer out of the secure estate?
6. Are there differences in service delivery for young people at-risk (prevention), remanded and convicted? If so, what are these differences?
7. Are there issues in relation to integration and cooperation in relation to Sentence Planning and generating court reports for various groups of children, in need, looked-after, etc.?
8. Are there any issues around funding and resources between the two agencies?

#### ***F. Responsibility for the corporate parenting role***

1. Should one organisation take sole responsibility for the corporate parenting role throughout the YPS involvement? What are the issues around this?

2. Is the independence of the Children's Services and YOT a hindrance in providing an integrated service for looked-after children? Does this independence create tensions? Does it impact upon services to children?
3. As the YOT focuses upon preventing criminality and the Children's Services the social care of children, are the two organisations pulling in different directions? (i.e. the Children's Services needs to deliver on the Every Child Matters Agenda)

***G. Other general issues/questions***

1. What is the respondents' overall view on the effectiveness of Children's Services in terms of provision for young offenders and those at-risk.
2. Do they have any ideas for better organisation and integration of the YOTs/Children's Services.

## Annex F: Social Work managers (semi-structured interview guide)

**Aim of interview: Director of Children’s Services, Assistant Director or Area Managers (or similar rank<sup>54</sup>) in each area** – the main purpose of this interview is to consider issues in relation to joint policies with YOTs (and strategies for dealing with looked-after children), operational relationships with YOTs and other issues that arise within working relationships. These interviews will be tailored according to the responses given in the online survey and findings of the stage two findings. The interview also needs to probe into potential tensions that can arise between the Children’s Services welfare function and the primary YOT function of preventing criminality for those aged 10–17.

### **A. Main background details**

1. Name of respondent
2. Job title and brief outline of main duties
3. Number of years in post
4. Key background details from online survey

### **B. History of YOT/Children’s Services/movement of the agencies and current location**

1. Where does the Children’s Services sit in relation to the YOT in the local authority structure?
2. How long has this set up existed?
3. What are the reasons for this set up?
4. Would you like to see this structure altered? Why?

### **C. The Children’s Services/YOT relationship, common objectives and the key contact points**

1. What are the *formal* contact points between Children’s Services and YOTs in the everyday business of the agencies? i.e. are the agencies represented on joint boards or panels, are there formal contact points when making referrals, etc.

<sup>54</sup> Where possible we would interview the Director of Children’s Services, though due to the tight timescale of the work and the likelihood that some Directors could be difficult to pin down for an interview we would also consider interviewing other people of similar rank as long as they could provide some strategic view of the relationship between the two agencies.

2. What are the *informal* contact points between Children's Services and YOTs in the everyday business of the agencies? (i.e. informal contact over casework.)
3. How are social workers represented within the YOT? Social worker posts/secondments?
4. What impact has the Common Assessment Framework on the working relationship between the Children's Services and YOTs?

#### ***D. Prevention work with YOTs (identifying those at-risk)***

1. What involvement does the Children's Services have in prevention work with those at risk of offending?
2. How are those young people identified as being at-risk?
3. How close would you say the strategic aims of the YOT and Children's Services are in relation to children at risk of offending? (i.e. identifying those at-risk and providing interventions)
4. What protocols exist between the Children's Services and the YOT in relation to dealing with young people at risk?
5. Would you say that additional protocols are required? (if so where)?
6. What are the particular challenges of this for the Children's Services and YOT?

#### ***E. Service delivery issues***

1. How are young people referred from Children's Services to YOT and vice-versa? What are key issues/problems with the process?
2. In your opinion does anybody fall through the gap? Why do they fall through the gap?
3. What are the key facilities/services you require from YOTs?
4. Which of these are the most difficult to access? Are there any issues around eligibility criteria?
5. How are assessments made for accommodation?
6. What issues (if any) arise in terms of providing:
  - a. Remand facilities, i.e. as an alternative to secure estate accommodation?
  - b. Overnight accommodation under s38 (6) of PACE?
  - c. Accommodation following transfer out of the secure estate?
7. Are there differences in service delivery for young people at risk (prevention), remanded and convicted? If so, what are these differences?
8. Are there issues in relation to integration and cooperation in relation to Sentence Planning and generating court reports for various groups of children, in need, looked-after, etc.
9. Are there any issues around funding and resources between the two agencies?

### ***F. Responsibility for the corporate parenting role***

1. Should one organisation take sole responsibility for the corporate parenting role throughout the YPS involvement? What are the issues around this?
2. Is the independence of the Children's Services and YOT a hindrance in providing an integrated service for looked-after children? Does this independence create tensions? Does it impact upon services to children?
3. As the YOT focuses upon preventing criminality and the Children's Services the social care of children, are the two organisations pulling in different directions? (i.e. the Children's Services needs to deliver on the Every Child Matters Agenda)

### ***G. Other general issues/questions***

1. What is the respondents overall view on the effectiveness of Children's Services in terms of provision for young offenders and those at risk.
2. Do they have any ideas for better organisation and integration of the YOTs/Children's Services.

## **Annex G: YOT caseworkers (semi-structured interview guide)**

**Aim of interview: three to four YOT workers in each area** – these interviews will focus on operational and delivery issues. They will establish how the relationship between YOTs and Children’s services works in practice, which agency takes the lead on which aspects of the joint working, and what the key issues are. As a multi-disciplinary team we would include, where possible, social workers, case managers and Connexions workers, who may undertake much of the work around accommodation. Areas of investigation will include remand into Local Authority Care and Remand into Secure Accommodation.

### ***A. Main background details***

1. Name of respondent
2. Job title and brief outline of main duties
3. Number of years in post
4. Key background details from online survey.

### ***B. Partnerships and the YOT/Children’s Services relationship (broad themes)***

1. How would you describe the relationship between the YOT and the agencies named above?
2. Does the YOT share common objectives with these agencies, such as the integration of Youth Justice Plan across other agencies?
3. Do any protocols exist between YOTs and the Children’s Services? How were the protocols developed?
4. Are additional protocols required and (if so) where?
5. What is the impact of the Common Assessment Framework to the working relationship between the two agencies (YOT/Children’s Services)?

### ***C. Prevention work with Children’s Services (identifying those at-risk)***

1. What involvement does the Children’s Services have in prevention work with those at risk of offending?
2. How are those young people identified as being at-risk?
3. How close would you say the strategic aims of the YOT and Children’s Services are in relation to children at risk of offending? (i.e. identifying those at risk and providing interventions.)
4. What protocols exist between the Children’s Services and the YOT in relation to dealing with young people at risk?
5. Would you say that additional protocols are required? (if so where)?
6. What are the particular challenges of prevention work for the Children’s Services and YOT?

#### ***D. Service delivery issues***

1. How are young people referred from Children's Services to YOT and vice-versa? What are key issues/problems with the process? Who falls through the gap and why?
2. Are you always aware of a young person's involvement with Children's Services at the point of referral?
3. How are cases involving Children's Services (e.g. looked-after children) allocated within the YOT?
4. What are the key facilities/services you require from Children's Services? (accommodation/child protection, etc.). Which of these are the most difficult to access, are there any issues around eligibility criteria?
5. Who do you liaise with within the Children's Services? Is this relationship satisfactory? What is the level/frequency of contact? Is this contact formal or informal?
6. What happens with children placed in your area from outside the area?
7. How is information transferred between the two agencies and what/where is information recorded?
8. How are assessments made for accommodation?
9. What issues arise in terms of providing:
  - a. remand facilities (i.e. as an alternative to secure estate accommodation – RLAA)?
  - b. Collaboration in terms of PACE (s38 (6)) remands?
  - c. Accommodation arrangements following transfer out of secure estate?
10. Are there differences in service delivery for young people at risk (prevention), remanded and convicted?
11. Are there issues in relation to integration and cooperation in relation to Sentence Planning and generating court reports for various groups of children (in need, looked-after, etc.)?
12. What training have you received around looked-after children, etc.?

#### ***E. Responsibility for the corporate parenting role***

1. Should one organisation take sole responsibility for the corporate parenting role throughout the YPS involvement? What are the issues around this?
2. Is the independence of the Children's Services and YOT a hindrance in providing an integrated service for looked-after children? Does this independence create tensions? Does it impact upon services to children?
3. As the YOT focuses upon preventing criminality and the Children's Services the social care of children, are the two organisations pulling in different directions? (i.e. the Children's Services needs to deliver on the Every Child Matters Agenda)

#### ***F. Other general issues/questions***

1. What is the respondents overall view on the effectiveness of Children's Services in terms of provision for young offenders and those at risk.

2. Do they have any ideas for better organisation and integration of the YOTs/Children's Services.

## **Annex H: Social workers (semi-structured interview guide)**

**Aim of interview: three to four social workers in each area** – these interviews will focus upon operational and delivery issues. They will establish how the relationship between YOTs and Children's Services works in practice; which agency takes the lead on which aspects of the joint working and what the key issues are. Areas of investigation will include remand into Local Authority Care and Remand into Secure Accommodation.

### ***A. Main background details***

1. Name of respondent
2. Job title and brief outline of main duties
3. Number of years in post
4. Key background details from online survey.

### ***B. Partnerships and the Children's Services/YOT relationship (broad themes)***

1. What agencies do you commonly work with throughout the course of your duties?
2. How would you describe the relationship between the Children's Services and the agencies named above?
3. Do any protocols exist between Children's Services and YOT? How were the protocols developed?
4. Are additional protocols required and (if so) where?
5. What is the impact of the Common Assessment Framework to the working relationship between the two agencies (Children's Services/YOT)?

### ***C. Prevention work with Children's Services (identifying those at-risk)***

1. What involvement does the Children's Services have in prevention work with those at risk of offending?
2. How are those young people identified as being at-risk?
3. How close would you say the strategic aims of the YOT and Children's Services are in relation to children at risk of offending? (i.e. identifying those at risk and providing interventions)
4. What protocols exist between the Children's Services and the YOT in relation to dealing with young people at risk?
5. Would you say that additional protocols are required? If so, where?
6. What are the particular challenges of prevention work for the Children's Services and YOT?

#### ***D. Service delivery issues***

1. How are young people referred from Children's Services to YOT and vice-versa? What are key issues/problems with the process? Who falls through the gap and why?
2. Are young people more likely to have been involved with YOT before they come to the attention of the Children's Services (or vice-versa)? Are you always aware of their involvement with the YOT?
3. What are the key facilities/services you require from the YOT? What do the YOT generally require from the Children's Services?
4. Who do you liaise with within the YOT? Is this relationship satisfactory? What is the level/frequency of contact? Is this contact formal or informal?
5. What happens with children placed in your area from outside the area with YOT involvement?
6. How is information transferred between the two agencies and what/where is information recorded?
7. How are assessments made for accommodation for YOT clients?
8. What issues arise in terms of providing:
  - a. remand facilities, i.e. as an alternative to secure estate accommodation – RLAA?
  - b. collaboration in terms of PACE (s38 (6)) remands?
  - c. accommodation arrangements following transfer out of secure estate?
9. Are there differences in service delivery for young people at risk (prevention), remanded and convicted?
10. Are there issues in relation to integration and cooperation in relation to Sentence Planning and generating court reports for various groups of children, in need, looked-after. etc?
11. What training have you received around youth crime and justice?

#### ***E. Responsibility for the corporate parenting role***

1. Should one organisation take sole responsibility for the corporate parenting role throughout the YPS involvement? What are the issues around this?
2. Is the independence of the Children's Services and YOT a hindrance in providing an integrated service for looked-after children? Does this independence create tensions? Does it impact upon services to children?
3. As the YOT focuses upon preventing criminality and the Children's Services the social care of children, are the two organisations pulling in different directions? (i.e. the Children's Services needs to deliver on the Every Child Matters Agenda)

#### ***F. Other general issues/questions***

1. What is the respondents' overall view on the effectiveness of Children's Services in terms of provision for young offenders and those at risk?
2. Do they have any ideas for better organisation and integration of the YOTs/Children's Services?

## **Annex I: Young People (semi-structured interview guide)**

**Aim of interview** – it is proposed that in each YOT area, six young people are identified for interview and that the young people are interviewed when they are at the YOT or similar programme. We aim to interview a range of young people with Children’s Services contact who would represent those at-risk, on remand or under the supervision of the YOT.

### ***A. Main background details***

1. Age and status of respondent (e.g. under supervision, at-risk)
2. What involvement has the child had with the YOT/Children’s Services – start, finish and overlaps, nature of interventions and mode of referral (information to be obtained by researcher from either the YOT manager or caseworker prior to interview).

### ***B. Experience of YOT/Children’s Services***

1. How many occasions and for what time period was there both YOT and Children’s Services involvement – based on above?
2. How frequent was contact with the Children’s Services, and how was it made?
3. Were they assigned a social worker/caseworker/key worker (for either Children’s Services/YOT or both)?
4. How did they find the social worker/caseworker? (i.e. how were they treated, what was the experience like)
5. Did they experience any problems dealing with either YOT or Children’s Services? If so what, and how were they overcome?
6. Has their experience improve/get worse/stay the same over time?
7. Is there anything they would like to see done differently?

### ***C. Prevention work with YOTs (identifying those at-risk)***

1. What involvement does the Children’s Services have in prevention work with those at risk of offending (if not clear from earlier answers)?
2. How did they come to be identified as being at-risk?
3. Do YP feel they have benefited from involvement with the prevention team?

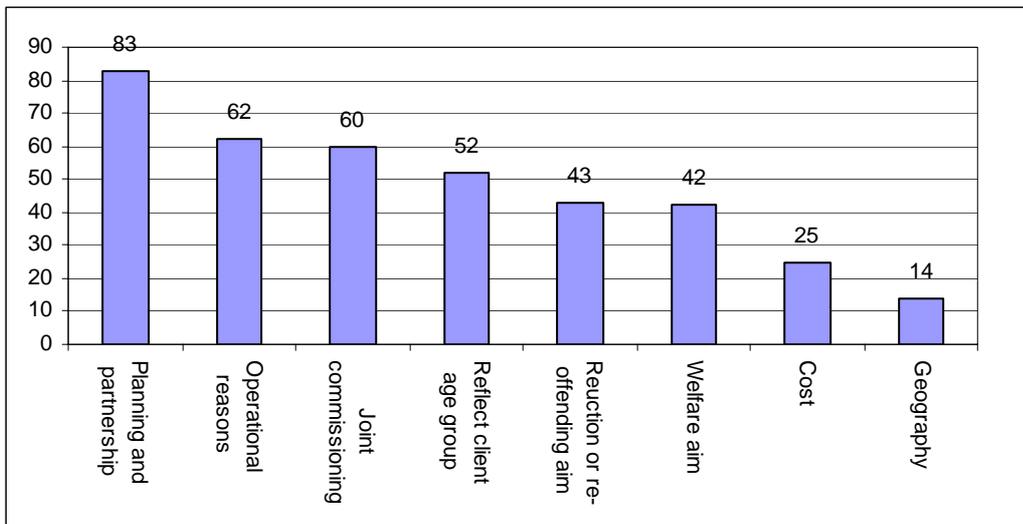
### ***D. Service Delivery Issues***

1. Are there services/facilities that they feel you would benefit from that are not available? Which of these are the most difficult to access? Are there any issues around eligibility criteria?
2. Have they experienced issues related to:
  - a. remand facilities, i.e. as an alternative to secure estate accommodation?

- b. overnight accommodation under s38 (6) of PACE (out of police custody)?
  - c. accommodation following transfer out of the secure estate?
3. Anything else would like to see done differently in relation to the above/i.e. to improve the experience?

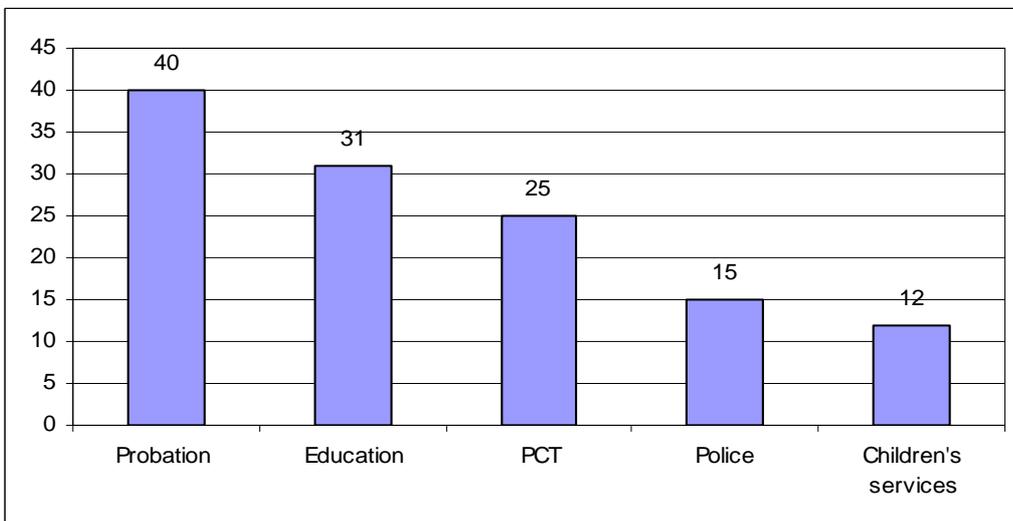
## Annex J: Chapter 3 – Additional tables and figures

Percentage of YOTs stating the following as a reason for their location of YOT



Base: 98 YOTs: Responses are those stating 'yes' to question.

Percentage of YOTs describing level of funding from partnership agencies as 'unsatisfactory' or 'very unsatisfactory'



Base: 95 respondents in relation to police, 94 in relation to children's' services, 92 in relation to PCT and 88 in relation to education.

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