

Foreword to ECOTEC Reports

The Youth Justice Board commissioned ECOTEC Consulting to undertake an audit of education and training provision for young people in custody on Detention and Training Orders. This arose out of a need to establish a baseline against which we could measure the success of an enhancement programme funded by Spending Review 2000. We also commissioned a review of the educational careers of a sample of young people before, during and after the custodial part of their DTO in order to assess education and training provision in the community. A further study examined the relationship between the incidence of youth crime and the scale and nature of the out-of-school population. In combination these three reports provide an authoritative account rooted in both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

We knew that all was not well – there was plenty of evidence to support this, but the extent of the problems revealed by these reports has served as a wake up call for all of us involved in youth justice. The audit has brought together information about provision across the piece, and in this sense is unique. The tracking of the young people gives us a remarkable evidence based snapshot of the systems, procedures and inter-relationships that are failing to provide these youngsters with their statutory entitlement to a good education. Indeed the picture of a disconnected, inadequate and generally impoverished service is not one that inspires confidence in its ability to deliver rehabilitative programmes. Most young people who enter the youth justice system have already experienced enough discontinuity.

The messages from these reports are clear. Young people are not getting an adequate education and training package whilst they're in custody, although this may be better than they were getting in the community. Following release, we are not doing enough to ensure that they get into education and training places either at school or in colleges. In areas where there are high levels of school absenteeism, the youth crime rate is likely to be higher.

These reports are not however, a condemnation of the people working in the front line. Indeed they are generally applauded for their hard work, commitment and creativity in the face of overwhelming systems failures. Nor is the Youth Justice Board going to stand back and wait for others to remedy the situation. There is a huge amount of work to do and the Board is fully committed to playing a full part in putting things right. Ministers have endorsed our strategy for reform and we will provide leadership where necessary in pulling together the vital contributions of our partner agencies such as the DfES, the Learning and Skills Councils and the Prison Service.

These were intensive pieces of research and could not have been completed without the assistance of very busy practitioners and managers and the young people themselves. I would also like to thank all the researchers auditors and the author of the audit and review reports, Dr. Martin Stephenson of Nottingham Trent University.

NORMAN WARNER

Chairman Youth Justice Board

November 2001

**An Audit of Education Provision within the
Juvenile Secure Estate**

A Report to the Youth Justice Board

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Phase 1

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This was an intensive study undertaken over a short period of time and it could not have been completed without a great deal of co-operation from staff in the secure estate who are already extremely busy. We would like therefore to record our thanks on behalf of the researchers and auditors to all those staff and young people in young offender institutions, local authority secure units and secure training centres who contributed to this project.

We would also like to record our thanks to the staff of the Youth Justice Board including their monitors who provided the audit teams with a great deal of background information and generally facilitated their work.

We would finally like to extend our gratitude to the researchers and auditors who took part in this study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) commissioned ECOTEC Research and Consulting to carry out an audit into education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate, and a linked review of education provision for young people pre- and post-custody.

The research aimed to:

- establish key baseline information to help strategic planning; and
- ensure consistency of service delivery across the three sectors that comprise the newly unified secure estate.

It should be noted that this report refers, in the main, to the findings from the Young Offender Institutions (YOIs). Local Authority Secure Units (LASUs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) have also been audited, but require a different set of actions in some cases to the YOIs.

Phase 1 was an audit into education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate. Phase 2 involves interviewing 200 young people about their education and training careers pre- and post-custody. A database on 2,000 young people held on a Detention and Training Order (DTO) in March 2001 is also being compiled. Phase 3 is testing the proposition that in areas where there is a high level of non-attendance at school, there is also a high rate of youth crime.

This report presents the audit findings of Phase I of the project. Audit teams visited each Young Offender Institution (YOI) and all the Local Authority Secure Units (LASUs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) with which the YJB currently contracts. Information from the interviews with young people being carried out for Phase 2 is also included.

Main findings

Overview

The custodial institutions are attempting to meet the needs of socially excluded young people who are beset with multiple disadvantages. In terms of education and training, the young people's immediate antecedents are mainly characterised by lack of access and/or non-participation, and long-standing deficits in literacy and numeracy.

Almost all the institutions were doing their best in difficult circumstances. Several provided evidence of a strong turnaround in their educational performance following critical inspection reports. However, Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) have not been provided with the appropriate internal infrastructure and resources, nor do they have the essential external links to initiate and sustain the radical change necessary.

The report and its recommendations focus on the YOIs, both because they supply 85 per cent of the custodial places and because of the degree of change necessary within them.

Population dynamics

The introduction of the Detention and Training Order (DTO) appears to have accelerated the throughput of young people very significantly. This has increased instability across the whole of YOI regimes. There are fundamental questions about the appropriateness of the curriculum and expectations of learning gains within such short sentences.

Leadership and accountability

There is confusion over the roles of the YJB, the new Prisoners' Learning and Skills Unit in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Prison Service. Education is not the focus of Young Offender Institutions in the way that it is within Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres. There is a relatively high degree of territorialism; the current contracting regime exacerbates this. YOIs and their education departments are subject to a disproportionate amount of inspection and monitoring.

Secure colleges

The need is to make a transition from establishments focusing primarily on control to ones which emphasise learning and reintegrating juvenile offenders into education and training in the community. In order to succeed in this, a conceptual framework akin to that of the secure college is essential.

Management

Strategic planning is not well developed. Education departments are disconnected from many of the significant changes that have occurred in mainstream education in recent years. There is limited use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Information is not routinely used for performance management.

Human resources

Custodial education has a serious lack of a career structure underpinned by relevant qualifications. Terms and conditions in YOIs are significantly worse than in Local Authority Secure Units and mainstream teaching. The labour force is predominantly part-time and turnover is relatively high, particularly for education managers. The level of qualifications is relatively low.

There is a serious deficiency of learning support assistant time to assist teaching staff and to work one-to-one with young people. YOIs also lack sufficient special educational needs (SEN) co-ordinators and educational psychologists.

There tend to be divisions among vocational, teaching and prison officer staff, all of whom are involved in aspects of educational activities.

Curriculum

There is no clear model or rationale for the curriculum. An appropriate curriculum would take account of the new sentence lengths, the young people's educational antecedents and the importance of managing educational transitions between custody and the community.

Literacy and numeracy profile of young people in custody

The average age within YOIs was 17. Just over one-quarter of the custodial population was of compulsory school age. Nearly half of these young people had literacy and numeracy levels below those of the average 11-year old. Over one-quarter had numeracy levels equivalent to that of the average seven-year old or younger.

Accommodation

Accommodation is a major constraint on expansion, for both the volume and quality of education across Young Offender Institutions. There is a serious lack of facilities, particularly for science and also in craft, design and technology.

Teaching and learning

A broad, balanced curriculum is not on offer. Special educational needs are an area of major weakness, with insufficient support and an extremely low level of transmission of important evidence from and to the community. Literacy and numeracy do not permeate the curriculum sufficiently. Other areas needing improvement are accreditation, awards ceremonies, homework, lesson planning, and National Records of Achievement (NRA).

Costs

At current funding levels, YOIs cannot provide all the young people with an acceptable education. Nearly as much is spent on education for the 300 bed spaces in LASUs as on the 2,900 bed spaces in YOIs. The cost per bed space on average is eight to ten times greater in Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres than in Young Offender Institutions. There is a marked variation in costs across LASUs, and for the larger ones education is significantly more expensive than in Secure Training Centres.

Messages from young people

The majority had been receiving part-time provision prior to custody. There was little evidence of disaffection with formal education - most preferred it to alternative provision such as pupil referral units or education in custody. But even the limited provision available in custody has made a real difference to some young people. Custody was proving very damaging for the minority who had a school or college placement immediately prior to their custodial sentence. The majority had little awareness of what was arranged for them on release in terms of education or training.

Conclusions

The recommendations require a combination of leadership from the YJB and capacity-building within the custodial institutions and in the community. The YJB needs to be assured that it has sufficient quantity and level of expertise to manage this large-scale and challenging process. The Board is likely to need to move into a simpler, more direct and at times more directive role with the secure estate.

The need is to focus on the young person in devising and providing education and training by giving a reality to the DTO to create an integrated programme.

The enhancement of education and training needs to occur within a strategic framework, otherwise problems may be compounded and inconsistency of provision exacerbated, with little to integrate provision within custody and the community.

Much remains to be done if the Detention and *Training* Order is to fulfil its intended purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations concentrate on YOIs and take account of the Youth Justice Board's project to develop a literacy and numeracy assessment of learning materials

It is vital that implementation of this potentially daunting programme does not destabilise establishments under considerable pressure. If the programme is accepted, it would need to proceed with clear timescales, early demonstration of positive intent and constructive dialogue with the key players in YOIs.

The scale of the underfunding of education and training within YOIs might require a bid by the Youth Justice Board in the next spending review. This would put even more emphasis on rapidly drawing up a credible education and training plan to deliver some significant short-term gains; it should still be possible to pilot secure colleges.

1.0 Youth Justice Board leadership

The Board to:

- 1.1 Prepare a strategic plan for education and training.
- 1.2 Equip itself with an in-house education/training team with appropriate experience, or enter into a strategic partnership/national supporter contract in order to provide the change management expertise .
- 1.3 Design and introduce a curriculum framework with appropriate key performance targets.
- 1.4 Develop a contracting regime to stimulate new providers of education, training and allied activities.

2.0 The secure college concept

- 2.1 The YJB should aim to enable the establishment of education and training centres where the students are held in secure conditions.
- 2.2 Pilot such an approach under direct contract to the YJB with a national supporter and external evaluation framework.

3.0 Human resources strategy

- 3.1 Aim to create a professional, high-status service with its own career structure and nationally recognised qualifications.
- 3.2 Devise and implement a coherent programme of preparatory training and continuing professional development for education and training within the secure estate.
- 3.3 This to be underpinned by a national programme of INSET.
- 3.4 Use the additional funding to create a special educational needs co-ordinator post, and teams of learning support assistants and educational psychologist posts for all YOIs.
- 3.5 Offer incentives to recruit effective teaching practitioners.
- 3.6 Introduce an education director post working directly to the governor.

4.0 Assessment, planning and review

- 4.1 Introduce an integrated and computerised assessment system across the secure estate.
- 4.2 Ensure that education departments are integrated into sentence planning. Education staff to attend all reviews.
- 4.3 Set targets, monitor them and use financial sanctions to ensure that there is 100 cent completion and transmission of ASSET to custodial institutions.
- 4.4 Amend ASSET so that it is clear that the education and training section must be passed immediately to the education department. Modify to ensure that full education information is recorded properly.
- 4.5 Issue guidance in conjunction with DfEE to LEAs and Connexions service partnerships to ensure that crucial SEN information always speedily accompanies a young person to custody.
- 4.6 Devise and introduce an added-value measure that applies across the custodial and community components of the DTO and includes measures for education/training

continuity.

4.7 Standardised summative educational assessments to be given to all young people immediately prior to release.

4.8 Review existing systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring systems in all Young Offender Institutions.

5.0 Teaching and learning

5.1 Integrate the education and vocational provision to provide a more balanced, broader and coherent curriculum for all young people.

5.2 Devise and introduce an incentive/rewards programme specific to education and training to further elevate the status of learning.

5.3 Ensure that there is a coherent approach to educational accommodation and that YJB funds are only used where there is appropriate advice on design.

5.4 The role and resourcing of libraries as learning centres needs specific attention.

5.5 Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody to the standards applying in mainstream education and that Youth Offending Team (YOT) supervising officers are accountable for ensuring its transition and continuation in the community part of the sentence.

5.6 Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme that has national currency and can be overseen in custody and the community.

5.7 Set standards regarding the formal setting of homework for all young people.

6.0 Individual support

6.1 Set standards for and fund dedicated classroom support staff, especially for literacy and numeracy skills.

6.2 Introduce an integrated case management system.

6.3 Introduce a personal tutorial system.

7.0 Evidence-based practice and quality assurance

7.1 Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for engaging young offenders, particularly in terms of reducing their offending.

7.2 Establish a formal education advisory group for each YOI

- 7.3 Pilot a streamlined inspection process that incorporates features of existing inspection regimes, but pays particular attention to both parts of the DTO's effectiveness.
- 7.4 Commission a handbook for education departments, to include case-studies and guidance on evidence-based practice within custody and the community.
- 7.5 Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate so that effective practice can be shared easily and the implementation of the education and training strategy better co-ordinated.

8.0 Strategic partnership with the further education (FE) sector

- 8.1 Negotiate through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and key agencies such as the Association of Colleges a guarantee of full-time courses available immediately on release from custody for all young offenders aged 14 to 18.
- 8.2 Develop jointly with the relevant bodies a training programme for college lecturers and learning support assistants so that they have the requisite skills to work with juvenile offenders.
- 8.3 Negotiate with local LSCs for funding for a college member of staff for each YOT.
- 8.4 Pilot a grid for learning to link up FE colleges, Young Offender Institutions and YOTs.

9.0 Connexions Service

- 9.1 Negotiate with the Connexions Service for personal advisers dedicated to young offenders on custodial sentences.

10.0 ICT

- 10.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the secure estate, linking these establishments to YOTs and FE colleges.
- 10.2. Prescribe the hardware and software to be purchased, or at the least provide specifications.
- 10.3 Review the strengths and weaknesses of the Quantum project and consider contracting relationships separate to this agreement.

The following indicative action plan depends on the Youth Justice Board's acceptance of these recommendations, its ability to acquire the necessary capacity to deliver this programme, and the availability of resources.

Action plan

Within three months

Recommendations	No.
Prepare a strategic plan for education and training	1.1
Establish YJB education team/national supporter	1.2
Design curricular framework	1.3
Set specific targets for completion and transmission of ASSET	4.3
Amend education and training section of ASSET	4.4
Issue guidance to LEAs and Connexions service partnerships	4.5
Prepare effective practice handbook for education departments	7.5
Review the Quantum project	10.3

Within six months

Fund special educational needs co-ordinator posts and educational psychologists	3.4
Introduce education director posts	3.6
Ensure that education departments are integrated into sentence planning	4.2
Devise and introduce added-value measures	4.6
Devise and introduce incentive programmes specific to education and training	5.3
Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody and in the community	5.6
Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme for both custody and the community	5.7
Fund and introduce learning support staff	6.1
Establish an education advisory group for each Young Offender Institution	7.2
Devise and pilot a streamlined inspection process	7.3
Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for young offenders	7.1
Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate	7.5
Develop a training programme for FE college staff	8.2
Negotiate with the Connexions National Unit for dedicated personal advisers for young people in custody	9.1
Produce ICT specifications for the secure estate	10.2
Review systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring	4.8

Within one year

Commence a pilot of a secure college working directly to the Youth Justice Board	2.2
Develop a new contracting regime	1.4
Devise and implement a national training programme	3.2 & 3.3
Offer incentives to enhance recruitment	3.5
Introduce an integrated electronic assessment system	4.1
Introduce pre-release educational assessments	4.7
Ensure a coherent approach to improving educational accommodation	5.3
Develop the role of libraries	5.4
Introduce an integrated case management system	6.2
Introduce a personal tutorial system	6.3
Negotiate with the LSC guaranteed provision on release from custody for juvenile offenders	8.1
Secure from local LSCs a college-based member of staff for each YOT	8.3
Pilot a grid for learning, linking selected FE colleges and YOIs	8.4

Within three years

Secure funding and transform Young Offender Institutions into secure colleges	2.1
Create a professional, high-status educational and training service	3.1
Integrate educational and vocational provision within Young Offender Institutions	5.1
Implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the whole secure estate	10.1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) commissioned ECOTEC Research and Consulting to carry out an audit into the education and training provision within the under- 18 secure estate, and a linked review of education provision for young people pre-and post-custody.

The research was commissioned in order to:

- establish key baseline information to help strategic planning; and
- ensure consistency of service delivery across the three sectors that comprise the newly unified secure estate.

This audit represents the first time that the whole of the secure estate has been examined using the same approach and audit tools. Equally, education and training have been assessed as a continuum rather than discrete activities to be inspected against particular standards. While this has been primarily a system audit, it has also assessed performance against existing standards such as Prison Service Order (PSO) 4950. The YJB's National Standards and those of Ofsted and the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) have also been taken into account in compiling the audit instrumentation.

The research was conceptualised in three distinct phases. Phase1 involved an audit into the education and training provision within the under 18 secure estate. This took place during March 2001. Phase 2 of the project involved interviewing 200 young people who experienced custody in March 2001 about their education and training careers pre and post custody. After release, follow-up interviews on their Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) are being used to assess their reintegration, and to examine whether any gains made in custody have been continued in the community. Phase 3 has run in parallel to this, and is testing the proposition that in areas where there is a high level of non-attendance at school there is also a high rate of youth crime.

This project has been a substantial piece of work involving teams of three (two researchers and an Ofsted-registered inspector)¹ spending two days in each Young Offender Institution (YOI) interviewing key staff, observing lessons, interviewing young people, examining their case files and amassing data. All the Local Authority Secure Units (LASUs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) with which the YJB currently contracts with have also been visited as part of this project.

A database of approximately 2,000 young people held in custody on a DTO in March 2001 has been compiled. Information has been taken from the education and training components of the ASSET assessment system and the basic skills assessments undertaken by education staff as young people commence their sentences. A more detailed database has been compiled on the sample of 200 young people, examining their education and care histories and gaining their views on their educational needs and how best these have been or could have been met.

¹ Although the majority were registered as Ofsted inspectors, their role in the study was to undertake an audit of education provision. On this basis, staff are hereafter referred to as auditors.

1.1 Social policy background

In order for the Youth Justice Board to achieve its primary statutory aim of preventing offending, it is placing a high priority on the education and training of young offenders. This audit and review will enable the YJB to use key baseline information so that progress can be charted and resources targeted where necessary.

There are three main areas where education appears to be significant in creating a likelihood of offending:

- the impact of custodial interventions;
- educational under-achievement, particularly with respect to literacy and numeracy;
- permanent exclusion and non-attendance at school.

Knowledge in each of these three areas is uneven and occasionally non-existent. What we do know, as revealed by meta-analyses, is that school participation and delinquency are quite strongly and inversely related, and that the most effective intervention programmes for reducing offending are those that help offenders to enter and sustain themselves within the labour market.

Raising the educational attainment of young people who offend has been identified as one of the most effective means of reducing criminogenic risk factors. Studies have indicated that the route to rehabilitation for most young offenders is through the attainment of normal milestones often denied to them because of their marginalised status – learning to read and write, attending school, gaining qualifications, getting a job, entering further education and training, finding somewhere to live and maintaining stable family relationships. Historically, young people who have offended have not achieved these milestones because they have not had access to, or have had great difficulty participating in, mainstream educational services both pre- and post-16.

The Social Exclusion Unit in its “Bridging the Gap” report (1999) drew attention to the association between offending and being outside education, training and employment, and the unsatisfactory nature of education and training provision in Young Offender Institutions. Consequently, it was recommended and accepted by Ministers that under-16s in custody should receive at least 30 hours of education and personal development per week, and 16 and 17 year-olds must participate in a programme of 30 hours a week of education, personal development and training reaching educational accreditation standards. All Young Offender Institutions must set education targets specifically for the under-16 population, coupled with individual targets for each offender based on an entry assessment.

These proposals extended the requirements brought in under PSO 4950, which: prioritised better assessment and planning at the beginning of the sentence; introduced goals for the amount of time to be spent on purposeful activities and education by under-16s; and set targets for attaining education and training including targets for attaining National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and GNVQs (General NVQs), according to length of sentence.

This audit and review are designed to provide the essential benchmarking information and audit framework to enable YJB staff to implement the new proposals effectively and ensure consistency of delivery across the three sectors that comprise the newly unified secure estate.

A common feature of custodial populations is the low level of educational or training qualifications, with significant literacy and numeracy deficits in particular. The Social Exclusion Unit Bridging the Gap report noted that 80 per cent of young people receiving custodial sentences had no qualifications, and that over two-thirds of young offenders sent to custody were at NVQ Level 1 or below for reading, writing and numeracy. A survey carried out by INCLUDE for the YJB's Basic Skills Initiative (2000) of the basic skills needs of young people with whom Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are working revealed reading ages averaging six years behind chronological ages.

The Government's national literacy and numeracy strategies were initially targeted at primary school age children and are currently being extended to Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds). Those aged 18 and above will be covered by the new adult basic skills strategy announced recently. This audit draws on these strategies to plug the gap for 14-18 year olds, with particular reference to serious/persistent offenders. The research design was assisted by experts from CfBT (Council for British Teachers), the organisation that implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies on behalf of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The audits were undertaken by registered inspectors familiar with the key pedagogical issues relating to literacy and numeracy as well as knowledge of secure establishments.

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act introduced the new custodial sentence of the Detention and Training Order, designed to ensure continuity of supervision within the community following the custodial part of the sentence. The negative impacts of custody caused by the fracturing of ties with family, education and community are well attested through the very high reconviction rates for released young offenders.

The intended enhancement to education and training regimes within the secure estate planned by the Youth Justice Board could, however, have negative unintended consequences. Magistrates may be attracted to use the DTO in order to secure a higher volume and quality of education or training than is currently available in the community. Equally, if the enhanced regimes do lead to very significant learning gains, these will be jeopardised if there is not continuity of provision (in terms of both volume and quality) in the transition from custody to community supervision.

There is already evidence of significant problems in ensuring appropriate transition in learning placement from custody to community. The evaluation of Medway STC revealed that 28 per cent of those released had no education arranged for them, despite being of compulsory school age; only 7 per cent were reintegrated into mainstream schools. In addition, there were significant delays in arranging education during the supervision part of the sentence in the community.

Similarly, Rainsbrook STC's management information system recorded in March 2000 that 44 per cent of the young people being released had no education or training placement

arranged. A survey by Manchester City College of young people released from secure accommodation in the North West showed only 12 per cent having an education placement plan on release.

The only national study² of the reintegration of permanently excluded young people found that Youth Offending Teams received relatively little information on the educational status of the young people they were working with, management information systems were weak, and part-time educational provision predominated.

The association between being out of school and offending has received considerable attention over the last few years – particularly in the context of the significant rise in permanent exclusions from school that occurred during the 1990s. The latest research is starting to indicate that exclusion in itself could have a powerful independent impact on offending. However, there have been no studies so far looking in detail for a given area at the relationship between the scale and nature of juvenile offending and the out-of-school population. In relation to those young people who have not attended school for a significant period of time, but were not formally excluded, remarkably little is known about their numbers or experiences. For instance, there are no national statistics on how many young people have not attended school for, say, the last six months.

Youth Offending Teams are now using a uniform assessment system (ASSET). Coupled with the introduction of management information systems and quarterly returns to the YJB, this means that much more detailed evidence is available on the scale and nature of offending within each team's area. However, there are poor horizontal linkages between national and local monitoring systems and problems relating to the DfEE's measurement categories (unauthorised absence figures, for instance, include those missing a single day and those who may not have attended for six months or more). As a result, the analysis of nationally collected data will need to be underpinned by representative local surveys. Accordingly, experts in this field who have access to the most up-to-date local education authority (LEA) information will support Phase 3 of this audit.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the audit

This audit provides an assessment of current education and training provision within the secure estate. It makes judgements against existing standards such as PSO 4950, but it also assesses the capacity of existing provision to be scaled up to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Board. The value for money of education provision is also examined.

The audit and the linked reviews contribute to the necessary framework for the Youth Justice Board to undertake a strategic approach to education and training provision by:

- supplying benchmark quantitative evidence;
- identifying promising approaches in both the secure facilities and community supervision;
- producing proposals to underpin the achievement of the strategic targets.

² Investigating the Re-integration of Permanently Excluded Pupils in England by C. Parsons and K. Howlett INCLUDE 2000.

The audit provides an authoritative assessment of current provision (within the context of significant gaps in the data) and its strengths and weaknesses, in the context of the proposed regime enhancement. The audit gives overall recommendations for the secure estate.

In particular, the review of the pre- and post-custodial experiences of young people on Detention and Training Orders will enable the Youth Justice Board to identify shortfalls in the volume and quality of provision and to influence the DfEE and relevant LEAs.

1.3 Methodology

The audit examined three critical areas of activity within the secure estate:

- the service delivery context;
- assessment, planning and review;
- teaching and learning.

In all three areas, judgements were based on the analysis of relevant documentation, semi-structured interviews with key members of staff, and observation of young people and lessons.

Key measures of effectiveness examined included:

- qualifications gained by young people while in custody;
- average time spent in education or training per week per young person;
- gains made in literacy and numeracy skills (basic skills levels 1 and 2);
- proportion of total education time spent on literacy and numeracy work.

In addition, information was gathered on other issues such as diversity, integration of education and sentence planning, the views of young people, and continuity with education pre and post custody.

2.0 SERVICE DELIVERY CONTEXT

Many staff within the Young Offender Institutions welcomed the criminal justice reforms. They cited the greater YOT involvement, an increase in external contacts, and a new commitment to after-care that the DTO represents.

Many governors, heads of regimes and education managers expressed strong support for the YJB's emphasis on education and training and saw it as the key intervention that could reduce criminogenic risk factors.

In many instances, education teams face extremely difficult transitions to working with juveniles. However, they often have the potential that will be necessary if there is to be a step-change in the quality of education and training provided.

More generally, there is the essential recognition that major cultural change will be necessary in Young Offender Institutions (although not so sharply in Local Authority Secure Units). Young Offender Institutions continuously experience a high level of turbulence, with several hundred movements each month. In these circumstances, the performance on record-keeping and other matters is remarkable.

In conducting the audit visits it was only too apparent to the researchers and auditors that there was a constant air of fire-fighting and that one small event could upset the finely balanced education regimes. The turbulence of the environment is also reflected in the high level of turnover of education managers and governors.

However, there are critical system failures relating to education and training both within custody and – crucially – at the transition points between community and custody. These findings in relation to education and training are indicative of deeper-rooted problems within criminal justice, education and social care interventions. The structural, practice and cultural weaknesses identified threaten the viability of the Detention and Training Order. They are all closely interlinked, and often reinforce each other. In concert, they represent a formidable and challenging case for business transformation.

2.1 Information and communication technologies

There is extremely limited use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the secure estate. Rectifying this situation is essential on several grounds. It offers the opportunity to transmit the key information that is currently not moving rapidly enough between the custody and community sectors. Through video-conferencing, for example, ICT offers a means of overcoming the practical barriers posed by the isolation and distance of the secure establishments.

In terms of working with young people, evidence suggests that those with multiple problems, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and a history of educational failure find it easier to

engage with learning via ICT than through more traditional methods. Furthermore, ICT offers the scope to link education providers within the custody sector to colleges and schools.

2.2 Accountability

A fundamental issue is the question of who is responsible for the education and training of the young person. The complexity of accountability for Young Offender Institutions has a negative impact on education and training. Over-inspection is a symptom of the current situation. One YOI's Head of Regimes illustrated this point by listing five inspections/audits in the last three months relating to education and training. Evidence was also seen of contradictory advice from different groups inspecting education provision.

Where education and training are concerned, governors, heads of regimes and education managers appeared either confused about the role of the YJB or saw it as being minimal. The question "Who owns the curriculum?" was posed several times. If the governing instruments such as PSO 4950 are provided by a service that does not have a role in community interventions, this will tend to compound the compartmentalised approach to education and training.

2.3 Contract arrangements

A linked problem is the current contracting process, as the existing system has several important weaknesses. The competitive element means that contractors tend to be secretive about the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. There is very little sharing of effective practice or failures. Contacts with other education providers are not encouraged and rarely happen. There is also too much emphasis on cost, which is putting a downward pressure on the quality of teaching staff.

Equally, there is too little flexibility to enable establishments within the secure estate to vary terms and conditions within what are often very tight labour-market conditions. They therefore cannot deliver the quantity of lessons specified. Governors can then divert money clawed back to other establishment activities.

A much greater emphasis needs to be placed on educational activities that integrate work both within and outside the custodial institution. This could include, for example, provision for teaching staff to attend reviews of young people, time for in-service training (INSET), sharing innovations across the secure estate and outreach work with YOTs and external education providers.

It is interesting to note that governors and, particularly, heads of regimes were comfortable with holding several contracts and having multiple providers for education, training and linked activities in their establishments – as long as this was within the context of simpler accountability where education and training were concerned.

A further drawback of the current contracting process is that the efficiency savings required within it (allegedly 2 per cent this year) are returned to the Prison Service Unit at Corby, not the YJB.

The contracting process as currently constituted appears to have created widespread dissatisfaction. Several governors would prefer direct provision and, more surprisingly, one or two education managers concurred with this viewpoint. There appears to be more support, however, for contracting out if it were to include vocational work and was made much more flexible, simplified and with much greater emphasis on quality.

2.4 Costs

In attempting to assess the relative value for money in the provision of education within the juvenile secure estate, it has to be borne in mind that it has not been managed as a single entity. Consequently, it is difficult to establish exact expenditure and to compare like with like.

The limitations of the current management information mean that the analysis has had to be confined to looking at total expenditure on education in relation to bed spaces. This does not enable an assessment of how much educational provision was actually available for use, as in YOIs in particular for a variety of reasons there are frequently shortfalls in provision compared to that actually contracted for.

Such information needs to be combined with detailed throughput figures so that judgements can be made as to the cost of education actually received by the young person. This cost data could then be analysed in relation to uniform value-added measures (which also need to be introduced) to enable value for money judgements to be made across the whole secure estate.

Nonetheless, there is enough evidence to make some comparisons across the three sectors. It is also possible to provide estimates of how much it would cost to secure a significant enhancement in the amount and quality of education provided.

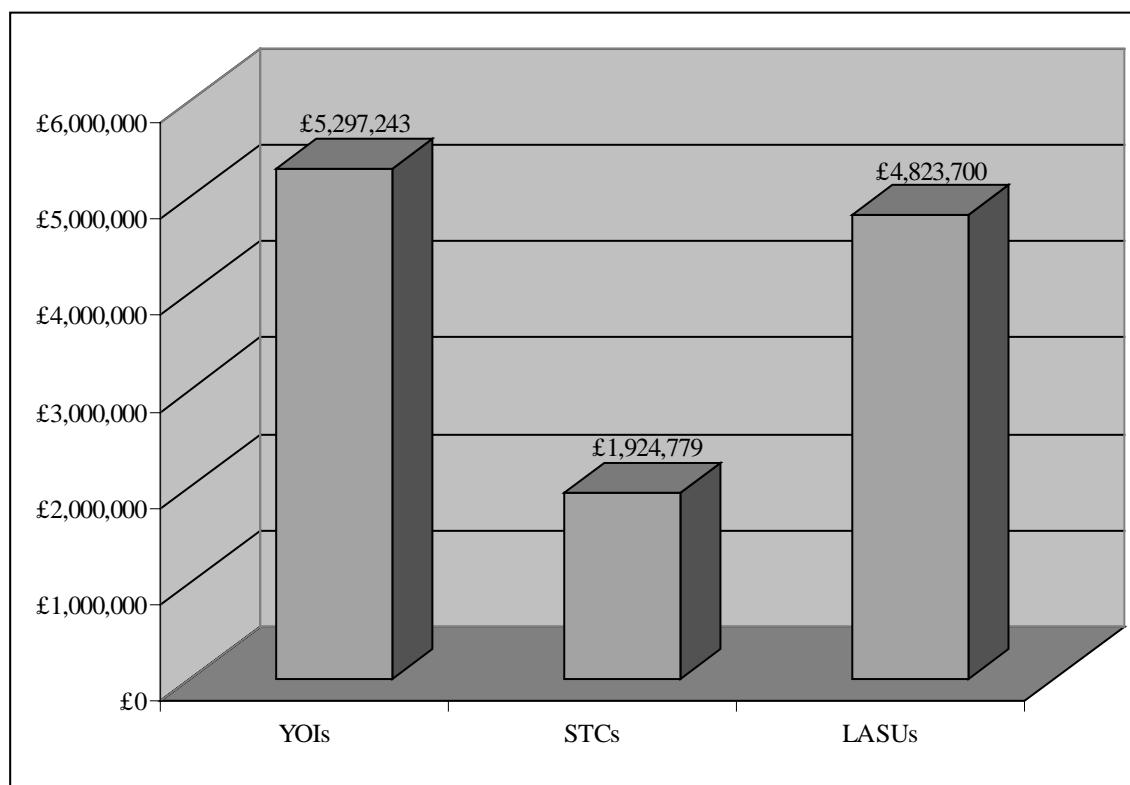
Table 2.1: Expenditure on education in the secure estate

Type	Total Expenditure	No. bed spaces	Cost per Bed space	Hours per week	Weeks per year
YOIs	£5,297,243	2,927	£1,810	15	50
STCs	£1,924,779	120	£16,040	30	50
LASUs	£4,823,700	300	£16,079	25	38

Table 2.1 is compiled from information provided by the Youth Justice Board for Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres. The information on Young Offender Institutions is based partly on estimations, because of the reluctance of education providers to release the relevant information.

Clearly, the most striking feature of Table 2.1 is the disparity in expenditure on education between Young Offender Institutions and the placements in Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres. Total expenditure on education across the secure estate is approximately £12 million (assuming for the purposes of this exercise operational capacity rather than occupancy, which is probably a reasonable assumption). Yet over half the total expenditure (56 per cent) is spent on educating just 12 per cent (420 bed spaces) of the custodial population.

Figure 2.1: Total expenditure on education, by type of establishment



Young Offender Institutions

The average education budget for a Young Offender Institution is approximately £400,000 for an average of 225 bed spaces. The range appears to be between a maximum expenditure per bed space of just over £2,000 and a minimum of just over £1,400.

Most, but not all, Young Offender Institutions have access to vocational workshops. On sites which provide for young offenders as well as juveniles a certain number of places may be available. The stand-alone Young Offender Institutions have control over their own vocational provision. Given the recommendations elsewhere in this report for the need for

greater integration of educational and vocational provision, and to ensure that cost comparisons are as valid as possible across the three sectors of the secure estate, estimates have to be made for the cost of this vocational provision.

Detailed figures were not available for all establishments. But extrapolating from establishments with significant vocational provision, it is clear that a generous estimate would be that expenditure on vocational activities is between one-quarter and one-third of expenditure on education.

This would give a total expenditure on education and training across all Young Offender Institutions of approximately £6.8 million and a cost per bed space of £2,335.

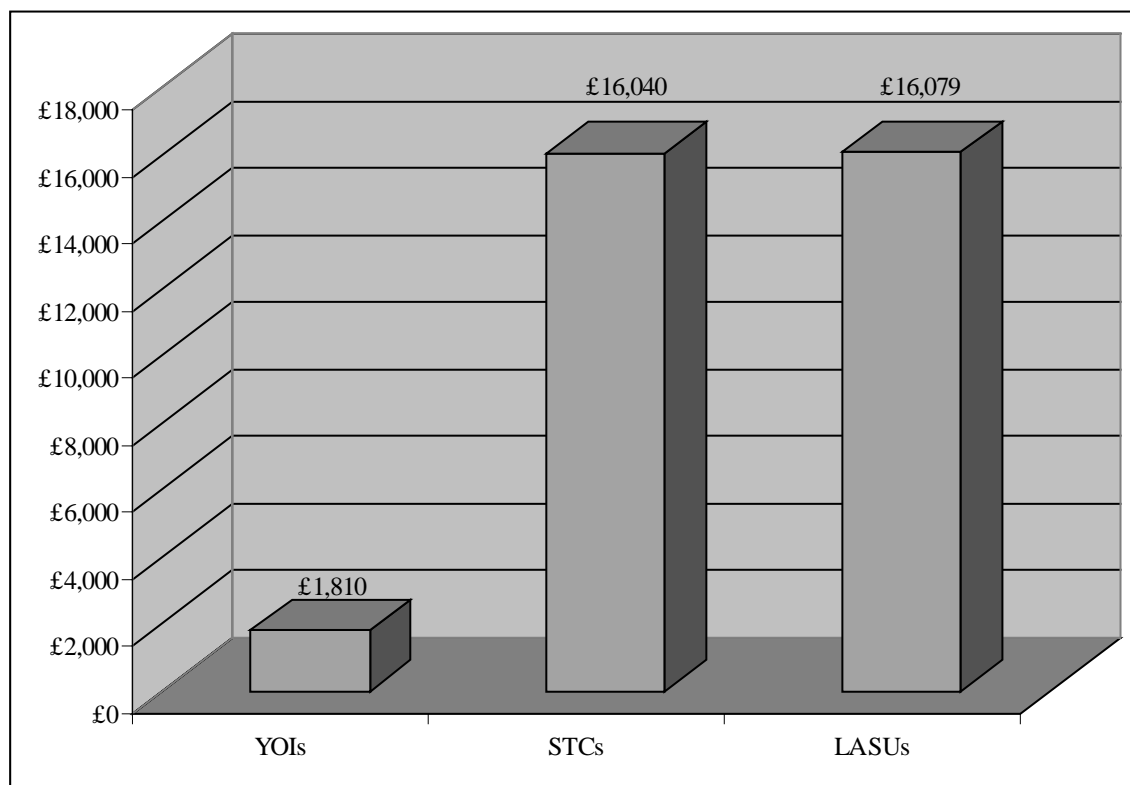
Secure units

The average cost of education in a Local Authority Secure Unit is £265,000 for an average of 16 bed spaces. The range lies between a maximum of almost £25,000 per bed space to a minimum of just over £10,000. This is the widest range of costs for any of the three sectors.

Secure Training Centres

The average cost of education in a Secure Training Centre is about £640,000 per year. The current capacity of the three Secure Training Centres is 40 bed spaces per unit. The variation in cost per bed space across the three centres is about £4,500.

Figure 2.2: Expenditure on education per bed space, by type of establishment



Clearly, the spend per bed space in Young Offender Institutions is dwarfed by that in Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres. In fact the amount spent on education alone by LASUs per bed space represents as much and often more than the entire regime costs of operating a Young Offender Institution.

Cost comparison between Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres

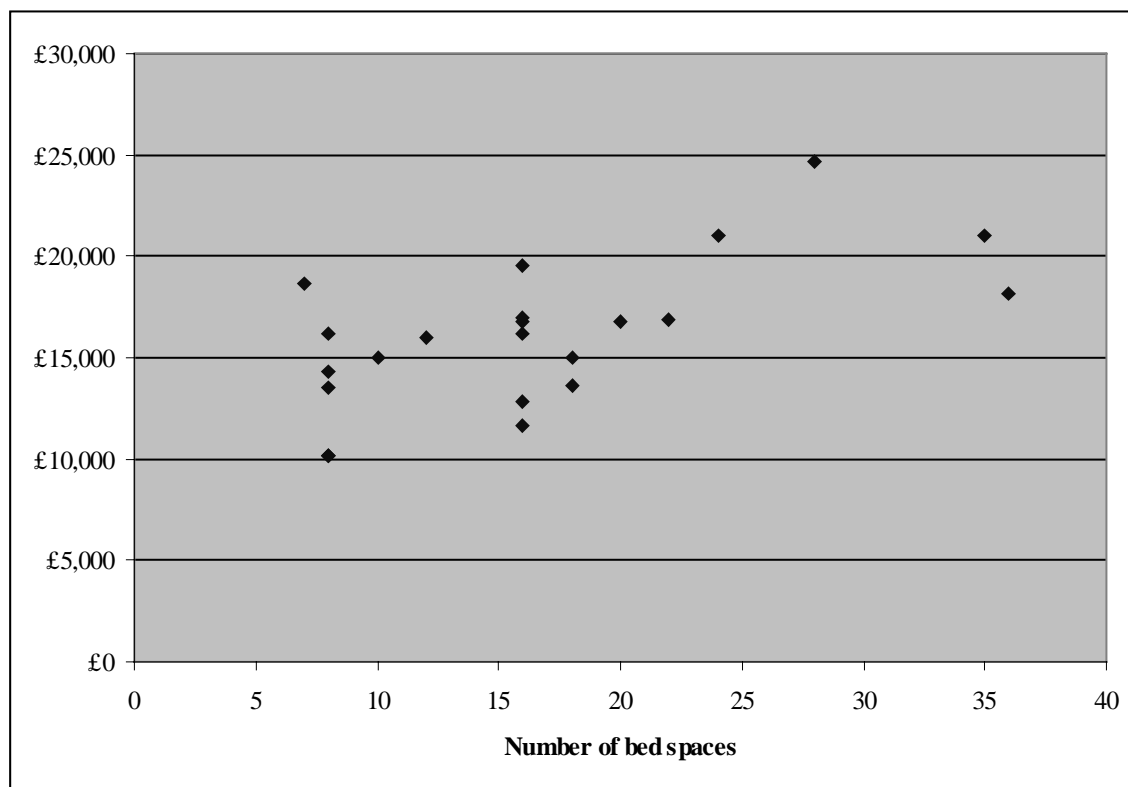
The average cost per bed space is virtually identical between these two types of provision (Figure 2.2), and as a result of these resources, both are able to give a higher quality of educational provision than YOIs.

It might be thought that there is very little to choose between LASUs and STCs. However, closer examination indicates that equivalent LASU provision may be significantly more expensive than that of the Secure Training Centre.

Estimates by the Youth Justice Board based on particular Local Authority Secure Units indicate that across the sector a move to 30 hours a week of educational provision would increase costs by approximately 20 per cent. This would mean an average cost per bed space of over £19,000 per Local Authority Secure Unit compared with £16,000 for a Secure Training Centre.

Another feature of the cost profile of Local Authority Secure Units is that the bed space costs tend to increase with the size of the establishment. It might be supposed that there would be economies of scale, and that the smaller units would have the highest bed space costs because of their proportion of fixed costs. However, this does not usually appear to be the case, as Figure 2.3 illustrates.

Figure 2.3: Education costs per bed space 2000-2001, by size of LASU



If the cost per bed space of the four largest Local Authority Secure Units is compared with that of the three Secure Training Centres, it can be seen that the LASUs are on average 25 per cent more expensive per bed space, at over £21,000.

If the four largest Local Authority Secure Units are costed at 30 hours a week, for 50 weeks a year, then the average bed space cost rises to £25,500 – 37% higher than the Secure Training Centres.

Cost implications of moving to 30 hours a week education

The Youth Justice Board is facing the need for a significant increase in resources – even assuming that an acceptable quality of provision can be made at significantly less cost per bed space than that of the largest LASUs, perhaps because of the economies of scale that YOIs would be expected to realise.

Education costs of provision in the community and others with similar difficulties indicate a range of between £10,000 and £20,000 per placement per year. Most pupil referral units, for instance, would cost over £10,000 per full-time placement. This would of course be only for a maximum of 38 weeks rather than 50. Home tuition of nearly five hours per week can cost between £3,000 and £5,000 per year.

A relevant analogy would be the provision of special schools for young people deemed to have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Here again the cost per bed space is likely to be over £12,500 per year.

The current level of expenditure per bed space in a Young Offender Institution is very low. Just how low is illustrated by the fact that it is less than the age-weighted pupil unit (the average variable cost) for secondary school pupils aged between 14 and 16.

An estimate of the total cost of providing education to an acceptable standard across the current operational capacity of Young Offender Institutions can be arrived at in two ways. The bed space cost of the Secure Training Centres could be used as a guide, with a reduction factored in to allow for economies of scale – although in fact the opposite could just as easily occur. Using the average cost of education per bed space in a Secure Training Centre would indicate expenditure of about £47 million per year on education in Young Offender Institutions. This represents a nine-fold increase over the current level of expenditure.

Another approach is to model a “secure college” based on the average size of a Young Offender Institution. The average secure college would have 225 places at any point in time. With an average sentence of four months, the institution would have a throughput of about 775 young people per year. Obviously the larger institutions such as Huntercombe and Wetherby would have well over 1,000 placements per year. This would make them many times larger than any existing special school.

Relatively straightforward staffing assumptions and their costs can be made, based for example on class sizes of eight with one experienced teacher and learning support assistant per group, with an appropriate management structure and specialist staff for special educational needs (SEN), basic skills and educational psychology. For an average-sized Young Offender Institution of 225 places, the total educational costs of a relatively modest secure college model would be approximately £2.25 million pounds to £2.5 million pounds. This represents a bed space cost of between £10,000 and £11,000.

Such assumptions would indicate a total cost for the operational capacity of all Young Offender Institutions of just over £30 million per year – nearly a six-fold increase over current levels. The bed space costs in this case are only two-thirds of those of Secure Training Centres and well under half those of the largest Local Authority Secure Units. It can thus be appreciated that these are not overstated costings for providing full-time education that is appropriate to need.

There is no doubt that there could be a significant increase in the effectiveness of education over the whole of the secure estate, particularly where reintegration is concerned. There are also potential economies of scale to be gained. Even so, educational provision in Young Offender Institutions is very significantly under-funded compared not only with the learning needs of young people, but also with the other provision in the secure estate and comparable provision in the community.

The sheer scale of the funding gap for education and training in Young Offender Institutions compared with LASUs and STCs and, more importantly, compared with the entitlement of young people in the community has serious social policy implications. It is extremely difficult to justify a significant reduction in young people's entitlement to education and training through imposing custodial sentences when education is an area recognised as very significant in preventing re-offending.

The fact that significant numbers of young people have entered custody from part-time or perhaps no provision should not be used to obscure the under-funding of education and training within Young Offender Institutions. The limited nature of the programmes for these young people has been a contributory factor to offending. The anomalous nature of entitlement to full-time appropriate education for those excluded from school was recognised in the first report of the Social Exclusion Unit. Accordingly, the Secretary of State for Education has required that by 2002 all young people whether excluded or not must be offered a full-time appropriate education. Furthermore, funding has been made available to LEAs to put this provision in place.

If the new Detention and Training Order sentence is to gain credibility, any education and training elements must be appropriately funded.

2.5 Staffing

Staffing is one area where very significant weaknesses were revealed. The current terms and conditions are much less attractive than those for mainstream education staff in terms of both pay and holidays. Consequently, most custodial establishments rely on too high a proportion of part-time or supply staff, are continuously coping with vacancies, and experience high rates of turnover and sickness. It is also fair to say that not all teachers, even in the best teams, are at the cutting edge of practice.

Ironically, some of these teaching teams are exhibiting the turbulent characteristics of the custodial population itself, with a lack of continuity, poor communication, low morale and not being plugged into mainstream professional networks. Visiting education departments in other establishments is not often encouraged. The drive to push down costs and focus on quantity means that critically important issues such as INSET are not always a priority. There is no real career ladder for teachers and educational managers. Vocational staff are from very different professional backgrounds and there is limited joint training. Practitioners rarely have access to more specialist colleagues with expertise in special educational needs, educational psychology and basic skills.

Arguably, one of the greatest challenges the Youth Justice Board faces is to create a cadre of high-quality educational/training practitioners and managers.

There was a welcome for the YJB's potential role in professional development. However, there was equally a concern that piecemeal and apparently reactive training is of relatively less value, and that there appears to be insufficient appreciation of just how disruptive such one-off training could be to establishments.

The management structures of Young Offender Institutions also require examination. Options such as the creation of a senior management post to bring educational/training expertise and coherence to a range of activities need to be considered.

Possibly of even more importance is the pervasive lack of learning support assistants for vital one-to-one work with young people, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The introduction of sufficient numbers of such assistants (provided they have been appropriately trained and inducted) could in itself bring about a step-change in literacy and numeracy levels for many of these young people.

Teachers within the secure estate come from a wide range of backgrounds and work experience histories. The secure estate in general seeks staff with previous teaching experience within a custodial environment. However, a number of staff referred to mainstream experience as an asset, particularly in helping to raise standards and expectations in the secure estate by offering a broad and mainstream curriculum. These teachers can help to replicate the national curriculum within a secure environment. Teaching staff at one LASU have visited mainstream schools in order to ensure that staff are able to replicate mainstream provision in a secure environment.

The ability to teach life and social skills is particularly important for teachers working with juveniles in the secure estate. One Young Offender Institution cited the development of a qualification in this area as important.

The terms and conditions of education staff within the secure estate vary significantly across the three sectors. Broadly speaking, terms and conditions are more favourable for teachers working in Local Authority Secure Units than in Young Offender Institutions, with LASUs demonstrating higher rates of pay and longer holiday entitlement than YOIs. Part-time teacher status is the norm in YOIs, while in LASUs the majority of teachers work on a full-time basis.

Educational provision in YOIs is mainly contracted out to local colleges, and therefore teachers' terms and conditions are defined according to further education (FE) scales. Some YOIs cited working hours and holiday entitlement (which is much less than in LEA schools) as barriers to the recruitment of teachers. Pay scales were viewed as the most important barrier. For example, at one YOI, full-time teachers' salaries range from £14,431 to £22,317; teachers at another are paid between £17,500 and £19,500. This represents a significant salary reduction for ex-teachers from mainstream education.

Some Young Offender Institutions believe that small supplements should be available to teaching staff, in addition to their basic pay. This was viewed as necessary to attract teachers from the mainstream, and was particularly important given the remote location of the YOI.

The reliance on supply teachers as a result of high staff sickness rates and vacancies in some Young Offender Institutions causes difficulties in relation to terms and conditions. Supply teachers working in mainstream schools can command a higher day rate – around £120 a day.

Some Young Offender Institutions expressed concern that teachers may choose to work in a YOI “as a last resort”, as some appear uncommitted to the job and may have been rejected for open school posts. Mainstream teachers are highly sought after.

Hourly rates are significantly lower for teachers in Young Offender Institutions compared with the rate they could command in mainstream education. The education manager at one YOI calculated that part-time teachers paid an hourly rate of £16.76 in the secure estate could be paid £25 an hour in a mainstream school.

Allowances result in teachers working in Local Authority Secure Units being significantly better off than mainstream teachers, in real terms. Salaries start at a base of £16,000 rising to £23,000. However, LASU teachers also receive an additional Community Homes and Secure Unit allowance of £5,500. Many teachers working in LASUs are paid according to JNC scales with enhancements. This results in salaries approximately £6,000 greater per year than a mainstream teacher, and more than £10,000 higher than teachers paid according to FE scales.

Pay for senior teachers and those with managerial responsibilities demonstrates more variance. Pay for senior teachers starts at around £30,000. In some units, the salary scale for heads of education starts at £30,975. The education manager’s salary bracket starts at around £37,000.

However, these figures should be viewed with caution, as it is not always apparent if they refer to basic salary, i.e. do not include allowances or management points – these add significantly to the pay of senior teachers and education managers.

Some units have high staff costs because teaching staff have been transferred from open units, having built up additional salary points. In some instances, staff are being paid at this level but do not hold the same degree of responsibility as in the past.

In rare instances, staff salaries and holiday provision were held to be better in mainstream education than in LASUs. Where evident, this situation occurred in Secure Units that had moved to providing education for 50 weeks a year.

The majority of teachers in LASUs receive the same holiday entitlement as mainstream teachers. In establishments offering 42 to 50 weeks of provision this has resulted in staff having to cover colleagues’ holidays. This means that the teachers allocated to a unit are not always present in the school at the same time. In some instances, holidays are structured so that teachers cannot take more than two weeks off at a time. In isolated instances, education staff are also given extraneous duties, such as working in conjunction with care staff in the evening.

Staff working in Secure Units facing possible closure often have vulnerable terms and conditions. For example, some staff working at one such institution have been on three-month temporary contracts for the past four years. These institutions are also vulnerable to

the loss of staff, and are unable to advertise for replacements as the funding of the unit is unclear.

Terms and conditions for teachers working in STCs are the worst in the secure estate. For example, the hourly rates at one of the STCs for sessional and full-time teaching staff are set at £15.32 and £10.10 respectively. This pay level is significantly lower than teachers' rates in YOIs. The difference was held to be £15 per hour, according to STC staff. Annual salaries in STCs range from £21,000 to £23,000, and there is standard holiday provision of 20 days, plus eight public holidays.

The move to a 50-week curriculum

Staff at one of the LASUs viewed the move to a 50-week curriculum as a mistake in hindsight. Several LASUs referred to staffing difficulties as a result of increasing the number of weeks in the education plan, and reconciling this with staff holidays. Several LASUs had appointed an additional teacher, or were planning to do so, to ensure that teaching levels could remain consistent throughout the year.

Similar staffing difficulties and implications for staff terms and conditions should be considered in assessing the impact of a move to 30 hours a week of education provision.

Sickness rates

Staffing levels generally and the provision of teaching support staff in particular have a clear impact on the sickness levels recorded in the secure estate. There are significant variations by sector.

A number of Young Offender Institutions cited inadequate staffing levels as a major cause of work-related stress, resulting in increased sickness levels. At one YOI, sickness rates and staff turnover have reduced since a new education manager has been in post. This reduction is attributed to a more structured timetable and the commitment of staff, which has led to improvements in staff morale. High staff sickness rates at another YOI were in part attributed to previous poor management.

Support staff are crucial throughout the secure estate. For example, at Feltham YOI, 60 to 70% of the young people are classified as "disturbed" (Attention Deficit Disorder, psychopaths, schizophrenic).

Difficulties in securing supply staff in the secure estate were noted – 28 days are required for security/child protection clearance. Some suggested the need for a pool of supply staff to ensure that teachers were readily available.

Lack of teaching staff can result in insufficient staffing levels to provide cover for other colleagues. In extreme circumstances, this can result in lessons being cancelled. For example, four or five lessons a week were cancelled at one of the YOIs because of this problem. The reallocation of young offenders to other classes is time-consuming and places other members

of the teaching staff under additional pressure, disrupting their lessons and increasing the discontinuity in learning provision.

In some LASUs positive reductions in staff sickness rates have been directly attributed to improved support staffing arrangements for teaching staff.

Increase in the number of juveniles

The introduction of DTOs has resulted in a significant increase in the number of juveniles entering the secure estate. This has resulted in a number of Young Offender Institutions experiencing significant and rapid changes to the type of young peoples they receive, and the type of provision they are expected to provide.

For example, the number of juveniles at Hollesley Bay YOI has increased sharply. Staff have had to adjust to this client group quickly. Many issues have resulted from the differences in understanding, behaviour, expectations and treatment of a 15-year old compared to a 20-year old.

Administration workload

A high volume of paperwork is attached to the juvenile population. Valuable teaching resources and time are being absorbed into managing the administration required for each young person. The juvenile programme co-ordinator at one of the YOIs, for example, referred to juveniles as only accounting for a quarter of their prison population, “so we only get a quarter of the resources, but they are double the amount of work”.

2.6 Areas for improvement

The interviews with heads of regimes, education managers and several governors contained questions about the areas for improvement that they saw as priorities, and the implications of moving education within Young Offender Institutions to 30 hours per week. As might be expected, there was a great deal of overlap in the answers to these questions. There was by no means universal support for the idea of moving to 30 hours a week. Five broad areas for improvement were identified by the senior managers within YOIs: staffing, integration, the curriculum, administration/management, and accommodation

All Young Offender Institutions saw staffing as the key area for improvement. Common themes were to increase the stability, levels and skills of the education workforce. Specific weaknesses cited across all the institutions were the absence of sufficient numbers of learning support assistants to provide essential one-to-one support, and the need for expertise to be provided by educational psychologists and SEN co-ordinators.

Regarding teaching practitioners, most Young Offender Institutions identified deficits around staff development. Several mentioned the problems of low morale and the lack of effective appraisal systems.

The staff development needs of education managers were not felt to be recognised. Networking opportunities and the dissemination of effective practice were identified as being inhibited by the contract culture and the need for commercial confidentiality.

Integration was seen as operating at several levels. Several Young Offender Institutions identified the need to integrate educational activities across all regime activities, especially in terms of enhancing literacy and numeracy. The involvement of non-teaching staff such as prison officers was seen as an area with much potential for further development, but would require specific training.

Most establishments felt that there needed to be more work on joining up the various strands of delivery across their sites, especially regarding through-care, guidance and administration. Also noted was the need for improved integration with other initiatives such as the work by CARATS on life-skills provision, possibly through a more integrated approach between the CARATS workers and the education department.

Two establishments in particular emphasised the need to change the institutional culture to align it behind education, and also to ensure a single culture across the Detention and Training Order based on either education or employment.

Regarding the curriculum, feelings were expressed on its inappropriateness for many young people in custody, particularly where the relevant key performance targets were concerned. Clarity is required over who owns the curriculum. In several establishments, clarity is also required regarding the roles and authority of the governor, contract managing officer, education manager and the contractor college. A broader curriculum was seen as being important, not only in terms of including vocational subjects, but also in meeting the needs of the more academically able young people.

Several establishments felt that the actual delivery of the curriculum, particularly for literacy and numeracy, was lacking in diversity and stimulation. The need for ICT-based systems, creative writing and more appropriate materials for 16 year olds with very limited literacy and numeracy skills was mentioned. Only one Young Offender Institution highlighted the need for a much greater emphasis on the aggregation and analysis of literacy and numeracy scores on entry and exit in order to assess learning gains.

The administrative improvements that were identified concerned for example the need for far better timetabling systems to ensure maximum use of space available, and a tracking system for young people, possibly using a smart-card system.

2.7 Implications of moving to 30 hours a week

The proposed enhancements to educational provision raise a series of fundamental issues. Constraints identified by education managers, heads of regimes and governors beg important questions as to the definition and purpose of custodial education. Simply attempting to scale up provision in such circumstances risks increasing complexity still further, reducing the integration of services even more and diluting any rigour within the curriculum delivered.

Discussion of the planned enhancements to educational provision identified six key constraints. These related to the definition of education, purpose and scope of the curriculum, staffing, accommodation, cultural change and leadership by the Youth Justice Board.

Definition of education

Most education managers raised the issue of the definition of education in this context. Several requested clear guidance from the Youth Justice Board as to what constitutes education. Most felt that if education was defined as purposeful activity, then 30 hours a week would be possible. Those who were most sanguine about the move to 30 hours a week were assuming that all aspects of vocational work qualified as education in the eyes of the YJB.

Others were concerned that young people who had been school refusers would not want to be involved in such an intense educational programme. Various suggestions were made, such as half-time gym and half-time education. Other suggestions included programmes such as thinking skills and citizenship.

Several education managers had serious concerns about the whole feasibility of moving to 30 hours a week education. One governor went so far as to assert that “it would be a total disaster if we go down the 30 hour route”. Understandably, most were preoccupied with simply putting together a programme for 30 hours a week in extremely difficult circumstances. Given also the concerns noted below about the scope and purpose of the curriculum, this tended to lead to an emphasis on process and throughput rather than the adoption of a completely fresh approach.

There was a widely expressed view that a new curriculum must be devised based on a clear rationale. It must be derived from learning needs, comprehensive assessments, take account of sentence length, and the young persons immediate antecedents. It was felt that the Youth Justice Board should provide the theoretical framework and necessary guidance for this.

Curriculum

A significant proportion of those interviewed questioned the current core curriculum. While some managers felt that the curriculum was simply inappropriate to the needs of the young people, many others were asking for a relaxation of the requirements of the curriculum in order to construct a 30-hour “educational” week.

One head of regimes asserted that a comprehensive needs assessment must be undertaken to look at what young people require in terms of education. He identified three tiers of need: those on the first tier, who need mainly support with numeracy and literacy; a middle tier of approximately 10 to 15 per cent who are capable of achieving Level 2; and a top tier of roughly 10 to 12 per cent in need of more advanced support which could possibly be achieved through day release.

Such a needs assessment would have to be undertaken in the context of what can realistically be achieved by young people with low literacy and numeracy levels, a history of non-participation and relatively short sentences. Clearly, a curriculum built on these assumptions would look significantly different to that currently shaped by PSOs 4950 and 4205.

Several education managers felt that the core curriculum needs to be more imaginative and not simply about setting targets. Concerns were expressed about the willingness of the young people to participate in a longer educational day. (However, this view was not borne out by the interviews with the young people.) It must also be noted in this context that curricular design and pedagogy, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy, have become significantly more prescriptive over the last 15 years in mainstream education.

Staffing

The demands on staff teams who are already under considerable pressure were recognised almost universally as a serious constraint on expansion to 30 hours a week. Even where proposals involve widening the activities and a broader definition of education rather than the deepening of literacy and numeracy provision on offer, this would still bring significant demands on staff. If, for example, homework were to be developed and possibly counted as part of the 30 hours, then there would need to be additional support on the wings with prison staff requiring specific training.

Any broadening of the curriculum would bring demand for staff with particular expertise, but also the need for staff to offer individualised support. In addition to requiring increased subject staff, learning support assistants, specialists such as educational psychologists and co-ordinators in SEN and basic skills, there would need to be increased resources for tutorials in order to ensure integration and more effective planning with the young person. Given that recruitment and retention are major issues for some of these establishments, particularly where the local labour market is extremely tight, then there are very real fears that the enhancement programme would not be able to function with any consistency.

The need both to expand vocational provision and to ensure that literacy and numeracy are thoroughly interwoven will also bring demands for staff with more specific skills and the need for more training. In these circumstances, great concern was expressed about increasing still further the number of part-time staff involved in this provision, which would reduce communication and use up scarce management time.

One consequence of the widely recognised need for a step-change in the quantity and quality of professional development for those working in custodial education is the need to build in much higher levels of supply cover.

The issue of salary levels for teachers in Young Offender Institutions was raised, along with the suggestion that there should be a premium paid for such work, as is the case in Local Authority Secure Units. It was felt that this would assist with recruitment and retention, recognise the specialised nature of the teaching work, and start to change the view that people only teach in prisons because they are not good enough to teach anywhere else.

There was a widespread concern that the extent of the changes with the move to 30 hours a week could destabilise some teams who were already experiencing considerable instability and were often wary of further changes. Proposals to ameliorate this potentially negative impact included more time and emphasis on staff induction and the provision of mentors in recognition of the difficulty of the working conditions. Several establishments raised the need for training/consultancy for staff groups to enable the transition.

Accommodation

All YOI senior managers raised the issue of accommodation. The situation is so acute that in certain establishments, whatever the revenue funding provided, 30 hours a week education could not be provided without an extremely elastic definition of the term.

The situation is particularly acute where the education department caters for young offenders in addition to juveniles. In these circumstances, roughly half-time education is provided for both groups; for example, the juveniles are educated in the morning and the young offenders in the afternoon. In the absence of new accommodation, any increase in formal classroom activity could only be achieved by an equivalent reduction in the teaching of the young offenders. This would apply for example at Ashfield, Feltham and Lancaster Farms.

At other Young Offender Institutions, current educational space is so limited that juveniles either have morning or afternoon education, or as at Huntercombe have to be educated on the wings. Most establishments would need an increase in accommodation for vocational activities and some, such as Brinsford, currently do not have workshops.

Accommodation constraints mean that there is a real risk that in order to meet the YJB's requirements, quality will be diluted further by more ad hoc educational programmes. This would make the assessment of added value even more difficult than it already is.

Cultural change

At several YOI establishments, a much greater emphasis on education and vocational provision was seen as having the potential to exacerbate an institutional culture where prison officers did not see the primary function to be related to education or training. Again, assistance was requested in both training and the development of quality systems, as well as in helping to change the culture with prison officer staff so that their work plays an even more important part in supporting education.

Youth Justice Board leadership

A significant number of senior managers in Young Offender Institutions expressed concern over the role of the Youth Justice Board. They were unclear as to where they stood in relation to the Prison Service, the new DfEE education unit and the YJB. There were concerns that without clear guidance from YJB as to the scope and purpose of the curriculum and the definition of education, they could be fined by the Prison Service for failure to comply.

Several managers expressed their concerns that the YJB is perceived as locked in a constant “power struggle” with its own standards for education and those of the Prison Service. Over half of the Young Offender Institutions expressed significant frustration regarding YJB invitations to bid for resources and a lack of response or structured feedback.

3.0 ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND REVIEW

These systems should provide the spine for all interventions with young people. But in the main the exercise is fractured and limited in that education and training are not an integral part of the process.

The extremely low level of transmission of assessment information calls into question its cost and relevance. It also means that education departments and other staff in the secure estate are wasting time in duplicating these assessment efforts when their teams sometimes lack the necessary expertise to do this.

The principal educational assessment tool is the Basic Skills Agency test, which has significant limitations and may well not be appropriate for use with juveniles. But at least it is used universally across prison service establishments. The Secure Training Centres and some of the Local Authority Secure Units are using considerably more sophisticated assessment tools which have the potential to inform the work within custody and then to be passed on to those providing education and training in the community.

Truly integrated case management does not yet exist. The majority of education departments in Young Offender Institutions have very little input into the sentence planning processes carried out by casework/sentence planning teams. This can give rise to conflicting education and training advice, as casework staff in the main possess relatively outdated knowledge of the education system. More importantly, it means that the work being undertaken in education and training is not being woven into the planning and review processes. The section of ASSET dedicated to education and training issues, although somewhat perfunctory, is nevertheless very relevant to education and training departments. Yet in nearly all Young Offender Institutions, the casework team holds the ASSET assessment and the relevant education/training section is not passed on to the relevant departments.

Education departments tend to have no knowledge whatsoever of the planned education/training destination for young people following custody. Their work with each young person is therefore often in isolation from what has occurred before and is unlikely to be used thereafter in the community. The opportunity to prepare young people (particularly important on the shorter “crash course” sentences) for effective re-entry into education and training is thus denied to both the staff and the young people.

Resettlement programmes, where they exist, tend not to be integral parts of the education and training provision.

Perhaps the most telling indictment of the ineffectiveness of the assessment, planning and review procedures within custodial institutions is that it is much easier to ask young people what they perceive as the plans being made for them on their return to the community. Education staff and their records and the case files do not usually provide full information on such a crucial matter.

3.1 Compartmentalised processes

There is little sense of a continuum in relation to education and training. Given that education and training is by far the largest single component (in terms of time) for intervention in the life of a young offender, the Detention and Training Order appears fragmented.

Transmission of important information is often tardy, and extremely limited in terms of both quantity and quality. In March 2001, between a quarter and a third of young people in custody on Detention and Training Orders in Young Offender Institutions had arrived without an ASSET. In itself, ASSET has some significant weaknesses in relation to education and training – crucially, it fails to record whether a young person has been receiving, say, five hours' home tuition a week or a full-time programme. However, ASSET is explicitly designed to be supplemented by vital specialist assessments and plans.

In most cases, individual education plans, SEN statements and care plans (which should contain a considerable amount of information on education and training needs) are conspicuous by their absence. Even on conservative estimates, in excess of half of the custodial population will have special educational needs requiring a statement. However, this study indicates that perhaps under 1 per cent of the young people in custody have had their statements sent to the YOI. It might be argued that some young people would never have had a statement because of their absence from school. But this simply begs the question of why they were not followed up and assessed.

This problem of information transmission is nearly as great in Local Authority Secure Units. Yet with LASUs, given their small size and links to the local authority, it might be supposed that transmission of key information would be much easier. Some Local Authority Secure Units, however, have been much more successful in securing ASSET as they have a policy of “no ASSET, no place”.

Vocational training is usually managed completely separately from education, again creating a whole series of unnecessary barriers both within institutions and in terms of the transition to the community. Similarly, other programmes such as those relating to offending behaviour, and in one case even art, music and drama, tend to operate completely separately from the work of the education department.

There is still a very low level of contact with external organisations, although there are signs of some increases in this area. The use of placements at college or work experience is very limited.

Several education departments have very significant weaknesses, usually related to staffing. Some are making strenuous efforts to surmount the problems, but there is a significant amount of old-fashioned and sometimes low-quality practice.

Education departments too often have the feel of a bolt-on facility to the mainstream control tasks of a Young Offender Institution. Occasionally, the impression was given that education

simply soaked up the time. It was in effect an optional extra when officers were able to bring the young people to the classes.

Youth Justice Board national standards

The Youth Justice Board has issued national standards that span intervention both in custody and in the community. Those applying to the custodial phase of the Detention and Training Order constitute advice on good practice and are currently being evaluated in the light of experience. The rest of the standards are expected to be achieved by Youth Offending Teams and others.

Where relevant, the audit team assessed the level of compliance with the YJB standards. One of the objectives of the national standards is to improve the effectiveness of information sharing and exchange. There is a section dedicated to assessment, and several standards relate to the integration of community and custodial phases of the Detention and Training Order. Therefore the standards are particularly relevant to this study.

Standard 3.1 requires that: “Before any intervention is made with a young person, ... an assessment must be undertaken using the Youth Justice Board ASSET assessment.”

Standard 3.2 further requires that “The assessment must be informed by : ... existing reports, including any previous assessment, pre-sentence report, list of previous convictions, statement of educational needs, and any information relevant to the offending about contact with police, health and social services.”

There was relatively little evidence to suggest that YOT staff have appropriate access to educational records (particularly in relation to special educational needs) when they are completing ASSET. The fact that 21 per cent of those in custody did not have an ASSET when they were interviewed nearing their release date may indicate non-transmission rather than failure to undertake the assessment.

The section on education, training and employment in ASSET is not always completed. It is worth pointing out that in the recent YJB evaluation of the validity and reliability of ASSET, the completion rate for education, training and employment was significantly less than for any other section of ASSET.

Standard 8.1.3 states that “The supervising officer must ensure that by the next working day following the court appearance, the secure facility has received a record of the current and previous assessments. This includes sentence or care plans, Pre-Sentence Reports, previous convictions, health and all educational plans, and the post-court report form.”

As the evidence adduced above demonstrates, this responsibility of YOT managers has a very variable compliance. Where care plans and education plans are concerned, little evidence was found in Young Offender Institutions in particular that this important material is routinely sent to secure facilities, let alone within the specified timescale.

An important distinguishing feature of the Detention and Training Order is the emphasis on the Youth Offending Team's accountability to ensure integrated provision within a common planning framework.

Standard 8.1.5 for example states that "Education, health and accommodation needs on transfer to the community must be addressed from the beginning of the sentence."

But as noted above, the education department in Young Offender Institutions is not an integral part of the planning process. Furthermore, the training plans reviewed by the audit team very rarely set objectives in terms of education and training needs, particularly in relation to placement on transfer to the community.

Again in the context of sentence planning for transfer to the community, **Standard 8.1.8** states that in the review before the return to the community, "The ASSET assessment must be updated. It must identify the progress made during the custodial phase as measured by ASSET, the programme to be provided on transfer, and the requirements to be made of the offender ..."

The audit team saw very little evidence that this practice is widespread. This finding is also borne out by the recent research into the validity and reliability of ASSET. Workload pressures meant that practitioners felt it was not practicable for them to complete an ASSET at this stage of the Detention and Training Order.

With regard to provision in the community, **Standard 8.2.6** requires that "The supervising officer must, where appropriate, monitor whether the home education authority provides a continuing programme of education of at least 25 hours per week on transfer, and must inform the Chief Officers' Steering Group if this is not provided."

Within the plans reviewed by the audit team, there was no real evidence to indicate that this is occurring. There was, however, evidence to suggest a likelihood of young people being discharged to less than full-time provision in the majority of cases.

For those above school-leaving age on discharge, a crucial link within the community regarding education or training is the Gateway personal adviser. Accordingly, **Standard 8.2.9** requires that "The supervising officer must ensure that links are developed for offenders over school-leaving age with the Gateway personal adviser."

There was some evidence from the review of written material that links have been made, although this could only be ascertained in a minority of cases.

3.2 Management information

The custodial institutions spend a great deal of their time in recording and providing information. However, the scale of this activity and the very high turnover of young people often crowds out the time needed to assess what the information is telling them.

With respect to education at least, individuals, teams and institutions as a whole are tending not to manage their performance through analysis of the information they are gathering. The use of summary information to feed back on practice is relatively rare within education departments and arguably within Young Offender Institutions as a whole.

These difficulties reflect the bureaucratic burdens placed on these institutions, which do not always have ownership of the staff within them. This problem will be a significant constraint on the introduction and dissemination of evidence-based practice, which is an essential part of the Youth Justice Board's strategy.

Most information on young people is paper-based. A limited amount of information is held on "LIDS" – Home Office software – which looks to be DOS-based and relatively user-unfriendly. There seems to be little awareness of how to interrogate the data held on the present electronic systems.

Even where paper-based systems are sound practice (i.e. normal management processes of quality assurance, monitoring and review), institutions are greatly hampered. They are unable to perform summary analyses, display data in graphic formats, and take several "cuts" through the data to create a variety of reporting formats.

Very significant amounts of teaching and prison staff's time are being devoted to recording information on paper (e.g. attendance and other tracking information). Staff input could be made more effective and freed up for teaching and security.

Paper records are often dispersed across the YOI site. Some records are kept on units/wings, other elements are kept in administration. Undoubtedly this makes some functional sense in allowing ready access to those creating and using records. But it is a severe drawback when information from all the locations has to be collated – as the audit visits attest. This must be a constant irritation for different functional teams within the regime.

As information is not in a format that can be interrogated, this must limit the ability to highlight problems/hot spots in both education delivery practice and individuals' behaviour (e.g. attendance and achievements). It also reduces management's ability to take remedial action, make appropriate and timely interventions, and form strategic policies. Lack of real-time tracking of young peoples is a serious drawback to making effective use of staff and other resources. Examples here would include timetabling education sessions, when young peoples may not attend for a host of reasons, such as being at court, sick, an appointment with psychology, lack of prison staff to escort them to sessions, or unwillingness to leave their cell. There is also the enhancement to security that real-time tracking would provide.

Young Offender Institutions are just one organisation in an information supply chain that goes both up and downstream, from schools, police, courts and YOTs and back downstream to stakeholders in the post-custodial sentence phase (YOTs, Connexions, FE, schools and so forth). At all stages there would seem to be an urgent need for all those involved in processing a young offender to be able to share information rapidly and in a harmonised format through electronic means.

3.3 *Added value*

For all young people on admission, all Young Offender Institutions have an assessment of learning level in terms of literacy and numeracy, although it is hardly ever summarised for the purposes of analysis. However, no YOIs undertake re-tests or any measures of learning gain on completion of the custodial part of the sentence. Equally, Youth Offending Teams do not appear to be recording learning gains during the community part of the sentence.

In contrast, two of the three Secure Training Centres measure learning gains systematically. This is done through the use of a database in one case and an electronic assessment and monitoring software package in the other.

The key performance target set by the Prison Service (and adopted by the YJB) relates to the numbers and proportions of young people achieving a Level 2 key skills qualification. Yet this only relates to a relatively small proportion of the custodial population, and is widely felt by education and other staff to be unhelpful and irrelevant to the bulk of their work.

The intake profile currently being prepared as part of this study indicates that two-thirds of the custodial population (average age 17) have a reading age of that of the average 11-year old or younger. Almost 20% of the entire population have a reading age of an average seven-year old or less. The profile for numeracy is very similar: just over two-thirds are at or below the performance of an average 11-year old.

As Level 2 is equivalent to the performance of the average 16-year old and the average DTO has a four-month long custodial component, the key performance target's relevance has to be questioned. At the very least it needs to be supplemented or replaced by targets that relate realistically to the needs and potential of the great majority of the custodial population.

The Basic Skills Agency has costed the learning hours needed for the average learner to move from one level to another. Its figures imply (assuming that we saturate young people with literacy lessons) that the average custodial sentence length would need to be 18 months to move a quarter of the population up to a reading age of 11.

Despite the administrative difficulties posed by the shortness of many Detention and Training Orders, they provide a significant opportunity for integrating custody and community. Learning gains over the whole of the sentence could be measured. Changes in young people's attitudes towards education and training, and their engagement in education and training could be used as additional measures of added value.

In keeping with the intent of the Detention and Training Order, the YOT Supervising Officer should be accountable for ensuring that this assessment occurs; clearly educational departments must own the process too.

4.0 THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CUSTODY

The following analysis looks at the literacy and numeracy scores on entry for DTOs held in eleven YOIs in March 2001. It breaks them down between those who were of compulsory school-age and those who were older. Further analysis of the full custodial population will be incorporated into the report on Phase 2.

It is interesting to note the comparatively high proportion who do not appear to have been tested for both literacy and numeracy: 226 of the 1,680 (13.5%) for whom information was received. This finding is being investigated further. It certainly includes those young people who refused to be tested, and those who were non-readers (possibly 5 per cent of the population).

Methodological caveats include the fact that the very low scores may also be measuring to some extent young people's resistance to testing and learning, given their deficits in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the high rate of transfer between YOIs and the number of young people who have experienced multiple custodial episodes means that some young people have been given the tests repeatedly. As a result, they feel that they have now memorised the questions.

These biases are unlikely to even themselves out if the unavailable scores are left out of the analysis. If anything, it means that these may be underestimates of the lower levels of literacy and numeracy.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 give figures for literacy and numeracy scores by level. Entry-level equates to the performance to be expected of an average seven-year old, Level 1 is that expected of an average 11-year old, and Level 2 that of an average 16-year old.

Figure 4.1: Literacy scores by level of 1,454 DTOs in YOIs

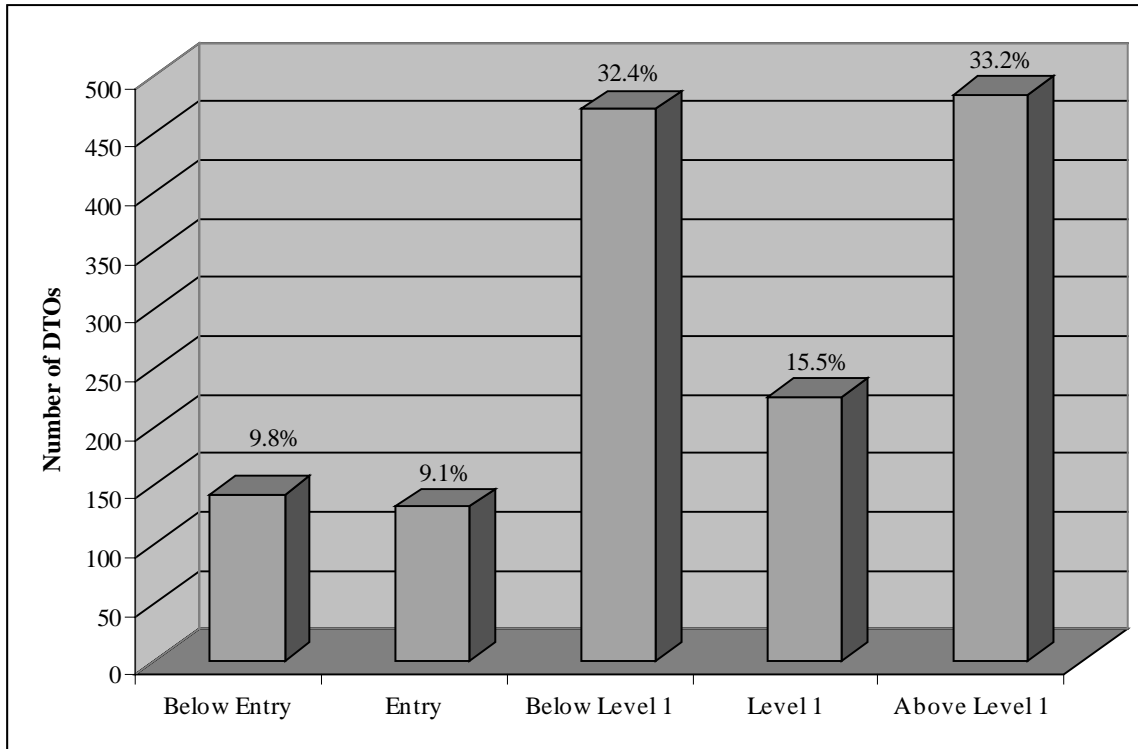
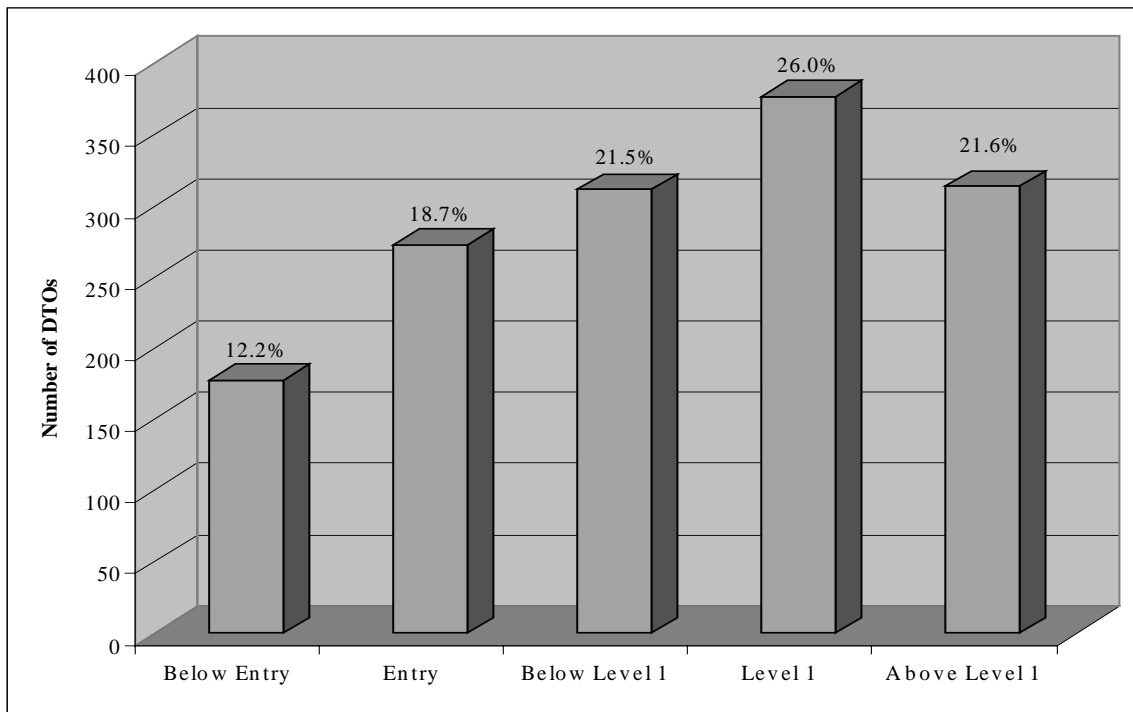


Figure 4.2: Numeracy scores, by level, of 1,454 DTOs in YOIs



Of the total YOI population, 8 per cent were functionally below that of the average seven-year old in literacy and 12 per cent in numeracy. Nineteen per cent were functioning at or

below the level of the average seven-year old in literacy and almost a third (31 per cent) in numeracy.

Over half of the sample (51 per cent for literacy and 52 per cent for numeracy) were not functioning at the level of the average 11-year old on entry into the Young Offender Institution.

The number of learning hours suggested by the Basic Skills Agency for (adult) learners to achieve competence in any one level is very considerable in the context of short sentences. In the case of these young people, the task may be made greater by the fact that their ability to learn independently is often quite limited, their self-esteem is low, and they are often faced with a relatively narrow curriculum.

For a learner to move to entry level it is estimated that between 300 and 450 hours' learning will be required. To move from entry level to Level 1 would require a further 210 to 329 hours' learning.

The Basic Skills Agency recommends that "basic skills provision should be designed to ensure an average of 500 hours of direct basic skills training for trainees below foundation level, at foundation or at Level 1". Within the context of the constraints on current YOI provision, and particularly the shortness of the average custodial sentence, then a 500-hour target is very unlikely to be achieved. If, however, intensive high-quality programmes spanned both halves of the Detention and Training Order (average length eight months) and contained 15 hours' relevant learning per week for literacy and numeracy, the necessary uplift could be realised.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show an analysis of the literacy and numeracy scores of those below school-leaving age. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 show an analysis of the literacy and numeracy scores of those over school-leaving age. Dates of birth are known for 1,127 of the 1,454 young people. Of these, 259 are below school-leaving age – i.e. were born on or after 1 September 1984; 868 are over school-leaving age.

Figure 4.3: Literacy scores, by level, of 259 DTOs below school-leaving age

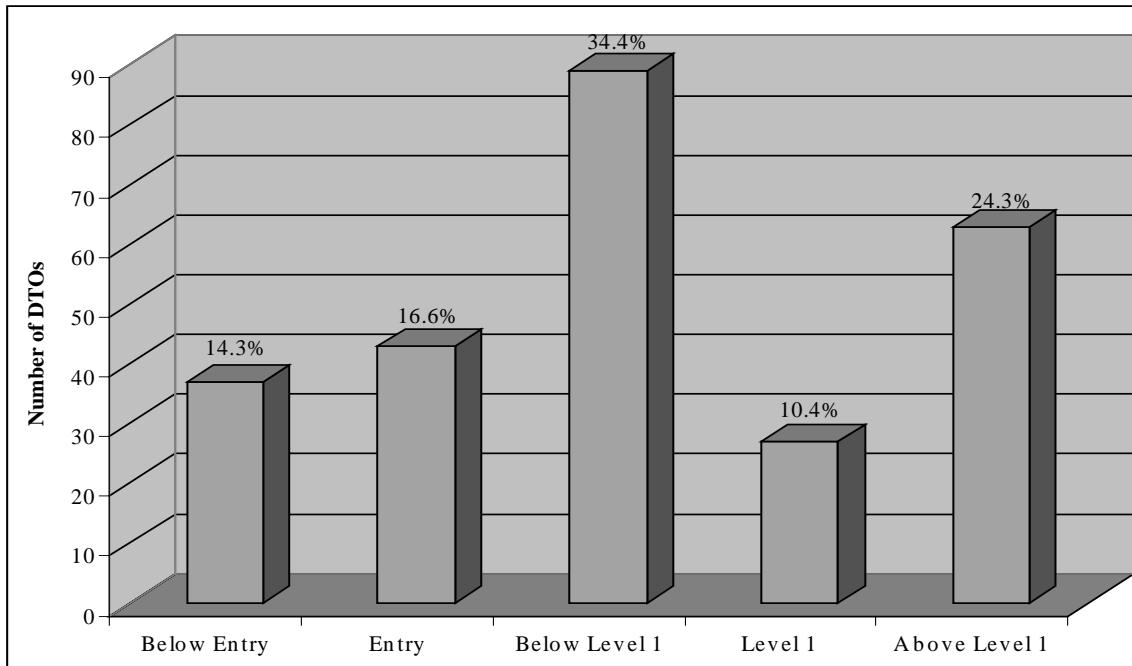


Figure 4.4: Numeracy scores, by level, of 259 DTOs below school-leaving age

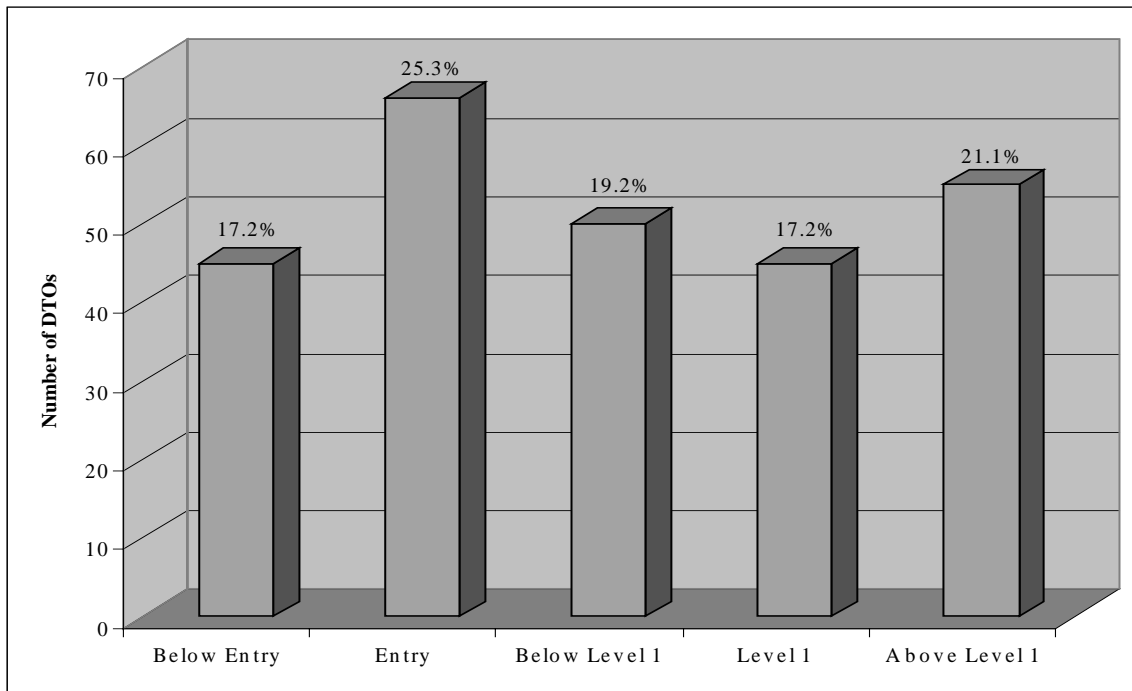


Figure 4.5: Literacy scores, by level, of 868 DTOs over school-leaving age

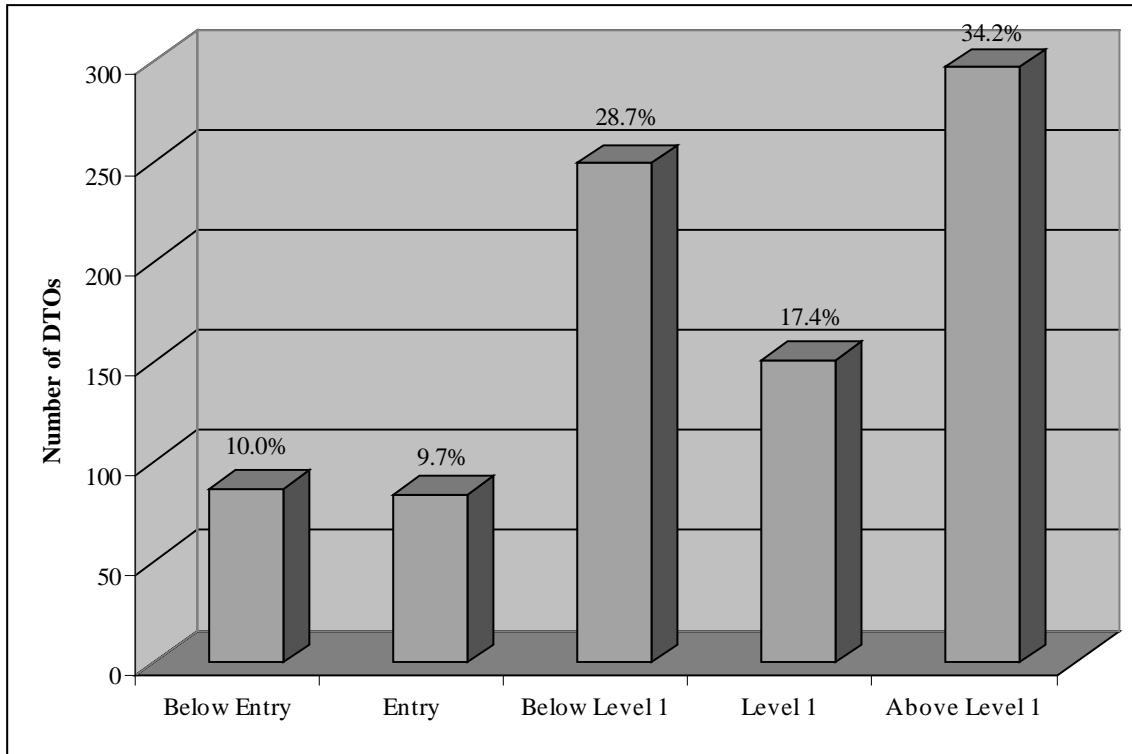


Figure 4.6: Numeracy scores, by level, of 868 DTOs over school-leaving age

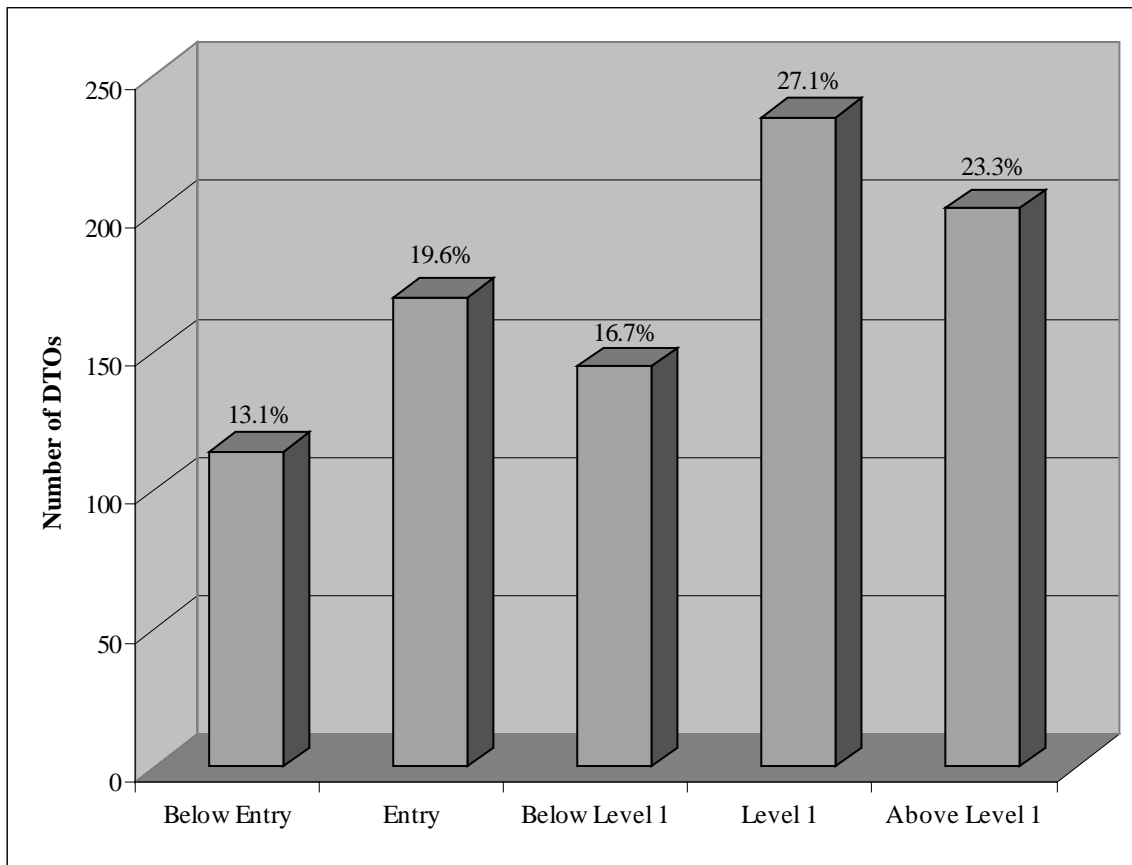
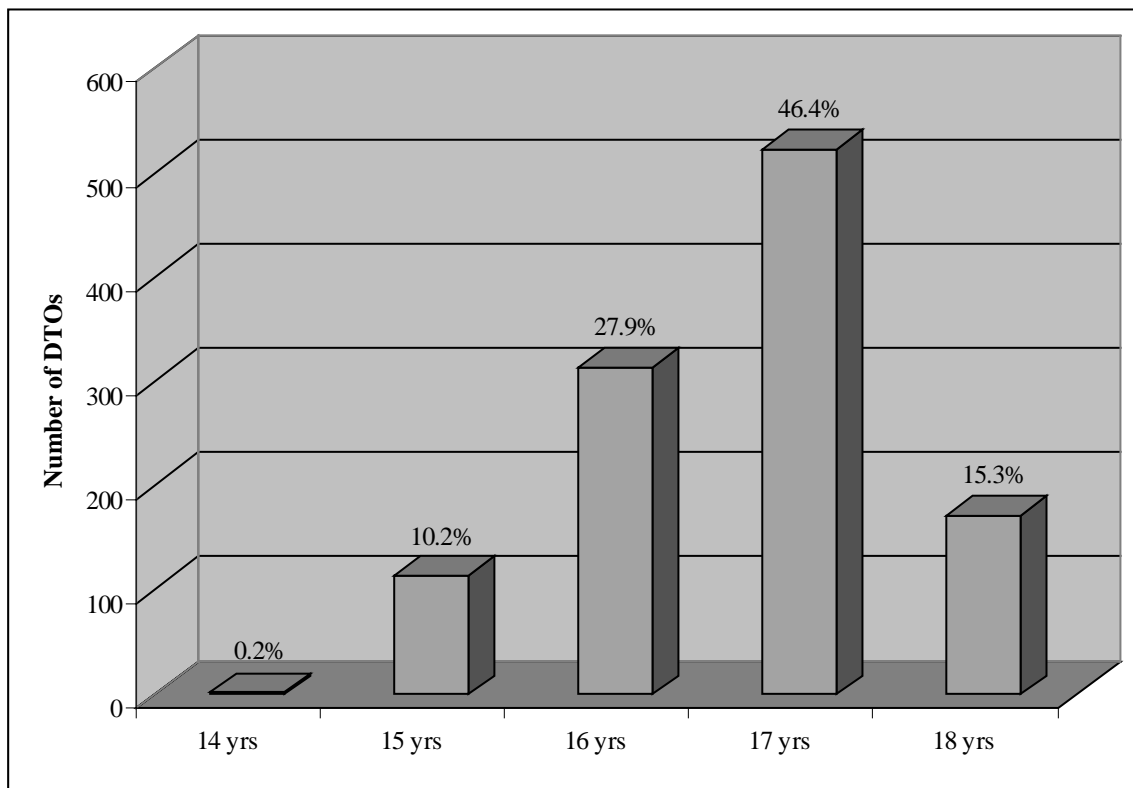


Figure 4.7 provides a breakdown by age of the 1,127 young people reflected in figures above.

Figure 4.7 Analysis of 1,127 DTOs by age on 15 March 2001



5.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING

The auditors made their assessments in the following main categories: curriculum, diversity, differentiation, classroom management, accreditation, integration and continuity. The instrumentation used had a considerable amount in common with that of other inspection regimes such as Ofsted and the SSI. However, it was also designed to look more widely across activities relevant to education and training within the institution. It also aimed to look at the effectiveness of the key transition points of entry and exit into the establishment, from an educational perspective.

The assessments were based on a combination of lesson observation, document analysis and interviews with education managers and practitioners. The particular nature of the institutions meant that access to lessons could be very variable, ranging from very limited where shutdown had occurred to up to eight hours and 10 lessons.

The following documents were usually made available: lesson plans, development plans, some schemes of work, timetables, and young people's files, examinations and awards taken. Wherever possible, reference was also made to Her Majesty's Inspectorate/Ofsted reports and the inspection reports of education services within the Prison Service.

Substantial discussions were held with education managers, and a smaller number with deputies and team leaders, and with governors. Feedback was usually given to individual staff where asked for and to senior staff. In most cases the accommodation was seen, although in instances parts of it were not in use and there was not full access.

The work undertaken by the education auditors was complemented by that undertaken by the researchers. The researchers looked in detail at assessment, planning and review processes; undertook case file searches; interviewed a sample of young people; collected data on the learning levels of the population; and interviewed the education manager and the head of regimes.

5.1 Curriculum

Availability of the national curriculum

The national curriculum is not available in any of the Young Offender Institutions. Although on paper it may appear to be available to a certain extent, in practice the schemes of work tend to relate only in part to the national curriculum targets.

There are universal gaps in the provision of science, modern languages and craft design and technology (CDT). Physical education (PE) forms a significant component of the educational week; it largely comprises games, with an element of fitness training. The provision of music, art and drama tends to be limited.

In some establishments, subjects such as industrial cleaning, catering, laundry, painting/decorating and horticulture appear to be more connected with the ongoing life of the

establishment than part of the curriculum offer, although they can result in some valuable certification.

The provision disadvantages the small number of young people who may have been following GCSE courses at mainstream secondary school, pupil referral units or colleges.

Clearly the provision of the national curriculum is not the objective of any of these institutions. But this only begs fundamental questions such as who owns the curriculum and what is its purpose?

Range and focus of the curriculum

In most establishments the curriculum focuses on the perceived needs of the young people, based on the institution's knowledge of the general nature of their new entrants, introductory assessments and the time to be spent in the Young Offender Institution. The curriculum is also often compromised by the very low quality of some accommodation, and operational exigencies. These pressures result in a curriculum that tends to be narrow and lacking variety as the price that currently has to be paid to achieve success in basic skills.

The operational relationship with prison officers is an important factor. The inability of wing staff to take young people to and from the education block could result in a situation as at one of the YOIs where the auditor judged the length of the periods (about one and a half hours) to be far too long. At another, long periods of one and a half hours with no break in the morning or afternoon sessions are only made tolerable because of the late starts and some early ends to lessons that appear to be commonplace. At a third YOI, it hardly seems conducive to commitment to studying and maintaining attention spans that during their breaks the young people just sit in their canteens and are given no drink or food.

PE occupies a very important place in terms of hours spent on young people's activities each week, ranging typically between 5 and 8 hours per week in YOIs. Auditors tended not to have access to observe PE to assess the degree to which it is integrated within the overall curriculum.

The range and focus of the curriculum is constricted by poor, insufficient or poorly designed accommodation on most Young Offender Institutions' sites. Staffing cover is also a major constraint. For example, at one Young Offender Institution at least, no cover is provided for staff leave – courses simply stop until teachers return (this happened in the motor vehicle maintenance course during the auditor's visit).

Broad, balanced, appropriate to age

This important area also raises the issue about the purpose of the curriculum for those in custody. Education services, the Prison Service core curriculum and PSO 4950 appear not to espouse a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to age, and this raises immediate problems. Most young people of compulsory school age will not be leaving custody to enter mainstream education where the national curriculum applies. But they will be entering other

educational provision where statutory guidance requires a broad and balanced curriculum. In terms of the scope of the curriculum, the current approach is therefore not dovetailing with that to be followed in education and the community.

In general, a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to age is not on offer for all the intake of each establishment. Given the major constraints noted repeatedly in this report, most Young Offender Institutions make a reasonably successful attempt to provide a balanced and broad curriculum for a proportion of their population.

In several establishments, the more able tend to receive a co-ordinated and well-constructed course that covers literacy, numeracy and to some extent ICT. The rest are passed around various largely unco-ordinated courses which, from the evidence available, do not cover the national curriculum or even the prison guidance.

In these circumstances, the programme for those of compulsory school age tends not to be balanced and broad. A detailed analysis for one establishment in the week of the audit revealed the following. Given the major constraints on the institution, a reasonably successful attempt had been made to provide a balanced and broad curriculum for 54 per cent of the young people. An ill-balanced curriculum had been provided for 17 per cent, a grossly ill-balanced curriculum for another 25 per cent, and no education at all for 4 per cent. The latter categories were made up of young people being given wing duties, often without the agreement of the education staff. All were taking a very large amount of a vocational courses (e.g. motor vehicle maintenance, industrial cleaning, and painting and decorating).

In Huntercombe, the severe limitations of the accommodation for education mean that teaching occurs on the wings and courses are grouped around the three wings. This brings difficulties when a young person changes wing; some young people have to repeat courses, although under another title, as staff rehash material that has been included in a number of courses.

In such restricted circumstances, and given the turbulence within the teaching groups, there is constant downward pressure on expectations. The operational realities of such environments must be borne in mind. But by viewing the educational process only within this context it is too easy to reduce standards to below an acceptable minimum compared to those for education in the community.

This point is illustrated by an education services quality assessment report for one of the YOIs. The report found that the curriculum met the requirement of the Prison Service core curriculum and PSO 4950. It added that the breadth of curriculum offered exceeded those requirements. However, our audit's findings were that the curriculum on offer has limitations and lacks variety. English and mathematics provision focuses mostly on literacy and numeracy skills – there is little to stimulate interest in books. Access to practical activity is limited to a minority of students. The restoration, cookery and art courses, although capturing the interest and imagination of the minority involved, do not fully incorporate basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Percentage of time for literacy and numeracy

Given the considerable deficits in literacy and numeracy for most of the custodial student population, the amount of time spent on these subjects needs to be assessed and monitored in relation to other inputs and, more importantly, for learning outcomes. Such assessments are made more complicated by the good practice of ensuring that literacy and numeracy are themed within a whole range of subjects, including vocational work. However, education managers could usually give no more than estimates as they have never analysed the curriculum for literacy and numeracy.

As might be expected, there was considerable variation between the amount of literacy and numeracy time allocated for the more able students compared to those with the greatest deficits. At Brinsford for example, those allocated to the renovation or cookery group spend no more than 15 per cent of their time on numeracy and literacy; those with the weakest skills spend over half their time. However, attendance at classes is often rescheduled or interrupted at institutions, and it is difficult to pin down exactly how much time any one student has spent on basic skills in a particular week.

The amount of one-to-one work is also significant in attempting such calculations. At Thorn Cross for example, those with greatest need have two and a half hours of one-to-one work per week as well as the basic skills work across lessons.

In the majority of cases, vocational courses are outside the remit of the education department, but they are a major opportunity for experiential learning in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Establishments such as Stoke Heath do not as yet have vocational courses. Staff providing vocational courses at Feltham and Thorn Cross have undertaken or are undertaking qualifications such as City & Guilds 7324 “basic skills in the workplace” which enables an extension of such work.

It is symptomatic of the lack of a management information approach that the curricular framework and schemes of work do not currently allow individual and institutional calculations about the amount/percentage of time spent on literacy and numeracy across all the activities undertaken by young people. This is not to underestimate the difficulty of theming literacy and numeracy across the curriculum – it underlines the expertise required as a teacher in this environment.

Use of ICT

ICT is an area that lends itself readily to strategic investment and holds out the promise of more rapid increases in learning gains, improved horizontal linkages for staff within institutions, and more vertical integration pre- and post-custody. ICT currently features largely as a separate subject and no single establishment has a coherent ICT plan. Most education managers would welcome expert external advice in this area.

Ashfield has the most abundant provision, with some 60 PCs (mostly networked) in the educational areas. The opportunity for video-conferencing is also available. While the

objectives were not clear for this abundance of provision, the scheme of work for the observed lesson was appropriate. This establishment has three staff appointed to teach IT. The assessment and progress monitoring package “Destinations” is also used. The rest of the Young Offender Institutions need at least this level of provision. On the evidence available, most establishments would be better off employing more teachers qualified in mathematics and English, with some knowledge of IT, rather than investing in IT teachers.

In contrast, at Brinsford for example ICT is not available to support all areas of the curriculum. New IT accommodation and equipment have been commissioned, but at the time of the audit there was insufficient equipment in curricular areas, particularly for basic skills. The IT suite has dated equipment and software, with printers frequently out of action. At Feltham, IT is well developed within the IT lessons (10 a week on offer); individualised learning is based on CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology), as is usually the case. Relatively little use appears to be made of IT in other areas except possibly for games. At Huntercombe, most of the teaching groups have one or two one-and-a-half hour lessons of ICT, but a quarter of the 20 classes do not have ICT in their programme for the present cycle of lessons. The non-networked IT equipment currently available could not support a programme for all the young people in the institution, and cannot support programmes to cater for high-level certification (e.g. desktop publishing and business studies).

Curricular innovations

Despite what can be highly unpredictable and demoralising circumstances, and in such large institutions, the audit team noted a range of innovations. This is a tribute to many of the individual managers and practitioners involved in the education teams and in vocational provision, as well as the managers of the YOI.

Without being able to give a full evaluation of these innovations, they are nevertheless worth noting as examples of potentially effective practice. In the current circumstances, however, they would be unlikely to be replicated across the whole secure estate.

At Feltham, roving teachers teach individuals in their cells. They are supported by packages of teaching and learning materials with some accreditation. This system could repay further investigation as a lifeline for the most vulnerable young people. Also at Feltham, prison officers are being trained so that they can deliver the citizenship part of the life-skills programme on the wings.

Huntercombe offers a useful framework for provision for the rest of the secure estate: it has a very strong emphasis on teaching key skills through a series of certificated five or 10-week courses. The breakdown of the work into 10 and occasionally five-week blocks with a week’s break in between is a good way to keep up the pace of work, achieve ongoing certification and stop boredom. The one-week changeover period is a welcome break for the young people, and provides time for teaching staff to prepare new work and courses.

At Stoke Heath, the auditor noted two curricular innovations. Firstly, selected, more mature young people are offered the opportunity to help assess the new arrivals in basic literacy and numeracy. To help them in this work, they undertake part of the City & Guilds 9281 initial teaching award. This has a twofold benefit: it increases the self-confidence of the young people involved, and enables new arrivals with a negative attitude towards education to work with one of their peers and possibly discover that there are benefits in it for them. The other initiative is the family literacy course. Here, young people can bring partners and children work with them inside the institution; a teacher works with them on how they as parents can improve their teaching of literacy and numeracy to their children.

The diploma course at Hollesley Bay offers a co-ordinated programme over three months that provides a programme that covers literacy, numeracy and ICT. This may well offer an appropriate vehicle for more able students across a wider range of institutions.

Castington's innovations include drama and sound engineering for the performing arts. Literacy and numeracy teachers go into the workshops to work with young people on the literacy and numeracy needed within this context. Equally, Thorn Cross's work in providing one-to-one literacy tuition would seem important for extending across all Young Offender Institutions.

Specialist provision – CDT, science, arts

With the exception of Ashfield, specialist provision – particularly in terms of accommodation and capital equipment – is poor or non-existent. It is rare for there to be any provision for CDT and science. This is partly because of the very real security issues. There are good examples within LASUs, but smaller numbers help to reduce the risks. At Hollesley Bay and Stoke Heath, there is good art provision. The accommodation at Feltham is disappointing, given recent extensive new building; for example, two art rooms exist, but are both very small. In the auditor's view, they have a safe maximum of only six young people, especially as scissors are in use. On his visit nine young people were in one art lesson. The tables were very crowded and there was significant scope for problems when young people had to move around.

There are obviously increased health and safety risks working with many of these young people. But the absence of well-equipped spacious rooms for CDT is a significant gap in provision. Ashfield alone has a very well-appointed and spacious room for CDT, including well-protected storage of equipment for a wide range of tools, six modern benches, drill equipment, a painting area, and lamination equipment. There is also a well-appointed textile room.

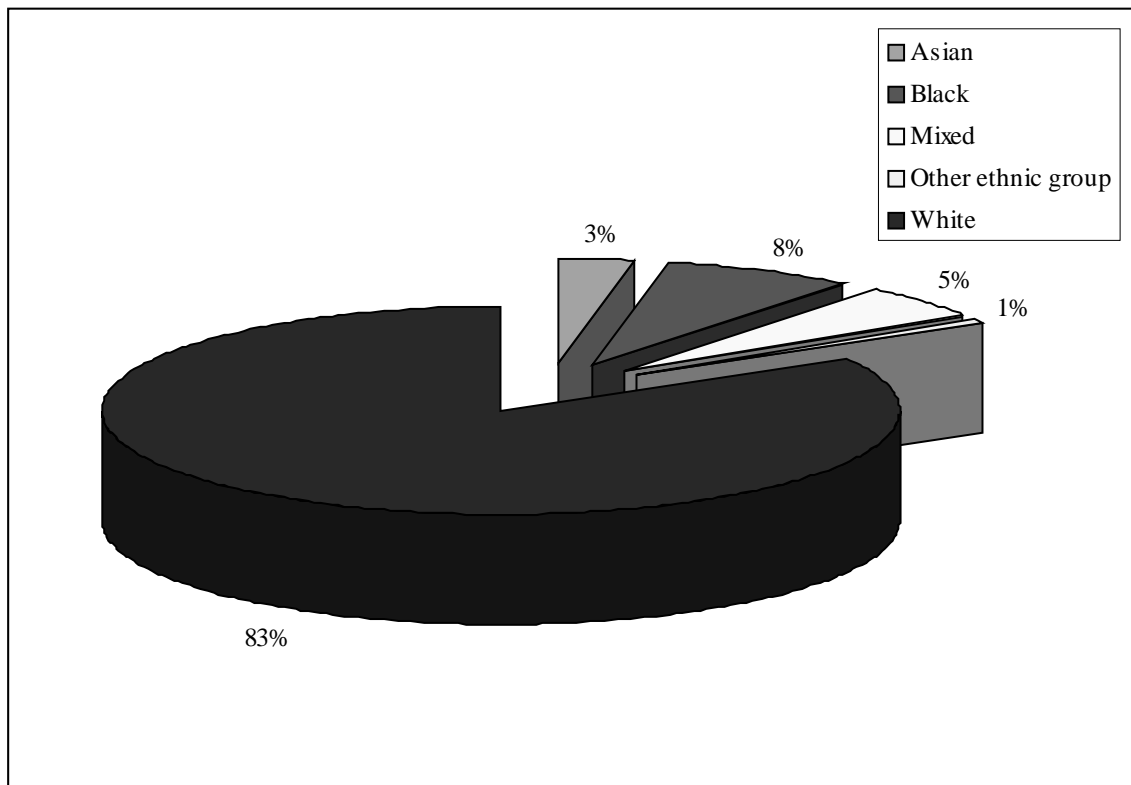
If the broader notion of a secure college is to be developed for young people in custody, a much more systematic approach must be taken to equipping institutions with relevant provision such as CDT, science and arts. The Youth Justice Board may wish to give more detailed guidance as to what aspects of science could be provided within Young Offender Institutions.

5.2 Diversity

There is over-representation of certain minority ethnic groups within the criminal justice system (particularly young African-Caribbean men). Coupled with their parallel disproportionate rate of exclusion from school, this is a particularly significant issue for education and training departments in custodial institutions.

Education managers were often aware of the issues, but appeared relatively vague in terms of the numbers of young people concerned. It may be that they were alluding to the other young offender populations when at one YOI they claimed that about 35 per cent of the young people were black; a proportion of 50 per cent of black young people was estimated at a second YOI. Similarly, at a third, the education manager estimated that 30 per cent of the young people were black when in fact the YJB database gives a figure of 7.6 per cent. For the national population of DTOs in custody, the YJB database gives the following breakdown by ethnic group³.

Figure 5.1 Profile of population by ethnic group



Despite the apparent over-estimates by staff, there is very little indication in the papers or materials seen during the audit that much recognition has been taken of assumptions of the ethnic profile within establishments.

³ Ethnic groups are further defined as follows:

Asian includes: Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Other

Black includes: African, Caribbean, Other

Mixed includes: White and Asian, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean

White includes: British, Irish, Other

Anti-discriminatory training

Only at Feltham does anti-discriminatory training appear to have taken place for all the education staff. At most of the other establishments, a certain number of staff had participated in training. It is often difficult to release education staff for such courses. It was pointed out at one establishment that Prison Service training is mandatory but infrequent, and as a result new staff have not been involved in such training.

Anti-discriminatory training for both full and part-time teaching staff, practitioners and education managers must be made an integral part of the YJB's human resources strategy. More pertinently, contractual and practical arrangements need to be made in order to ensure that this happens.

Coursework and materials appropriate for the diversity of the population

This was an area of significant weakness in a few institutions. One showed no or very little recognition of diversity in the books and materials seen by the auditors.

Elsewhere, the picture was variable with some good examples. In some courses, for instance the art classes at Thorn Cross, the teacher ensures that there is a good range of stimulus material incorporating art from a wide range of cultures, including Caribbean and Indian. Libraries offered a more diverse selection of materials, as for instance at Castington where the education manager had purchased reading books suitable for different cultures.

Teachers cited difficulties in finding appropriate resources. For example, the learning support teacher at one institution had been careful to choose books for Urdu speakers, but found that the majority of the books had a Hindu bias, so Moslem students were not interested in them.

In one establishment a film on racial harmony in north London was used in a lesson. The white teaching group did not take it very seriously. This was partly because of their unfamiliarity with this stimulus to learning, and partly because of their attitudes to the issues being raised.

Ethnic origin of staff

A very limited number of the teaching staff are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The most diverse staff group in terms of ethnic origin is that at Feltham, where the education manager, a team leader and several other full-time members of staff are black. Some establishments were aware of this as a potential problem and, as at Castington, hoped that posts they were currently advertising might bring about a more diverse mix of staff.

5.3 Differentiation

At the heart of effective teaching practice is the extent to which teaching practitioners are:

- enabling the young people to learn most effectively, by matching teaching and learning styles;
- achieving an appropriate balance between group and individual teaching and learning;

-
- ensuring that learning programmes and associated materials, while dealing with the same topics, are attuned to individual learners' needs.

The balance between group and individual teaching

Most Young Offender Institutions attempt to divide up their population in two broad ability groups, based largely on the opening interviews and the basic skills tests applied. Teaching groups further try to take account of the targets of individuals. However, in practice staff find it very difficult to cope with the turbulence of attendance and throughput of young people, both in the general custodial population and in those taking a particular subject.

Changes of group were very frequent, which can be related to problems in the classroom or elsewhere within the establishment. Changes can be made by busy administrative staff without the agreement of senior staff, which hampers attempts to create stability of teaching and learning groups.

The ad hoc allocation to classes of unscheduled students (often on remand) who turn up at each session can result in enlarged and varying class sizes. This was particularly noted at one institution which has the highest average class size in the national juvenile estate. Unpredictable pressures can also create particular difficulties regarding opportunities for one-to-one tutorial and pastoral discussions.

In most establishments, work in the classroom was in many cases individualised in an attempt to deal with a very wide range of need and ability in each teaching group. The effectiveness of such approaches is often eroded by the absence of colleagues, the low attendance of the young people and their throughput, and the very sparse nature of learning support assistance.

Where staff were able to overcome these challenges, teaching was often appropriate to the learning intended and the nature of the group. At Thorn Cross for example, the one-to-one provision for basic skills support was noted as an example of very effective practice, although of higher cost than some other approaches. In some establishments the teaching approaches were deemed mainly inappropriate; others were clearly struggling to overcome the challenges.

Meeting SEN needs

This is an area of major weakness in the educational practice and provision at Young Offender Institutions. In the auditors' view, many of the teaching groups they observed seemed to be composed of pupils with special educational needs of one kind or another, with many highly disturbed young people. It is likely that perhaps as many as three-quarters of the custodial population has special educational needs and if assessed would probably receive a statement. The best efforts of staff in these institutions are thwarted by lack of assessment information, SEN expertise and sufficient learning support assistant time.

The assessment process is clearly inadequate and the information flow is a trickle. ASSET is a blunt instrument as regards special educational needs, in that it refers only to the possession

of a statement as opposed to the much greater population who were at some stage on the code of practice. Similarly, pre-sentence reports often make reference to special educational needs. However, it is rare for education departments to have any access to either ASSET or the Pre-sentence reports.

The requirement is for SEN statements and other relevant tools such as individual education plans and the education component of care plans to accompany the transmission of ASSET. However, this happens so rarely that it is noted as exceptional. All colleagues echoed the experience of one education manager who had seen only two statements of special educational needs in eight years. Reliance on the Basic Skills Agency test is no substitute for appropriate diagnostic assessment. Obviously many of these young people may not have attended educational institutions in the community for some time and so may have escaped assessment. In any event, those young people who do have a statement should be accompanied to custody with it.

It is difficult to argue against the fact that such lapses in the education system are not only disadvantaging these young people, but are also wasting other educational professionals' valuable time and contributing significantly to the criminogenic risk factors.

Evidence from YOTs indicates that they are experiencing the same difficulties in acquiring SEN information from schools or ensuring that these young people's rights are met through an appropriate assessment under the code of practice.

There are several significant resource gaps. In a mainstream school (and in many Local Authority Secure Units and the Secure Training Centres) with a much lower incidence of special educational needs, there would always be an SEN co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO helps in meeting the needs of the young people and also supports other staff in providing appropriate programmes of work. Castington is currently advertising for a SENCO, but it is essential that all education departments in the secure estate are equipped with such a post. Special educational needs are such an integral part of the work of these education departments that it would be relatively ineffective and not value for money to establish a separate SEN team.

The YJB's human resource strategy needs to tackle the skills deficit in SEN work across the whole of the staff groups. Many of the teachers already regard themselves as teachers of young people with special educational needs, but without the training and recompense that this should bring.

Special educational needs provision will also require sufficient numbers of LEA-trained learning support assistants to work one-to-one and with groups. Again, this would be common practice in mainstream schools, let alone special schools.

The incidence, causes and most effective approaches to dyslexia are a matter of considerable debate. Not all Young Offender Institutions test for dyslexia and some only do it for the lowest-achieving group. Some education managers felt that in the absence of an appropriate quantity and quality of staff to offer help to those with specific learning difficulties, there was

little point in administering the test. More consistency needs to be achieved in this area, particularly given test results such as those at Huntercombe. These results showed that 45 per cent of the young people were thought to be potentially dyslexic, compared with 6-8 per cent in the population generally.

Knowledge of teaching and learning styles

An up-to-date knowledge of learning styles is particularly relevant when dealing with young people whose experience of learning is almost entirely that of failure. The predominant background for many of the teachers is that of further education. Although this has particular strengths, it may not always give practitioners the knowledge base for dealing with younger age groups.

For teachers in some establishments, the changes in the secure estate have meant that their students are now much younger. Arguably, this makes the students more challenging, and certainly often requires a different approach than for those aged 18 to 20.

In some establishments, there was evidence that faced with the considerable challenges of teaching in this environment, their practice was ossifying. Under these pressures, teaching methods can easily lack variety. Flair is restricted and some staff do not feel confident about using a variety of approaches (e.g. drama/role play). Some teachers feel that the lack of continuity in teaching groups inhibits the atmosphere for this. There can be heavy reliance on photocopied worksheets and relatively little use of other potentially stimulating source material.

Introducing innovatory approaches in such an environment will always be difficult. But lack of innovation has its problems too. For example, the reason that a short video of racial problems in North London was not well received may be partly because the young people were not used to viewing films and abstracting information and ideas from them.

A lack of up-to-date knowledge of learning styles is fostered by the isolation of many of the staff. Action learning sets across Young Offender Institutions and other distance-learning methods such as a web site within an overall INSET programme are essential for practice development. The practitioners need provision within the education contracts so that through INSET they can see what works in other similar establishments and what does not.

Many managers have a real recognition of these problems. Some establishments, such as Stoke Heath, have sent staff on the City & Guilds 9281 course on teaching and learning styles to update their knowledge. There were also examples of where staff (particularly those in basic skills) displayed a good awareness of individual learning styles. For example, at Thorn Cross one teacher had examined the preferred learning styles of the students and discovered that most were auditory learners.

More use could probably be made of the resources and expertise of local schools, the LEA and subject teacher associations. Some contact already exists between particular establishments and for example local secondary schools, such as at Feltham.

Differentiation of coursework according to need and ability

All establishments make strenuous efforts in this respect, and face the perennial problem of how to balance individualised planning with rapidly changing group dynamics. Generally, a fair balance of approaches is employed across the establishment, but not always within all individual subjects.

At times, lesson planning tends to be generic and focuses on content rather than outcomes and objectives. At some institutions, tasks undertaken are differentiated in part by the teaching groups established and the speed with which the individualised work is carried out. There is no real understanding of the other ways in which work might be individualised in the majority of institutions.

Range and appropriateness of learning materials

Generally, the range and appropriateness of learning materials are of a level suitable to the group and the individual. There is a tendency at some establishments for a predominant use of worksheets. Accommodation and facility weaknesses could be a constraint, for example if the library is some distance away and not based within the education block, or if there is insufficient storage space for materials. Materials on computer could also be restricted and not always the most relevant, as at one institution where an American literacy and numeracy programme was being used.

Despite their very difficult circumstances, there are examples of teachers extending the range of learning materials. At Brinsford, during the audit a visiting group of actors gave a drama presentation about the predicaments of people who cannot read. This was a relevant and imaginative lesson, sharing with youngsters experience of real people. At Feltham, a modern and good poetry book was in use with a higher ability class.

Some institutions could usefully extend the range of available materials, as virtually all the same materials are used by all the young people, whatever their strengths and weaknesses. At one establishment, the materials in use were deemed to be unacceptable. For example, a video contained material that went well beyond the comprehension of young people, and various reference books were suitable for many but daunting for less able readers. Support from the prison library over the provision of books had been jeopardised because of a dispute between the establishment and the education department over finance.

Subject expertise

A distinction sometimes has to be made between the paper qualifications held by staff and the very real expertise of staff who do not necessarily hold teaching qualifications. At Brinsford for example, a high level of specialist expertise was evident in the practical courses such as cookery, craft skills and art by staff who did not necessarily have a teaching qualification. At a number of establishments more than 50 per cent of teaching staff (including the co-

ordinator for basic skills) do not yet have appropriate teaching qualifications, although many are in the process of gaining accreditation.

Despite appropriate qualifications, some teaching staff were finding the transition difficult where they had become accustomed to teaching older young offenders. All establishments also face the challenge of competing with mainstream educational institutions which offer far higher pay and better terms and conditions. Several attempts were noted to widen the catchment for subject expertise. At Wetherby, trainers who join the education unit to run skills workshops undertake to achieve qualified teacher status as part of their contract. Similarly at Huntercombe, a pilot has been introduced offering placements to students at university studying to qualify as teachers.

However, the maintenance and development of subject expertise is a very real challenge to these relatively isolated groups, which often have part-time staff with high turnover. The Youth Justice Board's human resources strategy will need to be robust enough to increase strengths in this area across all institutions.

Assessment of work and feedback given

The teaching staff in all the Young Offender Institutions placed great emphasis on the need for praise for young people whose educational history was so marked by failure. In the main, feedback tended to be verbal and immediate. The standard of marking was variable and could on occasion lack rigour and not give the student sufficient guidance about how to improve.

Tutorial systems such as at Onley where one-to-one feedback could be given need to be the universal feature, so that overall progress can be discussed in positive feedback to the young person. This argues for strengthening links with Personal Officers within YOIs, case workers and other professionals who might provide this essential individual personal tutor role.

Individual records of student progress

Here again the frequent changes to class allocation and the overall rapid throughput of young people make the tracking of progress difficult. The National Record of Achievement (NRA) forms provide the framework for all establishments. In general, the young people's records need more details in order to be fully acceptable, and tend not to compare in quality or quantity with what is produced by their peers in schools. While this is perfectly understandable in the circumstances, the NRA is often potentially the only tangible record of a young person's educational achievements after 11 years of compulsory education. It should be possible to produce a higher quality NRA with appropriate binding, and give it to the young people at awards ceremonies.

Teachers and young people and their teaching groups usually keep individual records. At one YOI for example, these individual records are turned into monthly reports which go to the personal tutors for fuller discussion with the young people. At times, progress records tend to concentrate mostly on attendance and coverage rather than achievement. In an example of

good practice at Brinsford, progress records in cookery include a tracking system, self-assessment, and photographs of the finished menus.

Individual and group achievement is displayed, although the quality and extent of this practice varies considerably across establishments. At Stoke Heath, there is a strong emphasis on recording achievement and progress. Pages from the record of achievement are displayed on notice-boards so that the young people can see their own and others' achievements.

As this area links both to added value and to ensuring the continuity of education, further development work would be beneficial, including standardisation of materials, processes and training.

5.4 Classroom Management

The following areas relate closely to the effectiveness of the interaction between teacher and student.

Awareness of individual learning styles

The extent to which teachers appeared aware of a range of learning styles varied. The tendency is to adopt a common style of individualising the work, which runs the risk of discouraging general discussion of ideas and problems. The nature of the teaching circumstances leads to a tendency whereby once teaching staff have decided the best style for them, they are inclined to stick to it most of the time. However, occasions were also observed when students were encouraged to help their peers in a significant way. At Onley, the education manager encouraged open debate within the classroom as well as formal teaching sessions.

One common weakness is the very limited amount of observation of other teachers' lessons. This is compounded by minimal amounts of INSET.

Classroom preparation and organisation

The organisation of lessons is often a major problem, created principally by the throughput of young people, the instability of many teaching groups, variations in attendance, the length of teaching periods and the nature of the teachers' contracts.

Long teaching periods of one and a half hours usually result in the last half hour (and sometimes longer) being a very difficult time for many teachers. The wind-down period often results in teachers having to resort to games-playing or chess and drafts. This is particularly true in subjects that are more "academic", whereas vocational courses can often benefit from a longer teaching period.

More flexibility needs to be built into many establishments in respect of teaching periods. However, practical barriers raised by education managers included doubts as to whether the prison regime could cope with more frequent changeovers. In addition, under the existing

contracts teaching staff would lose money if teaching time had to be reduced to allow for more frequent changeovers.

Staff absence can be a particular problem. At one establishment for example, one teacher being observed during the audit was a cover for a cover teacher; another teacher had been informed at 8.15am that she was needed at 8.30am to replace someone else. These circumstances tend to fragment the curriculum and lower the quality of classroom preparation, organisation and continuity.

Lesson and task preparation are being carried out thoroughly at the majority of Young Offender Institutions, but the preparation and the success of the lesson plan or otherwise tend not to be well or systematically recorded.

The display of students' work to demonstrate its quality and quantity contributes to the ethos of establishments as well as being indicative of a good organisation. Effective displays were noted particularly at Wetherby and Stoke Heath. Logistical problems intruded at one establishment where classrooms (apart from the practical areas such as art) lacked attractive displays; there were few attempts to celebrate students' achievement by displaying their work. This was partly due to the fact that most teachers move from room to room and lack ownership of the areas in which they work.

Lesson planning

The hallmarks of effective lesson planning are the prior establishment of intended outcomes, sufficient detail, consistency of format and evaluation of the success or otherwise of a lesson.

Across Young Offender Institutions the standard of lesson planning is variable. For the majority of YOIs, the standard is adequate.

The turbulence in the groups, often with a lack of notice about arrival or departure, restricts effective programme planning. This encourages a more ad hoc approach and inhibits teachers from planning for individuals. The lack of a common format affects several establishments, and at times lesson plans tend to identify content to be covered rather than the intended outcomes.

Where work leads to certification or when the intended programme is guided closely by a particular book or course guide, the planning and in particular the intended outcomes are laid out more clearly.

Marking of work

The standard and regularity of marking varies both across Young Offender Institutions and across subjects within institutions. Marking does not always encourage students to extend themselves or take pride in their work. Nor is it always used as a means to identify areas for improvement.

Classroom management skills

As far as general classroom management skills are concerned, many satisfactory examples and some excellent ones were displayed in the majority of Young Offender Institutions. Individual comments, guidance, direction and praise often took the work forward well. At Feltham for instance, rooms were attractive, graffiti was not allowed to stay on tables, teachers introduced resources at the appropriate time to move work forward, and they kept in effective control over the pace of the lessons.

At Brinsford, Stoke Heath, Thorn Cross and Wetherby the auditors commented particularly on the positive rapport and strong interpersonal relationships between the young people and the teacher. In contrast, at one institution (but where only a small sample of work was seen), barely satisfactory skills were observed in most of the lessons. At another, they were unsatisfactory in many lessons.

Behaviour management skills

This is an important subset of classroom management skills. Some staff had had difficulties adapting to exclusively juvenile teaching groups, and the lack of sanctions was seen in some institutions to be a real problem. But even so, every Young Offender Institution provided good examples of behaviour management skills in operation. In the main, teachers were adept at defusing the possibly difficult situations which occur on a daily basis, usually in an apparently unconcerned and restrained way. In general, the auditors' observations were that the teachers were calm and affable, flexible when necessary, knew when to pull back and joke, and when to push and insist on something being done.

The frequency of difficult situations arising means that most teaching staff are very experienced in both fire-fighting and de-escalating potentially challenging situations. This may of course have been achieved at the cost of early burnout of many staff.

Managers and teachers in several Young Offender Institutions emphasised the need for in-depth induction and training for working with this age group in this environment. In one institution, several teachers commented on the lack of good-quality, specific training for dealing with disaffected young people. They asserted that trainers from an FE college who provide staff development have less experience of the needs of young people in custody than the staff these trainers are supposedly helping.

Although behaviour management skills are a particular strength of these teaching groups, they are likely to have been achieved at a very high cost with regard to staff turnover, sickness and instability of provision.

Without addressing some of the human resource issues such as continuing professional development, teaching in custodial settings will simply be an apprenticeship in behaviour management. This is doubly disadvantageous to the custodial sector given the tightness of the labour market and the premium being placed on behaviour management skills by a range of government initiatives. This applies particularly within the mainstream education sector

where staff can gain salaries 20 to 50 per cent higher by running in-school learning support units for example.

Use of incentives and sanctions to improve attendance

Incentives and sanctions comprise another area where practice could gain significantly from closer interaction among Young Offender Institutions. This is very much a live issue and several establishments such as Castington, Feltham and Huntercombe have seen a system of incentives and sanctions either recently introduced or being developed.

At one YOI, incentives to attend and do well in education classes are currently relatively weak and could be said to consist largely of the pleasure of being out of the cell. This institution intends to introduce a pay system that reflects attendance, achievement and behaviour rather than the present one, which rewards the young people who work on the cleaning and maintenance of the establishment.

There are variations in the perceived effectiveness of incentive systems. At one institution, the incentives to attend and do well in education classes appear to be weak currently and attendance at lessons is low. At another, a system of incentives is being introduced to parallel the hierarchy of official sanctions at classroom level; however, staff felt that the range of incentives and sanctions available to them was small.

Award ceremonies

There might be considerable logistical problems in awards ceremonies, given the rate of turnover of custodial populations. But it is very telling that none of the Young Offender Institutions have formal ceremonies to celebrate achievement. Some staff organise their own – for example the catering teacher at Thorn Cross, for presentation of the certificate students have gained in the evening cookery class.

Given the universal recognition of just how important praise is to these young people to mark achievement, this is a very unfortunate omission. With the well-attested stigma attached to custody and the damage it can cause through disrupting the educational process, the emphasis on public recognition of positive achievements by some young people in custody is very much overdue. In a sense, what might seem to be a relatively minor point underlines just how far these establishments are from becoming secure colleges.

Young people taking responsibility for their own learning

This is an important area for development. It is probably a reasonable assertion that the decision-making skills of these young people are of very limited effectiveness. In educational terms their ability to plan and act as independent learners is just as restricted. As one main impact of custody is a loss of control, educationalists have to work very hard to enable young people to equip themselves with these skills. This is particularly important if reintegration into education and training in the community is to be achieved.

It might be thought that the dominant style of teaching, that of individualised work, would give considerable responsibility to individuals; however, the picture was much more mixed. Predictably, where young people have selected the work and especially where it leads to certification of some kind, this seems to increase their interest in their work and their desire to achieve. In general, however, the auditors found relatively little evidence of pupils being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. In classroom observations, young people were pursuing tasks in lessons without referring constantly to the teacher, but they did not necessarily take a great deal of responsibility for their own learning.

Homework is not often set as a matter of routine, and accessibility to libraries restricts the opportunities for independent research.

Technical support

There are universal deficiencies in technical support. This wastes more expensive teacher time and results in avoidable disruption of education. At one YOI, the teachers use the students as general assistants/helpers to prepare rooms and distribute materials. While this is appreciated by both the teachers and the young people, it is not necessarily good practice. Some students were receiving an unbalanced programme as they remained for much of the time in the subject in which their help was needed.

At a YOI recently when some PCs in several rooms were deliberately and severely damaged, essential repairs could only be made when a teacher was able to free himself from other work to restore the equipment. At another in contrast, technical support for the IT equipment comes from an external contractor. The speed of response and quality of work were described as very good.

Any expansion or integration of vocational courses with more academic work will also increase the need for technician support. At Wetherby for example, where half the instructors work to the education manager, no technical support is available for staff in academic or vocational workshops. With a growing amount of time and courses available, an IT technician and another technician for workshop duties would ensure that equipment was maintained and tools sharpened on a regular basis.

Lesson timing – length and punctuality

The inappropriate length of lessons at several establishments has been commented on above. As with punctuality, it is closely linked to logistics of moving prisoners around the establishment. Only at two YOIs was punctuality observed to be good. In most other establishments there were significant delays.

The auditors observed significant late arrivals and delays in moving at several institutions. Several visits had lesson observation curtailed significantly because of shutdowns, caused by a serious incident in one case or a lengthy POA meeting in another. A shortage of prison staff was often cited at these establishments. When movement did take place it was often at a

relatively slow pace. At Stoke Heath there is some movement of students, but it is mostly the staff who move from room to room with their resources on a trolley.

While these difficulties contributed to the over-lengthy timetabled lessons, the same difficulties often reduced the lessons to a more manageable length. Teaching staff tended to accept the situation as the norm, and the daily operational realities of these institutions must be appreciated. But it also serves to emphasise how the delivery of education has to be given higher priority within the establishment and integrated more closely with the rest of the regime.

Teachers' expectations

One pervasive feature of interventions with young people with multiple problems is that expectations relating to educational and training achievements are often lowered because of concentration on other aspects of their lives. At times this comes close to labelling and risks being self-fulfilling. A significant number of the young people interviewed complained about not being sufficiently challenged through the work provided for them. This view was borne out by the auditors' observations at several establishments.

Expectations about behaviour and discipline were often firm. But they were not paralleled by expectations about individuals' achievements, which were not always as demanding as they might have been. Auditors at several institutions particularly noted this.

Review of teaching and learning

It is difficult not to have sympathy with the establishments' arguments that they have been over-visited by inspectors and auditors in recent months. As several establishments pointed out, this creates particular problems when the visiting teams use different criteria and offer conflicting advice. One consequence, it was claimed, was to diminish the importance of self-evaluation.

Arguably, the introduction of teacher appraisal and performance management is even more necessary in such complex and unusual teaching environments than in mainstream schools, where it is currently being introduced. At Huntercombe, the education manager and the four departmental team leaders observe teaching and carry out appraisal. At Hollesley Bay, very limited appraisal was said to have been carried out by the Norwich City College team, but no evidence of this activity was seen. At Thorn Cross, education services inspection had criticised the absence of teacher observation; this matter has now been addressed and there is regular classroom observation.

A framework is also needed for initial and continuing training in order to support staff to be able to introduce and sustain effective performance management processes. These processes would be based on self-evaluation and lesson observation.

Managing transitions

Delay in providing pre-custodial information reduces the effectiveness of the induction period in all the establishments. The shortage of immediate information on health matters, for instance, was commonly expressed as a real concern to senior managers and the education manager. Concern was expressed in most establishments as to the lack of knowledge about what education provision (and where) will be provided for young people when they are released. At one establishment, the induction period's effectiveness was further reduced: although the Basic Skills Agency test had been conducted, young people were interviewed before it had been marked.

At Brinsford, half of a full-time member of staff's time is dedicated to establishing links with Youth Offender Teams and providing educational feedback to sentence planning meetings. At Warrington, the teaching staff make strenuous efforts to remain in contact with the students' schools to ensure continuity in progression in learning. The transition process might be further improved in establishments if a summative educational assessment were made prior to release, and if a senior manager from the education department were to attend the final review meeting.

The "head start" project at Thorn Cross receives European funding. It provides access to a range of support agencies and could be seen as a precursor for the Connexions service. There is a Connexions service pilot at Huntercombe which could provide valuable lessons.

Quality of accommodation

The appropriateness and condition of accommodation has an important impact on both teaching and learning, and also on control and health and safety. The strategic development of education and training within Young Offender Institutions will clearly need a well-thought-out approach to the development of buildings and associated capital equipment.

There is considerable variation in the standard of accommodation available. Ashfield and Feltham have had new facilities constructed within the last two years. Ashfield will require further building work if the number of hours of education provided each week is to be expanded.

At one establishment, the main education block was described as "pretty but with serious defects" by one of the staff. While some provision (such as the computer rooms) is of high standard, there are some basic design faults from an educational point of view – particularly bearing in mind the needs of this group of young people. The food room, for example, is poorly conceived as the cooking arrangements are in rows. This means that the teacher cannot easily control the teaching group. If the Youth Justice Board is to be involved in serious capital expenditure, it should ensure that there is appropriate input from educationalists and those with experience of working with this group of young people.

Other establishments struggle with accommodation that is well below standard. If not remedied, it will seriously reduce the effectiveness of any investment the Youth Justice Board makes towards the revenue funding of increased education and training. At one establishment, the very poor accommodation needs to be augmented and replaced urgently if

the Board's expectations are to be achieved. The low quality of this provision affects adversely the overall curriculum and restricts the styles of teaching that can be employed. At times, this establishment has made a virtue out of necessity, for example by teaching programmes on the wings, but this has arguably increased health and safety risks. For example, teachers on the wings do not currently have access to panic buttons.

At another institution the lack of infrastructure is a major issue. There are too few teaching spaces, especially for practical activities, and the establishment is unable to meet requirements for the provision of 30 hours of educational activities.

Staff often work hard to overcome the poor standards of accommodation. At Werrington, despite bleak conditions and the whole area being unwelcoming, the staff have provided excellent displays of students' work in the classrooms in an attempt to create a more meaningful learning environment. Similarly, staff at Wetherby, particularly those from the workshops, have spent much time in ensuring that the accommodation and displays improve the environment for the trainees.

Given the high cost and complexity of moving groups of young people around these large sites, particular attention needs to be given to design, to minimise movement and ensure integration of activities. The problems of separate accommodation often seen within establishments are also exacerbated by separate management arrangements for vocational and more academic activities. Different standards can also exist within the two categories. At one establishment, the poor accommodation for educational classes contrasts starkly with the first-class facilities in the workshops and a state-of-the-art gymnasium and fitness room.

The quality of design and standard of upkeep of educational and training accommodation are important from a practical point of view. But they also send out a very powerful message to staff and students about the priority given to this work within the institution. As with other aspects of education and training in the secure estate, the Youth Justice Board needs to adopt a coherent strategic approach if its investments are to be effective.

Class sizes

Class sizes can be measured in two ways. There is the ostensible ratio of teachers to students as determined by the contracts. There is also the average class size, which tends to be a much smaller figure as a result of disruptions such as other appointments.

Within establishments there is a great deal of variation in the ratio of teachers to students, as at Ashfield where the ratio varies from 1:8 to 1:1 for basic skills. The staffing establishment at Feltham and Huntercombe is set at a ratio of 1:10 and at Portland at 1:12. In the absence of significant numbers of learning support assistants or technicians who have been appropriately trained, these numbers are probably too high for effective control and learning of these young people. For example, an observed art class was staffed at a ratio of 1:9; the auditors regarded the circumstances as being above acceptable risk levels.

5.5 Accreditation

Qualifications available

Across the Young Offender Institutions as a whole, a wide range of accreditation methods are used. At particular establishments, however, levels of accreditation were deemed to be limited. Several establishments use locally produced certification which might for instance include the FE college's logo. These certificates appear to be awarded relatively easily. A more important point is that they have no currency in the outside world, and many young people realise this. This factor has to be balanced against any potential increase in motivation for the individual young person.

Certain key principles need to underpin the forms of accreditation used. It is essential for accreditation to have currency in the external world. Accreditation needs to be achievable by every learner within the period of their sentence. Where possible, the accreditation should be utilised. The qualifications should be commonplace within FE colleges and training providers (e.g. Wordpower, Numberpower and CLAIT) and available for all learners whatever their level. Accreditation also needs to have a rapid completion process and be flexible enough to encompass a wide range of activities such as work experience.

The key skills programme which has particular emphasis at Huntercombe would appear to fulfil many of these requirements. The various AEB tests are useful in that they can be administered relatively easily. Also, progression can occur in English and mathematics for many of these young people within the span of the average sentence length. The ASDAN Youth Award scheme is particularly useful in accrediting a wider range of activities. It can be transferred relatively easily from work undertaken in custody to that in the community.

A major problem is the level of knowledge about accreditation within the Youth Offending Teams. It has to be questioned as to how far Supervising Officers have current knowledge of relevant accreditation and are confident enough to broker its continuation with schools, colleges and training providers upon release of the young person. An allied difficulty is ensuring the transmission of relevant information such as portfolios of work and certification, or ensuring that such certification is chased up in the future.

Assessment and validation processes

Only accredited staff are allowed to award grades in external awards. The auditors judged that work appeared to be properly validated. This is often supplemented by external examinations, which were taking place at several of the visits. These examinations can cause real timetabling problems in allowing sufficient time for them to be taken, and in providing suitable accommodation so that they can be taken without cheating. One auditor observed several examination sessions where candidates were sitting far too close to each other.

If external examinations are to play a major part in the new educational and training regimes, the accommodation will need to include appropriate dual purpose classrooms.

National Record of Achievement/progress file

The National Record of Achievement, which will become the progress file, is of pivotal importance in terms of accreditation. The lack of an NRA is the first indication to a prospective education or training provider – or more importantly an employer – that a young person has not been in mainstream education.

The NRA is designed to be a portfolio of work. It is a useful tool for encouraging and recording independent learning, covers a wide range of activities, and is designed to record lifelong learning. Its significance can therefore be understood for this group of young people, who more than any other have no tangible evidence of progress in learning. The NRA would also provide a useful medium for linking work within custody and the community. YOT supervising officers should all receive training so that they are comfortable with its requirements and value.

It is essential that work on the NRA begins with the induction of the young people. At some establishments this happens relatively late on in their sentence.

It is disappointing, and another sign of weakness of the current contracting process, that the young people do not receive the national binder for their NRA. This binder is distinctive and of high quality, and ensures that all relevant material is kept together. One establishment cited the cost of the binder as being far too expensive, given the throughput of over 1,000 young people per year. The presentation of these binders would provide a focal point for awards ceremonies for the young people.

Measurement and progress recording across all subjects

Recording is linked to the quality of lesson planning (see above) in providing a framework against which to evaluate the progress of individual young people. The lack of re-testing is a major problem in terms of assessing and recording progress. Establishments tend to be overwhelmed with paper, and because of the rapid throughput of offenders and the lack of computerised administration and educational systems, more rigour could be brought to the recording process. In some establishments there is no common way of recording a young person's progress across all the work undertaken.

The most effective approach appears to be the aggregation of information following each lesson for the monthly reports used by personal tutors in establishments. At some establishments the recording of achievement across subject areas lacks coherence as there is a diversity of practice within the department in the use of levels, grades and percentages to identify achievement.

5.6 Integration

Effectiveness of the links between vocational and academic provision

The division between “education” and vocational work/training is often too rigid, and significant opportunities for providing a much broader and more balanced educational

experience are missed. At some establishments this is because of the absence of vocational provision. But for many, the separate management arrangements for very different qualification groups mean that a coherent learning experience is denied to many young people.

For the majority of establishments, the links between vocational and academic provision are not particularly strong, but there are moves to improve them. Generally, there appears to be relatively little cross-fertilisation across subjects. The complexities of the timetable exacerbate this lack of mutual support.

There are promising approaches, however, such as at Hollesley Bay where support staff from the education department are attempting to certify key skills in the establishment's vocational courses. At Castington, literacy and numeracy teachers work with young people in their workshops. They improve the young people's literacy and numeracy using the vocabulary and use of number in the vocational area, in order to assist progress. In several establishments, instructors have attended training courses on key skills. At one YOI, the management divide has been partly overcome by the education manager having line management of half the instructors.

Extent to which literacy, numeracy and ICT permeate the curriculum

In general, the findings were that the permeation of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum is fairly limited. This is an extremely important area if there is to be a step-change in literacy and numeracy levels of these young people. It is encouraging that it is starting to be recognised at senior management level just how urgently this is needed.

The lack of appropriate ICT equipment is a major constraint, but so too is the division between vocational and educational activities and the nature of the current contracts. Ensuring a coherent strategy across all the learning experiences available to students requires expertise and a significant amount of time. One teacher responsible for basic skills commented to an auditor "I don't make any money for the college unless I'm in the classroom". This teacher could not therefore help in providing subject leadership, co-ordinating basic skills across courses, or guiding other staff on how to maximise opportunities in their courses.

Currently for the key skills of numeracy, literacy and ICT, there are no consistent themes across all subject areas. Teachers at Brinsford for example have benefited from recent staff development in this area, and are aware of the need to integrate key skills into their classroom activities. However, the lack of IT equipment in subject rooms limits the scope for this.

There is also increasing recognition of the importance of key skills in providing the framework for uniting vocational and educational work. For instance at Onley, one member of the education staff is currently seconded to the Prison Service to undertake an audit of key skills across the Young Offender Institution.

Role of prison officers in education and training

In general, very limited help is given by prison officers, although they are generally supportive of the educational work. Staffing pressures mean that the prison officer role appears to have little scope to take on board matters such as homework. In one section at Castington, however, prison officers take on a role similar to learning support assistants. At Hollesley Bay, the officers taking the prison's offending behaviour course sometimes link it with the education department's intervention course.

Role of personal, social and health education

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) appears not to operate as a consistent programme across the young offender estate. It is covered mainly in life-skills courses, which are not always open to all students. In some establishments such as Castington, PSHE is taken as part of social education in the pre-release programme. At Hollesley Bay, it only takes place formally in the life-skills course taken by the less able young people. PSHE is not always given priority status, as at one establishment where young people were taken for their PE session halfway through the life-skills course. The implied message was that life skills are less important than aspects of provision such as PE.

Links to offending behaviour programmes

Offending behaviour programmes appear to be run separately from the main education programme provided by a YOI. This confirms the findings of the research commissioned by the Youth Justice Board into effective practice in the secure estate.

Homework

No Young Offender Institution sets homework formally as a matter of course for all young people. Individual young people who ask for homework that can be undertaken in their cells are given it. This work tends to be associated with examinations and certification.

The homework policy needs to be reviewed, as it is losing valuable study opportunities for independent learning and links with other significant adults in the institution (such as Personal Officers). One complaint from a proportion of the young people interviewed was that they were not set "pad work". This was often in the context that the work was not sufficiently challenging.

6.0 MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

6.1 Introduction and background

Phase 2 of this study will concentrate on giving an authoritative picture of the provision for, and educational experiences of, young people prior to being sentenced to custody and post-release. It will also assess the effectiveness of reintegration into education and training in the community under the Detention and Training Order.

A detailed database has been compiled of a sample of 200 young people who were in custody on a DTO in March 2001 and released by mid-April. This database has been augmented by qualitative material from interviews with the young people both in custody and on release. The purpose of the interviews was to gain the young people's views of their education prior to, during and after custody, and to identify the barriers to learning that they have experienced.

A separate report has been prepared, based on 300 individual interviews with young people, 200 interviews with YOT supervising officers, and the analysis of a considerable amount of quantitative material. Some of the preliminary findings are of relevance to this audit of education in custody.

The information provided in this chapter is based on about half the sample. Full analysis has not yet been completed on all quantitative material. Nevertheless, the views of young people provide a salutary perspective on their experiences of education in the community and in custody.

Information has been gathered on the young people's secondary school educational careers; the nature and scale of any education or training immediately prior to their entry to the custodial system; their experience of education within custody; and their education/training plans upon release. Detailed ratings of the education and training provision during each of these episodes have been completed, to enable statistically valid comparisons to be made.

The researchers found the contributions of the young people to be very open, usually very detailed and relatively consistent. Many of the findings reflect those of other studies of socially excluded young people. However, in one or two important areas they run counter to received wisdom.

Most significantly, the researchers did not find a group of young people who described themselves as disaffected from formal education or completely anti-school. On the contrary, mainstream school scored the highest of all the educational experiences that these young people have undergone. If anything, they displayed extremely conventional attitudes towards education and demonstrated a yearning for structure and normality. They saw mainstream school as being "proper", but repeatedly referred to the need for individual attention and support, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

This does not mean, however, that education in custody was not perceived as being beneficial to some young people. Indeed, for the majority of young people – particularly those of compulsory school-age who were experiencing part-time provision of a few hours a week in a pupil referral unit or home tuition – the education provided in custody could seem a real improvement.

One area of very real concern, however, was the unequivocal failure of education in custody for the small minority of young people who had been relatively successful in education, or at least were still in mainstream school or college. For these young people, custody has the potential to be an educational disaster. Real anxiety was expressed about the damage done to their chances of getting back to school or college and the fact that they had usually lost a whole academic year because of their custodial sentence. Young Offender Institutions are simply not equipped to provide a broad balanced curriculum that can offer the necessary continuity in GCSEs, GNVQs or A-levels for this minority of young people.

When it came to plans for education and training on release and the second half of the Detention and Training Order, the majority of young people appeared relatively bemused. Only a minority appeared to be actively engaged in the planning process for their education or training. Here again, apathy and disaffection were absent in most of the young people. Instead, they appeared mystified or confused about the interventions of the professionals around them.

The rest of this chapter presents the views of young people. They are broadly representative and are drawn from all the Young Offender Institutions.

6.2 Views on mainstream school

Even where young people rated some aspects of their mainstream schooling very highly, it had clearly been an extremely painful experience because of their learning failures and consequent feelings of humiliation. As approximately a quarter of these young people had literacy and numeracy ages 10 years or more behind their chronological age, it is hardly surprising that mainstream schooling was so difficult for them:

“No one knew about me, I kept myself to myself.”

(Roger)

“I didn’t want to feel as thick as I am.”

(Roger)

“You wouldn’t catch me reading for nothing.”

(Roger)

For some young people, custody represented educational sanctuary as there at least it was normal to have these learning difficulties:

“I never learnt anything at school. I always felt too embarrassed because I couldn’t do things, but here you’re not alone – everyone in the class is in the same position ...”

(David)

But even where there was a positive attitude towards the education received in custody (bearing in mind that education was often the most positive aspect of custody) it was still not preferred to mainstream schooling:

“Alright, but not better than school.”

(John)

“The teachers help you more at school.”

(Brian)

There was a recognition, however, that there was no going back as far as mainstream schooling was concerned, despite hankering after it:

“Looking back it doesn’t seem as bad now as it seemed then”.

(Joseph)

6.3 Positive views on education in custody

Despite the systemic failings that this report has drawn attention to, it is important to record that individual triumphs do occur, thanks to the efforts of the education staff and the young people. In reducing criminogenic risk factors, enabling young people who were functionally illiterate and innumerate to read and write is in itself a major achievement:

“When I came in I couldn’t write to my mum or read her letters but now I’m able to write to her regularly and read.”

(Leroy)

“Since being in custody I’ve been taught to read – I never had that at school.”

(Darren)

“Here I’ve learnt more than in the whole of school.”

(James)

The impact of custody can produce beneficial responses, through the shock of incarceration, the reality of compulsion and the fact that – despite its shortfalls – provision was often considerably better in quantity and quality than that received previously (e.g. home tuition). All these factors combined to produce positive reactions:

“[It has] brought it all back to me, things I’d forgotten ... [I can] build on what I learnt before and I’m getting better at things.”

(Damien)

“Made me realise I need to get my head down and work.”

(Shane)

“In here [STC] the only time I want the lesson to end is when I’m hungry.”

(Billy)

“What’s happened has made me more positive – I could be smarter, could do better. It’s made me a lot more determined – but it’s getting late!”

(Paul)

For a small number of these young people, the support they have received in their learning in custody and the nature of the provision has resulted in their viewing it extremely positively. Were it not for the stigma associated with a criminal record, they would choose to undertake their education and training in these establishments:

“If I could have come here without a criminal record I would have come because of all the help I’ve had. If I weren’t here I’d be worse off – I’m more focused now.”

(Dean)

“I’d stay here [STC] for a year for my education but not in a YOI.”

(Jerome)

Incentives

There were examples of the constructive use of incentives within custody to encourage learning and participation in education:

“You have to do work here and therefore you learn ... There’s an incentive scheme and that has a good influence. I would do better in mainstream school now.”

(Jane)

"You can't miss 'em [lessons] otherwise they take your TV. I've been to most lessons. It is good that you have to go and it is boring sat in your pad all day. I might as well learn something while I'm in here."

(Rob)

Classroom management

Attitudes towards discipline comprised the one area where there were very mixed reactions. There was a very even split within the sample between those who considered the custody regime to be too ‘strict’, and those who thought it was less strict, and therefore an improvement on, mainstream school.

“You’re not made to do things, they don’t push you like at school.”

(Adam)

“School is stricter – here you can do what you want, as long as you do your work. The only reason I used to fight in school was so I could get sent home.”

(Charles)

“.....if they’re too strict [teachers in the YOI] I don’t do any work – if they’re less strict I do some work.....”

(Robert)

Appreciation of teaching

Young people were not slow in being complimentary where they experienced effective teaching. Some of the following comments encapsulate key elements such as the permeation of literacy and numeracy, keeping up the pace and target setting:

“Mr White is one of the best teachers I have ever had, he’s a laugh and he gives you support. The classes are only small. It’s no good being stuck and not telling anyone as then you never learn.”

“My maths teacher gives me cooking ingredients to add up. This is good, as you don’t know you are learning maths, do you?”

(Wayne)

“Here, with computers they show you how to do something rather than doing it for you.”

(Sean)

“The staff are good – nice – and they help you. My writing has improved.”

(Richard)

“The help is really good – the tutor makes it interesting, as much as he can, keeps the pace up.”

(Kevin)

“This is more than I expected – I’m not used to this approach with options and short-term targets.”

(Jason)

Less positive participation in education

Understandably, education in custody was often regarded as the least worst alternative. Even where relatively few hours were on offer and in topics that young people were unenthusiastic about, this was still regarded far more favourably than being in their cell. Not surprisingly, returning to their wing because education occurred only in the morning was viewed with disfavour:

“Better than going back to the wing.”

(Roy)

“It’s better than being in your cell.”

(Jimmy)

“I go to education ’cos it gets you out of your cell, doesn’t it?”

(Darren)

With others, an even greater degree of apathy was displayed. Some had been so disengaged from education and training in the community that anything could be regarded as an improvement:

“You can’t do nothing else in jail”

(Curtis)

“Nothing negative has affected my education in here because I wasn’t doing it anyway, beforehand.”

(John)

6.4 *Negative views on education in custody*

For a number of young people, education in custody fell well short of their expectations, potentially curtailing those expectations still further:

“You’d think with all these resources you would learn something, but you don’t.” (Felix)

“I would have liked to have learnt something by now, but I haven’t.” (Felix)

“If they had sat down with me straight away and got me learning, then I would be learning something else. There’s nothing I know now that I didn’t know already.”

(Ashley)

“When I was on the out I missed education and wanted to go back, but that’s just gone ’cause of the way that education is.”

(George)

“Being in here makes you think you’d get more help but when you don’t you feel like you won’t get any help on the outside.”

(Carl)

“... no education, just PE.”

(Miller)

Lesson cancellations

Perhaps the area of greatest criticism by the young people was the cancellation of lessons. Allied to this was the length of time it took to arrange lessons, and the frequent changes that occurred as a result of wing moves. The apparently very short notice for most of these cancellations, plus the fact that it meant that young people were confined to their cells, indicates that their complaints would appear to be well justified. All Young Offender Institutions appear to suffer from this problem to some extent. But judging by the young people's reactions, the situation appears to be even worse at three or four institutions in particular.

"I have been here six weeks and today is the first day I've been able to attend education. The teachers never turn up so you have to sit in your cell – and it's freezing in there."

(David)

"The teachers never turn up so you just have to stay in your cell. This happens at least twice a week."

(Joseph)

"Education here would be better if the teachers came – you look forward to it and then it's cancelled."

(Kevin)

"There are about five lessons cancelled every day. The staff don't know anything and are always off sick. Once we were told the teacher was sick and then saw them teaching later that day."

(Jamie)

"I feel that I should have learned more since I've been in here."

(Leroy)

"The teachers are really nice and kind but if one is away, you get banged up."

(Frankie)

"... and in the meantime we are banged up for a week. All we get is extra social. Sometimes everything in the whole prison is cancelled."

(Adrian)

"They're always going to funerals or don't turn up so we get banged up and spend more time in our cells than anything else. There's always a few afternoons every week that it happens."

(Dennis)

"At the moment I couldn't do it anyway [favourite subject] – the teacher broke her leg and has not been replaced."

(Benjamin)

Lack of individual support

Another great barrier to learning identified by the young people was the lack of sufficient individual support, particularly for literacy and numeracy. This harks back to their main criticism of mainstream schooling. These criticisms were voiced by young people who were if anything more enthusiastic than some of their peers and very willing to learn. But they often felt ashamed of the low level of their literacy and numeracy.

When Henry requested “a class full of quiet people with flexible teachers”, this was his suggestion on how to improve the quality of education in custody. By “flexibility” he meant the ability to negotiate individual study.

Of more concern is the despairing comment of Sammy, who in the absence of individual help has:

“... given up – my writing’s like a two year old’s – it’s embarrassing.”

Similarly, Jerome spoke for many more young people when he asserted that those with difficulties in literacy and numeracy:

“Don’t want to learn to spell in front of a whole class of kids.”

Individual support was seen as significant not only by those with major deficits in literacy and numeracy, but also by those who were attempting to work at a higher academic level:

“There is no one sitting down with me when I’m stuck. I’m doing ‘King Lear’ and ‘Grapes of Wrath’. If I could get one-to-one I would be OK but I just get left to do it in my cell.”
(Daniel)

A closely related issue was that of overcrowding within lessons or insufficient resources:

“In IT there are seven computers and 10 kids.”
(Jamie)

“I would attend education more if there were less people in class.”
(Donald)

“Sometimes there are 16 to 20 people in the class, depending on the class.”
(Charles)

Disruptive behaviour in lessons

One area of divided opinions was over how strict the approach of the teachers should be. Many young people, however, echoed the views of Jonathan that:

“You should be locked up properly and given proper support and not allowed to fool around at lessons.”

Complaints about poor behaviour from others in lessons were commonplace. To an outsider this might not be unexpected, but these comments were very much in the context of the frustrations engendered by frequent lesson cancellations, lack of individual support and inappropriate and low-level tasks set:

“They’re all criminals – they’re all older than me. I was trying to do high-level maths but I couldn’t concentrate – I couldn’t explain. I just got angry – I need a little bit of help but not like that.”

(Michael)

Access to libraries

A common systemic weakness noted by the auditors was the lack of integration between the library facilities and education departments. This was often caused as much by physical separation as anything else. The auditors highlighted the promotion of reading and enjoyment of books as an area for improvement at several establishments, and the library should be central in terms of access. This was a particular problem where less than full-time education is concerned:

“You get through them [books] really quick though. I’m in my cell most of the time so you just get bored.”

(Cameron)

“One of the officers gives me Welsh magazines and papers sometimes ’cos there’s nothing in the library, everything’s in English, even in lessons.”

(Gerald)

“I like to read books in my cell but can’t get to the library. I can’t get anyone to ever take me over there.”

(Ahmed)

Low expectations and lack of differentiation

The difficult circumstances noted throughout this report have understandably resulted in a situation where teachers’ expectations of the young people can be very low. In addition, there is relatively little differentiation of teaching methods and materials. In these conditions, teaching strategies are eroded and repetitive low-level tasks are set, often on an ad hoc basis. Students’ morale is correspondingly lowered:

“You do the same thing all day. I’m just doing art all the time.”

(Carl)

“It’s the same daft thing ... not like primary school, but stuff you’ve done before.”

(John)

“I don’t want these pansy lessons. I want more conventional lessons ... these are just boring, there is nothing here.”

(Lee)

“Nursery work, kiddies’ work.”

(Barry)

“We just keep learning the same stuff over four months.”

(Darren)

“Lessons are too easy and there is too much copying out.”

(Ryan)

“A lot of copying and colouring in ... which is not helping me learn.”

(Jimmy)

“I don’t do maths in here; I read the papers. I do go to IT but only to play – I play cards in IT.”

(Ken)

6.5 *Suggestions for improvement*

In addition to the improvements recommended above by the young people, there were other suggestions for improvement. Several students requested more vocational work such as woodwork:

“I would do more woodwork if I could. You get to create things and have something to show for it at the end.”

(Donovan)

Another significant gap in the curriculum was drama. Gareth expressed his disappointment at its lack because:

“It makes you feel something ... inside.”

Another example of the straightforward requirements of young people was the request by several for homework to be set:

“Homework to take to your pad, the same as at school.”

(Ashley)

A more general request was made by many young people and summed up by Roy:

“Longer hours, more of it [education].”

6.6 Post-release planning

With some notable exceptions, the young people appeared disconnected from the planning process as far as their education and training were concerned. It may be that relatively little had happened while they were in custody. In any event, a disturbingly large proportion appeared to have had little arranged for them on release. Given that the majority were being interviewed very close to their release date, this finding is of even more concern.

There was little in case files to indicate placement options on release. This is a disappointing reflection on the peripheral nature of education and training to the sentence planning process and the shortcomings in recording information.

The young people readily acknowledged the risks of being released without education or training being arranged:

“I know there are complications, but it would be good [to have a plan], because, you go out, go out to get a job, and it takes a few weeks, a month ... that’s when you reoffend.”
(Dean)

Others were worried about the lack of structure that would face them on release into the second part of their Detention and Training Order:

“It won’t be the same – won’t have my day planned for me.”
(John)

6.7 Summary

Although the entire sample has not yet been analysed, there is a surprising consistency in the views of the young people experiencing custody.

The education and training experienced in custody received relatively high scores from most of the group compared with what they had been receiving (or often not receiving) prior to custody. This was despite vigorous criticism regarding issues such as the frequency of cancelled lessons.

Most now felt more positive about education and training. However, most also felt confused or unclear about what was planned for them on release.

Many of the young people appeared to have had relatively little contact with YOT staff, and were sometimes unclear as to who was their supervising officer. The case files often

indicated that this lack of clarity was due to unclear records of who the Supervising Officer was.

One-to-one work was highly valued, especially where the young person was struggling with literacy and numeracy.

7.0 MAIN FINDINGS

7.1 Overview

These institutions are attempting to meet the needs of socially excluded young people who are beset with multiple disadvantages, but often pose a considerable challenge to our social care, educational, criminal justice and health systems. In relation to education, the immediate antecedents of these young people are mainly characterised by a lack of access to, and/or non-participation in education or training.

The secure estate works within a wider context of public and political opinion that appears uncertain about the balance to strike between custody and education, and punishment and growth. Yet this task is being undertaken in very demanding and constantly changing circumstances. For YOIs in particular, the daily operational pressures, lack of infrastructure, poor and inappropriate accommodation, and recruitment and retention difficulties all combine to create significant barriers for high-quality educational and training provision.

In these circumstances, almost all the institutions were doing their best. Several provided evidence of a strong turnaround in their educational performance following critical inspection reports at both Young Offender Institutions and the Secure Training Centres. However, this audit had to proceed with reference points derived from the reforms in mainstream education, the Government's social policy targets and the YJB's standards. Against these criteria, YOIs have not been provided with the appropriate internal infrastructure and resources, nor the essential external links to initiate and sustain the radical change necessary.

The audit found a general recognition of the need for significant cultural change in Young Offender Institutions. There is also considerable goodwill, and a number of innovations could usefully be disseminated far more widely. Nonetheless, education/training in the sector is struggling to meet some of even the fairly basic standards currently set.

Educational provision in Young Offender Institutions is also simply too isolated, both within the institutions and in relation to the world outside, to make the changes required by the Youth Justice Board.

The auditors commonly used "turbulence" to describe the composition of education teams. However, some education departments are close to a tailspin and are delivering a disjointed and poor-quality service. Even if the quality and volume of provision (particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy) were to be enhanced significantly in custody, this would be to little effect. This is because of the ineffectiveness of current reintegration processes and the prevalence of lower-quality part-time provision within the community.

7.2 *Population dynamics*

The introduction of the DTO has greatly accelerated the throughput of young people within the custodial system. The use of shorter sentences such as two and four-month custodial episodes means that Young Offender Institutions have to cope with high rates of turnover. The processing of such large numbers of young people in such short periods of time creates instability across the whole of an institution's regime.

These rates of turnover are being compounded by other factors where, for example, some establishments are now taking young people on remand. Transfers between Young Offender Institutions are not infrequent (between one-quarter and one-third of young people identified from the YJB placement database and designated for interview were found not to be at that particular YOI). Little evidence was seen that the impact of the move on education was taken into consideration.

The total custodial population has not fallen, but sentence length has reduced. This means that either there has been a significant increase in the numbers of young people experiencing custody, or some offenders are now experiencing repeated custodial sentences within a relatively short period of time. This would repay further investigation.

This increased "velocity of circulation" has serious indirect effects on education and training. It also has a direct impact on administrative processing and the logistical demands on operational staff. Fundamentally, it calls into question the rationale for the curriculum, particularly where young people are only in custody for between eight and 16 weeks. What learning gains can realistically be expected and measured within this period of time?

The formation of stable learning groups becomes extremely difficult if not impossible in these circumstances. This affects the quality of lesson planning and the necessary differentiation of work for young people. This undoubtedly depresses morale and reduces the effectiveness of planning with young people. The often ad hoc nature of educational provision is also exacerbated. These high turnover rates were exemplified in an art class where no single item of sculpture or painting had been completed by the person who started it.

Population instability can be transmitted to and among groups of staff. For example, the pressures of such a rapid turnover of young people can be reflected in the turnover of educational staff and their sickness rates. Equally, the absence of prison officers can have a serious impact on whether education is available or not. Instances were noted where the absence of a prison officer determined when PE took place, which in turn removed young people from scheduled lessons.

The operational pressures that Young Offender Institutions work under are often intense, and in the face of such unstable populations the provision of education becomes fragile. During the audit visits, education shutdowns occurred at very short notice in two establishments and late starts to lessons were perennial.

7.3 Leadership and accountability

For institutions operating under such pressures and reliant on long communication supply chains, effective leadership is essential both internally and for the secure estate as a whole. One voice needs to speak with authority on all education and training matters both externally and internally. This is currently not the case. Concern was repeatedly expressed about the confusion of roles regarding the Prison Service, the new DfEE education unit and the Youth Justice Board.

Some education managers felt caught in the crossfire of the "constant power struggle" between the Youth Justice Board and the Prison Service. One governor likened the situation to that of a child of estranged parents, where the father (Youth Justice Board) dropped in from time to time dispensing treats and occasional admonishments, and the mother (the Prison Service) had to deal with the day-to-day drudgery.

Given the scale of change necessary, to expect governors to manage under situations of such potentially conflicting accountabilities will minimise the chances of radically improving educational and training provision. There is a very real risk that this could compromise the implementation of 30 hours' a week education. Not only could it add to confusion and complexity by introducing more "add-ons" to education provision, but a lack of guidance from the YJB as to what constitutes "education" could well lead to very variable outcomes.

In the absence of unequivocal leadership, fundamental questions arise as to the scope and purpose of the curriculum. Similarly, key performance target set do not appear aligned most effectively to the Youth Justice Board's priorities.

The proliferation of inspections, particularly for Young Offender Institutions, is symptomatic of the mixed accountabilities and conflicting priorities. Claims that Young Offender Institutions are over-inspected would appear to be justified. Conflicting advice, between for example Prison Service in-house inspection and Ofsted inspections, understandably causes problems for education departments. Differing inspection frameworks are used, none of which adequately relate to the Youth Justice Board's overarching objectives as expressed through the Detention and Training Order.

Within Young Offender Institutions, there is not always clarity of leadership where the provision of education and training is concerned. The triangular relationship between governor, educational manager and head of regimes is crucial, but in the view of the auditors can, as presently constituted, come into conflict too easily. From an educational perspective, Young Offender Institutions are far less coherent than Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres. This is not simply an issue of scale – there are significant issues of territorialism. Education departments often operate in isolation or competition with vocational provision, PE/fitness training, offending behaviour programmes, and resettlement work. A less than rigorous implementation of the move to 30 hours a week education could exacerbate this territorialism.

The present contract arrangements tend to reinforce the segregation rather than integration of education across the regime. As currently constructed, these contracts do not facilitate linkages between the education department and others internally, let alone across custody and community for the length of the DTO. For example education departments are not paid to participate in reviews.

The present balance between the amount of education contracted out and the in-house management of vocational provision and other programmes does not appear to be the optimum. Several governors and heads of regimes favoured direct management of education. So unsatisfactory is the present balance that even some education managers supported this option. An alternative view is that vocational provision should also be contracted out.

Doubts were expressed about the quality of educational expertise available to facilitate the necessary changes. Within Young Offender Institutions, governors and heads of regimes in the main do not have an educational background. There is a strong argument for the creation of a senior management post – an education and training director within each Young Offender Institution. This follows the model used by the Secure Training Centres. It also brings a stronger education and training ethos into the senior management team.

7.4 *Secure colleges?*

A transition is needed from establishments that focus primarily on control to ones where the emphasis is on learning and the subsequent reintegration into education and training in the community. In order to do this successfully, a conceptual framework akin to that of the secure college is essential.

There are considerable cultural barriers within Young Offender Institutions, but these could be overcome given clear leadership from the Youth Justice Board. This issue goes to the heart of the purpose of custody for juveniles. It is potentially a more inclusive concept in that it can enable these providers to be linked to other educational and training strategies and providers, rather than remaining marginalised.

This philosophical shift also places these institutions more centrally within the context of the development of evidence-based practice. It embraces the totality of an establishment's activities and is a powerful signal to criminal justice agencies and the young people of what being in custody is for.

The development of secure colleges underpinned by a comprehensive human resources strategy could prove more attractive – not just to education staff, but also to those staff primarily concerned with care and control.

7.5 *Management systems*

Education departments in Young Offender Institutions have not kept pace with the performance management changes that have occurred in mainstream schools in recent years. The school improvement planning process is a very useful model to emulate. Similarly,

adoption of the self-evaluation model used by schools would help to lock management information and performance together within the context of an improvement planning process.

Education departments (and the rest of the Young Offender Institution) spend a great deal of their time in recording and providing information. The scale of this activity often crowds out the time needed to assess what the information is telling them. Individuals, teams and the institution as a whole are tending not to manage their performance through analysis of the information they gather. The use of summary information feedback on practice is rare within education departments and arguably within Young Offender Institutions as a whole. For instance, no YOI is attempting systematically to measure added value through a comparison of exit testing with entry testing. This reflects the bureaucratic burdens placed on these institutions and will be a significant constraint on the introduction and dissemination of evidence-based practice.

There is extremely limited use of ICT. Rectifying this is essential for several reasons. ICT offers the opportunity to transmit the key information that is currently not moving between the custody and community sectors. ICT is another area where custodial education practice is lagging significantly behind that in mainstream schools. For example, using electronic means to analyse attendance patterns is being done very successfully in mainstream schools.

In terms of working with young people, there is evidence to suggest that those with multiple problems, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and a history of educational failure find it easier to engage with learning via ICT than through more traditional methods. Furthermore, ICT offers the scope to link education providers within custody to colleges and schools. Through video-conferencing for example, ICT also offers a means of overcoming the practical barriers posed by the isolation and distance of secure establishments.

7.6 *Human resources*

This area requires the greatest investment by the Youth Justice Board if significant change is to be achieved. In contrast to many of the Local Authority Secure Units, YOIs have very serious staffing problems. Their work is not given the status and recognition that it deserves. Consequently, recruitment and retention are even more difficult, given the current tightness of the labour market.

Most of the teaching practitioners are part-timers. While this brings some flexibility, it is both the cause and effect of an undervalued education service. Many staff are trapped in educational backwaters with terms and conditions which are significantly inferior to those in mainstream schools. The expertise required to meet the needs of young people in custody is signally failing to be recognised. There is no career structure to recognise the importance of this work and offer the opportunities to develop skills and to progress professionally.

Consequently, the movement of staff tends to be one way. Once experience is gained in the secure estate, there is a ready market in mainstream schools – particularly with the emphasis on social inclusion and behaviour management for staff with experience of such settings.

As a matter of urgency, professional links need to be made with mainstream developments. This could involve two-way secondments, a system of placements in mainstream education once every six terms, and the introduction of action learning sets between practitioners in mainstream and custodial education.

The introduction of performance assessment and threshold payment, as for teachers in mainstream education, could be developed and applied to teaching in the secure estate.

In order to achieve greater integration with the work of vocational and technician staff, an inclusive career structure with portable initial qualifications and continuing professional development is essential.

Similarly, there needs to be a very significant increase in the numbers of learning support assistants in custodial education. They will need an appropriate accredited training programme, and ladders to help them move up to become teaching practitioners.

There also needs to be a step-change in the management status of the senior managers within education departments. The new head teacher qualification is an obvious parallel that could be developed in this context.

In addition, the Youth Justice Board needs to remedy the serious deficit in specialists such as educational psychologists, special educational needs co-ordinators and basic skills co-ordinators. The education departments simply do not have sufficient full-time teaching practitioners, learning support assistants or specialists. Consequently, there is a widespread failure to meet the special educational needs of the young people.

7.7 Curriculum

There is no clear model and rationale for the curriculum. Prison Service Order 4950 lays out coverage, but a curriculum has to be more than that – the "How?" is as important as the "What?". PSO 4950 contains nothing about the proportionate allocation of teaching time or appropriate methodologies to be employed.

Entitlement to the national curriculum is a key issue. This needs developing for those young people who were participating in education prior to custody. In their cases there is a strong argument that the curriculum should be dedicated to maintaining and developing their existing learning.

However, the majority of young people were being offered a few hours per week part-time provision prior to custody. Over one-third of those of compulsory school age had a reading age of seven or less; more than two-thirds were functioning below the level of an average 11-year old. Approximately 50 per cent were functioning at or below the numeracy level of an average seven-year old.

An appropriate curriculum for these young people needs to take full account of their very low levels of literacy and numeracy, the fact that they have often been outside full-time learning for a considerable period of time, and that their average sentence length is only four months.

The key performance target set by the Prison Service (and adopted by the YJB) relates to the numbers and proportions of young people achieving a Level 2 key skills qualification. Yet this only relates to a relatively small proportion of the custodial population and is widely felt by education and other staff to be unhelpful and irrelevant to the bulk of their work. This target's relevance has to be questioned, given that Level 2 is equivalent to the performance of the average 16-year old and that the average DTO has a four-month long custodial component. At the very least, it needs to be supplemented by targets that relate realistically to the needs and potential of the great majority of the custodial population.

The Basic Skills Agency has costed the learning hours needed for the average learner to move from one level to another. Their figures imply (assuming that we saturate young people with literacy lessons) that the average custodial sentence length would need to be 18 months to move a quarter of the population up to a reading age of 11.

7.8 Assessment, planning and review

These systems should provide the spine that runs through community and custodial interventions. The audit found that in the main the processes are fractured and limited, and education and training are not an integral part of them.

The work of custodial education departments is disconnected from the entry and exit points to the system. Educationalists are being set an impossible task to devise appropriate individual learning programmes for young people with such complex needs and chaotic prior educational careers, given the timescales available. There is an extremely low level of transmission of assessment information from the community into custody.

The principal educational assessment tool is the Basic Skills Agency test. This has significant limitations, is not a diagnostic tool, and may well not be appropriate for use with juveniles. ASSET has some fundamental flaws from an educational perspective – crucially, it fails to distinguish whether the young person has been receiving say five hours home tuition a week or a full-time programme, which is important from both an educational and a criminogenic risk perspective. But it could be of some value to education departments. Unfortunately, between a quarter and a third of young people in custody in March in Young Offender Institutions had arrived without an ASSET. Even when the ASSET does arrive, it is not shared in whole or in part with education departments as a matter of routine.

In terms of throughcare, integrated case management does not really exist. Most education departments in Young Offender Institutions have very little input into the sentence planning processes carried out by casework/sentence planning teams.

Education departments tend to have no knowledge whatsoever of the planned education/training destination for young people following custody. Their work with each

young person is therefore often in isolation from what has occurred before and is unlikely to be used thereafter in the community. The opportunity to prepare young people for effective re-entry into education and training is denied to both the staff and the young people.

7.9 Accommodation

Senior managers from all Young Offender Institutions raised the issue of accommodation. The situation is particularly acute where the education department caters for young offenders in addition to juveniles. In the absence of new accommodation, any increase in formal classroom activity could only be achieved with the equivalent reduction in the numbers of young offenders. Most establishments need an increase in accommodation for vocational activities, and some currently do not have workshops.

In order to meet the YJB's requirements, there is a real risk that accommodation constraints will lead to quality being diluted further by more ad hoc educational programmes. This will make the assessment of added value even more difficult than it already is.

The restrictions regarding accommodation apply to facilities for staff as well as classrooms.

7.10 Teaching and learning

In general, a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to age is not on offer for all the intake of each establishment. Given the major constraints noted in this report, most Young Offender Institutions make a reasonably successful attempt to provide a balanced and broad curriculum for a proportion of their population.

The current curricular framework and schemes of work do not allow individual and institutional calculations about the amount and percentage of time spent on literacy and numeracy across all the activities that young people undertake. Stronger links with mainstream reforms would be valuable in this context. For example, primary schools have had to introduce literacy and numeracy and work hard to theme it across all the curricular areas.

Despite all the difficult circumstances, the auditors noted a range of innovations. This is a tribute to many of the individual managers and practitioners involved within the education teams and vocational provision, as well as the managers of Young Offender Institutions.

In most establishments, work in the classroom is individualised to an extent in an attempt to deal with the very wide range of need and ability in every teaching group. Genuinely individualised programmes, however, are very rare and the work is largely predetermined. In addition, the effectiveness of such approaches are often eroded by the absence of colleagues, the low attendance of the young people and their throughput, and the very sparse nature of learning support assistance.

SEN is an area of major weakness in Young Offender Institutions. In the auditors' view, many of the teaching groups they observed seemed to be composed of pupils with special

educational needs of one kind or another, with many highly disturbed young people. Perhaps up to three-quarters of the custodial population has special educational needs and if assessed would probably receive a statement. The best efforts of staff are thwarted by lack of assessment information, SEN expertise and sufficient learning support assistant time.

The turbulence in the groups, often with a lack of notice about arrival or departure, restricts effective programme planning. It also encourages a more ad hoc approach and inhibits teachers from planning for individuals. The lack of a common format affects several establishments. At times, lesson plans tend to identify content to be covered rather than the intended outcomes.

The use of incentives and sanctions is another area where practice could gain significantly from a closer interaction between each Young Offender Institution.

Although there might be considerable logistical problems, it is very telling that none of the Young Offender Institutions had formal ceremonies to celebrate achievement.

The division between "education" and vocational work/training is often too rigid. Significant opportunities for providing a much broader and more balanced educational experience are missed. At some establishments, this is because of the absence of vocational provision. But in many the separate management arrangements and very different qualification routes for teachers and instructors means that a coherent learning experience is denied to many young people.

No Young Offender Institution formally sets homework as a matter of course for all young people. Individual young people who ask for homework that can be undertaken in their cells are given it.

7.11 Messages from young people

A separate report is being prepared based on 300 individual interviews with young people and 200 interviews with YOT supervising officers. Some of the preliminary findings are of relevance to the audit of education in custody.

The views of young people provide a salutary perspective on their experiences of education in the community and in custody. Many of the findings reflect those of other studies of socially excluded young people. But in one or two important areas they run counter to the received wisdom.

Most significantly, the researchers did not find a group of young people who describe themselves as disaffected from formal education or completely anti-school. On the contrary, mainstream school scored highest of all the educational experiences that these young people have undergone. If anything, the young people displayed extremely conventional attitudes towards education and demonstrated a yearning for structure and normality. They saw mainstream school as being "proper", but time and again referred to the need for individual attention, particularly around literacy and numeracy.

This does not mean that education in custody was not seen as being beneficial to some young people. Indeed, for the majority – particularly those of compulsory school age who were experiencing part-time provision – the education provided in custody could seem a real improvement.

One area of very real concern, however, was the unequivocal failure of education in custody for the small minority of young people who had been relatively successful in education or at least were still in mainstream school or college. For them, custody had the potential to be an educational disaster. Real anxiety was expressed about the damage done to their chances of getting back to school or college and the time lost because of their custodial sentence. Young Offender Institutions are simply not equipped to provide a broad balanced curriculum and continuity in GCSEs, GNVQs or A-levels for these young people.

Regarding education/training plans on release and the second half of the DTO, the majority of the young people appeared relatively bemused. Only a minority appeared to be actively engaged in the planning process regarding their education or training. The young people appeared mystified or confused about the interventions of professionals around them.

7.12 Conclusions

The recommendations in Chapter 9 require a combination of leadership from the Youth Justice Board and capacity-building within the custodial institutions and in the community – principally through further education colleges linked to the secure estate by robust bridging processes.

This is undeniably a large-scale and challenging business transformation exercise. The Youth Justice Board needs to be assured that it has sufficient quantity and level of expertise to manage this process. Assuming that the Board equips itself appropriately, it is still likely to need to move to a simpler, more direct and at times more directive role with the secure estate. One of the most important and challenging cultural changes that needs to occur is to focus on the young person in devising and providing education and training. This means giving a reality to the Detention and Training Order so that all planning processes and teaching and learning create an integrated education and training programme.

The Youth Justice Board's planned enhancement of education and training needs to occur within a strategic framework. Otherwise it might compound some of the problems, exacerbate the inconsistency of provision between establishments, and do little to integrate provision within custody and the community.

The recommendations concentrate on Young Offender Institutions because of their strategic importance (85 per cent of the custodial places), but also because the systemic weaknesses are very significant and there is currently considerable underfunding. The recommendations also take full account of the project to develop literacy and numeracy assessment of learning materials that the Youth Justice Board has recently commissioned. This will be an important building block for the rest of the strategy.

Indicative timescales have been given to the recommendations. This is a potentially daunting programme and it is vital that its implementation does not destabilise establishments that are under considerable pressure. The Youth Justice Board is therefore advised that if this programme were accepted, it would need to proceed with clear timescales, an early demonstration of positive intent (e.g. the funding and training of significant numbers of learning support assistants) and a constructive dialogue with the key players in Young Offender Institutions.

The scale of the underfunding of education and training within Young Offender Institutions revealed by this study is so considerable that it might require a bid by the Youth Justice Board in the next spending review. If that were the case, it puts even more emphasis on rapidly drawing up a credible education and training plan that will still deliver some significant short-term gains. Equally, it should still be possible to pilot one or two secure colleges.

It is clear that much remains to be done if what is after all a Detention and **Training** Order is to fulfil its intended purpose.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Youth Justice Board leadership

The Board to:

- 1.1 Prepare a strategic plan for education and training. This plan would provide a framework for the development of education and training provision in the secure estate and the transition to the community. It also needs to influence the planning of the Connexions partnerships and more importantly the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). The plan must clarify the respective roles of the YJB, the Prisoners' Learning and Skills Unit at the DfEE and the Prison Service. It must set out the Board's vision for education and training, the rationale for the curriculum for young offenders on Detention and Training Orders, appropriate standards and targets and a clear timetable for implementation.
- 1.2 Equip itself with an in-house education and training team with appropriate experience of education and training for young offenders both in custody and the community; or enter into a strategic partnership/national supporter contract in order to provide the change management expertise.
- 1.3 Design and introduce a curricular framework with appropriate key performance targets that spans education and vocational training within custodial institutions and the transition to the community.
- 1.4 Develop a contracting regime to stimulate new providers of education, training and allied activities to enter the market with a view to a tendering exercise in 2004 for all education and vocational work within the secure estate.

8.2 The Secure College Concept

- 2.1 The YJB should aim to reverse the current approach of running secure institutions which provide education. Instead, the aim should be to enable the establishment of education and training centres where the students are held in secure conditions.
- 2.2 Pilot such an approach, but under direct contract to the YJB with a national support and external evaluation framework.

8.3 *Human resources strategy*

- 3.1 Aim to create a professional, high-status service with its own career structure and nationally recognised qualifications. The terms and conditions should reflect the necessary skills. The service should consist predominantly of full-time staff (80 per cent by 2004).
- 3.2 Devise and implement a coherent programme of preparatory training and continuing professional development for education and training within the secure estate. This programme should integrate teaching and vocational instruction and offer professional progression to all. It must include an accredited training programme for learning support assistants, prison officers, care staff and senior managers in education departments.
- 3.3 This programme should be underpinned by a national programme of INSET.
- 3.4 Use additional funding to create a special educational needs co-ordinator post (SENCO), teams of learning support assistants and educational psychologist posts for all Young Offender Institutions.
- 3.5 Offer golden hellos and other incentives to recruit effective teaching practitioners (over and above existing Prison Service contracts if necessary).
- 3.6 Introduce an education director post working directly to the governor and responsible for all education and vocational training, integrated case management teams and Connexions personal advisers.

8.4 *Assessment, planning and review*

- 4.1 Introduce an integrated and computerised assessment system across the secure estate to replace the current tests used by the Prison Service.
- 4.2 Ensure (through contract) that education departments are integrated into sentence planning, particularly where preparation for post-custodial education and training provision is concerned. Education staff to attend all reviews.
- 4.3 Set targets, monitor and use financial sanctions to ensure that there is 100 per cent completion and transmission rate of ASSET to custodial institutions as a matter of urgency.
- 4.4 Amend ASSET so that it is clear that the education and training section of the document must be passed immediately to the education department. Modify this section so that information as to whether a student was receiving full or part-time

provision prior to custody is recorded, and to ensure that SEN status is recorded properly.

- 4.5 Issue guidance in conjunction with the DfEE to LEAs and Connexions service partnerships (personal advisers have a key new statutory role in relation to SEN assessment) to ensure that crucial SEN information such as individual education plans and statements always speedily accompanies a young person to custody.
- 4.6 Devise and introduce an added-value measure that applies across the custodial and community components of the DTO and includes measures for education/training continuity.
- 4.7 Standardised summative educational assessments should be given to all young people immediately prior to release.
- 4.8 Review existing systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring systems in all young offender institutions.

8.5 *Teaching and learning*

- 5.1 Integrate educational and vocational provision to provide a more balanced, broader and coherent curriculum for all young people.
- 5.2 Devise and introduce an incentive and rewards programme specific to education and training to further elevate the status of learning. This could be linked to regular achievement evenings and formal award ceremonies to celebrate success.
- 5.3 Ensure that there is a coherent approach to educational accommodation and that YJB funds should only be used where there is appropriate advice on design.
- 5.4 The role and resourcing of libraries as learning centres needs specific attention.
- 5.5 Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody to the highest standards that apply to young people in mainstream education, and that YOT supervising officers are accountable for ensuring its transition and continuation in the community part of the sentence.
- 5.6 Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme that has national currency and can be overseen both in custody and in the community.
- 5.7 Set standards for the formal setting of homework for all young people.

8.6 *Individual support*

- 6.1 Set standards for, and fund, dedicated classroom support staff so that young people with weaker literacy and numeracy skills can receive more individual tuition. Initially,

it is recommended that five hours learning support assistant time per week be introduced for all young people whose literacy and numeracy levels are assessed as being below Level Based on the literacy and numeracy profile of the YOI population, this would cost approximately £4 million per year, including the necessary accredited training programme.

- 6.2 Introduce an integrated case management system. This could be based on the approach at Huntercombe and would consist of groups of eight young people, the personal officer, a case worker and the Connexions personal adviser.
- 6.3 Introduce a personal tutorial system to provide a focal point for pastoral care and education planning. Personal tutors should attend all reviews and ensure the integration of education planning within sentence planning.

8.7 Evidence-based practice and quality assurance

- 7.1 Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for engaging young offenders, to bring about the most effective education and training gains in terms of reducing their offending.
- 7.2 Establish a formal education advisory group for each Young Offender Institution (Youth Justice Board to provide a formal induction programme and guidance on the choice of membership).
- 7.3 Pilot a streamlined inspection process that incorporates features of existing inspection regimes but pays particular attention to both parts of the Detention and Training Order's effectiveness.
- 7.4 Commission the preparation of a handbook for education departments. It should contain case studies of promising approaches and provide guidance on how evidence-based practice may be developed and evaluated both in custody and in the community.
- 7.5 Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate (including Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres) so that effective practice can be shared easily and implementation of the education and training strategy can be better co-ordinated.

8.8 Strategic partnership with the FE sector

- 8.1 Negotiate through the Learning and Skills Council and key agencies such as the Association of Colleges a guarantee of full-time courses available immediately on release from custody for all young offenders aged 14 to 18.
- 8.2 Develop jointly with the relevant bodies a training programme for college lecturers and learning support assistants, so that they have the requisite skills to work with juvenile

offenders and are familiar with the assessment systems, teaching and learning styles, and materials used within the secure estate.

8.3 Negotiate with local LSCs for funding for a college-based member of staff for each YOT.

8.4 Pilot a grid for learning to link up FE colleges, Young Offender Institutions and YOTs.

8.9 *Connexions service*

9.1 Negotiate with the Connexions National Unit provision within the contracts with their 47 partnerships for personal advisers dedicated to young offenders on custodial sentences. These advisers must have a protected caseload and be appointed and managed by the education director within Young Offender Institutions, but spend a significant amount of time in their home YOT area (see integrated case management system recommendation above).

8.10 *ICT*

10.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the secure estate, linking these establishments to YOTs and FE colleges. This would provide vital linkages for these dispersed and isolated staff groups and facilitate distance learning for the students and transmission of their learning records.

10.2 If the Board is not to prescribe the hardware and software to be purchased, at the least it ought to provide specifications in the following areas: assessing young peoples' learning needs; smart cards for recording attendance and other information; recording young people's learning gains and other progress measures; interactive learning materials; timetabling systems; intranets for students and staff; training for all staff.

10.3 Review the strengths and weaknesses of the Quantum project and consider contracting relationships separate to this agreement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) commissioned ECOTEC Research and Consulting to carry out an audit of the education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate, and a linked review of education provision for young people pre- and post-custody.

The research aims to:

- establish key baseline information to help strategic planning; and
- ensure consistency of service delivery across the three sectors that comprise the newly unified secure estate.

The research has been conceptualised in three distinct phases. Phase 1 involved an audit of the education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate. This took place during March 2001. Phase 2 involved interviewing young people who experienced custody in March 2001 about their education and training careers pre- and post-custody. After release, follow-up interviews on their Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) were used to assess their reintegration, and to examine whether any gains made in custody had been continued in the community. Phase 3 has run in parallel with this, and has tested the proposition that in areas where there is a high level of non-attendance at school there is also a high rate of youth crime.

Research data has been gathered from six main sources: the Youth Justice Board's secure accommodation placement database (SACHS); the ASSET assessment system; Basic Skills Agency literacy and numeracy test scores; interviews with young people in custody; interviews with young people on release; and interviews with Youth Offending Team (Yot) supervising officers.

Pre-custody issues examined include:

- the proportion of young people who were in education or training;
- those who were excluded or persistent non-attenders of mainstream school;
- those in full or part-time employment; and
- those with statements of special educational need (SEN) or at other levels on the SEN code of practice.

With regard to post-release experiences the review assessed:

- how many young people had full or part-time training and education (or employment) places arranged upon release;
- how many of these arrangements were full or part-time;
- how quickly education and training was arranged after release; and
- how many left custody with no arrangements in place.

Profile of the sample interviewed

The mean and mode age for the population of the secure estate is 17. The sample interviewed was skewed towards the younger age group for methodological reasons. The ethnic mix of the sample matched well with the overall population of the secure estate.

Mainstream educational career

Detachment from mainstream education begins at an early age. At the age of 11, 17 per cent of the cohort were no longer in mainstream education. The numbers detaching accelerate up to the age of 15, by which time 80 per cent were out of mainstream education. Once detached from the mainstream, reintegration becomes more difficult, especially for those over 14. Detachment is often accompanied by a move to part-time provision and a high number of moves of placement. This involves a high degree of disruption for the young people.

Wider analysis of ASSET forms, sections 3 and 4, reveals that 45 per cent of young people within the custodial population had experienced permanent exclusion from an educational placement.

Placement type immediately prior to custody

Analysis of ASSET showed that over one-third of the young people had received no education at all in the six months prior to custody. Local and individual circumstances appear to determine the provision for young people outside of mainstream education prior to custody.

Mainstream school is nominally the most significant provider of pre-custodial education. However, attendance figures show that the number of teaching hours actually delivered to the pre-custody sample were up to 75 per cent less than for their peers who had successfully sustained their mainstream education. Special schools and pupil referral units provided 10 and 11 per cent respectively of the pre-custodial education of the sample for those of compulsory school age.

Within the sample, the level of part-time educational placements prior to custody was found to be high.

Learning profiles

The results for those who had been tested show that just over 50 per cent were not functioning at the level of the average 11 year old at the point of entry to the Young Offender Institution (YOI). There is no repeat testing at any stage in the sentence to judge the added value of custodial, or community education.

Special educational needs

This was shown to be an area of major weakness in provision at YOIs. The audit of the secure estate found that many of the teaching groups contained young people with special educational needs of some kind. However, SEN statements are rarely received, and little information is contained in ASSET forms to enable the institutions to provide appropriate specialist support for these young people.

Young people's views on education

The researchers found the contributions of the young people open, detailed and consistent. The young people did not describe themselves as disaffected from education or anti-school. They rated mainstream education highly, but referred to the need for individual attention, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

A number of young people found education in custody preferable to their pre-custody experiences, and 45 per cent found their education within custody good or excellent. However, in conjunction with these positives, the young people could be very critical of the teaching staff and the learning environment.

Anxiety was expressed about the lost academic opportunities within the secure establishments because of their inability to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and continuity with standard examination courses.

Education and training in custody

The introduction of the DTO has led to a much greater throughput of young people within the secure estate. Education within the secure estate is turbulent, with frequent disruptions to the teaching process. The formation of stable learning groups is virtually impossible in these institutions. There are poor contacts between the secure institutions and external organisations, including poor transfer of information and poor levels of continuity, and the use of placements in college or work is limited. High attainers prior to custody appear to suffer negative consequences because of the inability of the institutions to deliver the national curriculum.

Almost 40 per cent of the young people were very positive about training and education post-custody. The views of Yot supervising officers echoed these findings with 45 per cent assessing the young person as more positive about education training and only 10 per cent believing them less positive than before they entered custody.

Transition to the community

The ineffectiveness of the planning systems is highlighted by the failure to secure a smooth and timely transition from education in custody to appropriate and consistent education in the community. Even after one month following discharge from custody over half (58 per cent) of the young people had no education or training arranged. Only one in six young people released from custody had education, training or employment immediately available. For those who did have education, training or employment opportunities the majority were half-time or less. Fewer than one in 10 young people had full-time education training or employment available during the first month following their release on a Detention and Training Order.

The immediate effect of custody appears to have been to double the numbers who had no provision available to them at all compared to the period immediately prior to custody and to increase the proportion that had only part-time provision available.

Assessment, planning and review

There is little evidence of a continuum in relation to education and training. Transmission of information is tardy and limited in scope. ASSET records information inadequately. A quarter to

a third of ASSETs fail to arrive with the young person at the secure institution (though Local Authority Secure Units have a policy of ‘no ASSET, no place’). SEN statements, care plans and individual education action plans rarely reach the institutions.

Their training plans had little detailed content regarding education and training and it was rare for these aspects to be specific, measurable, achievable, and with timescales. There was little reference to how these plans would be implemented in the community part of the Detention and Training Order and they tended to focus almost completely on the custodial aspects of the sentence.

Conclusions

There is strong evidence of a failing system for meeting the education and training needs of young people at risk of offending or re-offending. Research suggests that a lack of proper educational provision increases the propensity to offend, especially for those outside mainstream education. Young people still of school age are receiving low levels of education, as well as education which lacks quality and diversity. Educational policy for young people at risk of offending should concentrate on the out-of-school population rather than focusing further resources on the mainstream.

Management information systems fail to track young people in their out-of-school career, and inter-agency links are poor. As a result, gaps in the resources and expertise required to rectify the situation are disguised.

The two separate parts of the DTO comprise a fault line running through the criminal justice system, as they remain two separate systems. Without change, the DTO will not decrease the risk associated with offending, through greater access to educational provision.

The very low levels of literacy and numeracy among young people under DTOs present a further risk factor, because these young people’s access to employment and continuing educational opportunities is restricted as a result. The educational system must be geared up to accommodate the high levels of support needed for these young people.

The challenge for the Youth Justice Board is to increase the coherence of the DTO, and particularly to enhance the educational component of the order. The YOIs are strategically important but very underfunded, and will require capacity building. Further work needs to be undertaken with all sectors involved in DTO provision to enable a smooth and timely transition into the community component of the order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations complement those put forward in the report ‘An Audit of Education Provision within the Juvenile Secure Estate’. Some of those recommendations have already been adopted by the Youth Justice Board, while some are closely connected to the issues discussed in this report and so are reproduced here.

These recommendations are designed to accelerate the responsiveness of the criminal justice system in both the community and custody in ensuring effective education and training provision for those young people on DTOs. In addition, the recommendations aim to bring about a step-change in the dosage of education and training received by these young people, by integrating the necessary planning processes, and equipping the relevant professionals with the essential knowledge and skills around which an effective infrastructure can be put in place.

Youth Justice Board leadership

The Board to:

- Ensure that all relevant agencies within the criminal justice system and in education appreciate that the Detention and Training Order is an integrated sentence which provides the teaching and learning framework within which all education and training will proceed. The statutory duty of preventing offending must be re-emphasised in defining the role of local education authorities (LEAs), schools and Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) in providing full-time appropriate education and training for all young people on DTOs.
- Prepare a strategic plan for education and training for young offenders on Detention and Training Orders, although it could be widened to include each stage of criminal justice intervention from prevention onwards. This plan would provide a framework for the development of education and training provision in the secure estate and the transition to the community. It also needs to influence the planning of the Connexions partnerships, and more importantly the 47 local LSCs. The plan must clarify the respective roles of the YJB, the Prisoners’ Learning and Skills Unit at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and the Prison Service. It must set out the Board’s vision for education and training, the rationale for the curriculum for young offenders on Detention and Training Orders, appropriate standards and targets, and a clear timetable for implementation.
- Extend the recently commissioned national specification for education and training for Young Offender Institutions to the education and training to be provided in the second half of the DTO, in the community.
- Prepare a protocol for Youth Offending Teams to act as the template for their written agreement with local LSCs and LEAs that is now required by the Youth Justice Board. This protocol will remind key agencies of their statutory duties and will contain clauses to enable effective local monitoring. This standardised approach will enable the Youth Justice Board to be prescriptive about what is acceptable in this context, and will facilitate monitoring on a national basis.

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- Modify Youth Justice Plans and the relevant guidance for quarterly returns so that there can be closer scrutiny of the speed with which education and training provision is arranged, its quality and the outcomes by the end of a DTO.
 - Negotiate with the DfES for the production of guidance on the education of young people in the criminal justice system (particularly those on DTOs). This would parallel the comprehensive guidance issued by the DfES on the education of young people in public care. It would incorporate monitoring procedures for the out-of-school population for each LEA, and set in place convergence targets for young people leaving custody with the national targets on attainment for all young people (again this would parallel aspects of the Quality Protects initiative for the education of young people in public care). Agreement should be secured from the Connexions National Unit that all young people leaving custody will already have been informed of the personal adviser in their home authority and have immediate access to this adviser.
 - Amend the national standards relating to DTOs to require that individual learning plans spanning both the custodial and community part of the sentence are in place within 10 working days; that all young people will be transferred to the community with a summative assessment of their progress in the first half of the sentence; and that there will be a literacy and numeracy re-test at the end of the sentence.
 - Develop a contracting regime to stimulate new providers of education, training and allied activities to enter the market with a view to providing services in both the custodial and community parts of the Detention and Training Order.

The secure college concept

- The YJB should aim to reverse the current approach of running secure institutions which provide education. Instead, the aim should be to enable the establishment of education and training centres where students are held in secure conditions. These colleges should not concern themselves solely with education in secure settings, but should be more outward-looking, developing strong links with local education providers and also with services in the young person's locality.
- Introduce a 'learning programme manager' post into each YOI. This person will ensure that an integrated individual learning plan based on full diagnostic assessment of learning needs will be prepared for each young person and will apply to both the custodial and community parts of the DTO.
- Establish personal advisers working within each YOI. The advisers' role from the point of sentence will be to accelerate and make far more effective the education planning process. They will do this by visiting the young person's home area, gathering relevant documentation, and assessing and brokering education or training provision in conjunction with the Yot supervising officer and the home Connexions personal adviser. These advisers

will also be the contact point for monitoring progress during the community part of the sentence, particularly in gathering outcome information.

- These adviser posts to complement the work of the learning programme manager; the advisers could be members of integrated case management teams within YOIs. With a recommended caseload of no more than 10, this would dramatically enhance the outreach capacity of YOIs. This system of advisers could be established effectively through a national contracting process as it could be run on a national or at least on a regional basis, given the catchment areas of YOIs.
- Judge the performance of YOIs against new measures of added value which include how far they have prepared young people for reintegration into education and training in the community, and young people's re-test scores at the end of the community part of the Detention and Training Order.
- Establish a formal education advisory group for each YOI (the Youth Justice Board to provide a formal induction programme and guidance on the choice of membership).

Human resources strategy

- Produce guidance and training so that practitioners within Youth Offending Teams are equipped to broker appropriate education and training provision from mainstream schools, further education (FE) colleges, training providers, pupil referral units, and other alternative provision. In addition, practitioners should have at least a working knowledge of relevant issues relating to the curriculum, accreditation, assessment, SEN and National Records of Achievement.
- Training for supervising officers should incorporate education and training issues as a major theme and should include visits/placements in education departments within YOIs and education within the community, such as FE colleges.

Assessment, planning and review

- Introduce an integrated and computerised assessment system across the secure estate and Yots to replace the current tests used by the Prison Service.
- Ensure (through contract) that education departments are integrated into sentence planning, particularly where preparation for post-custodial education and training provision is concerned. Education staff to attend all reviews.
- Amend ASSET so that it is clear that the education and training section of the document must be passed immediately to the education department. Modify this section so that information as to whether a student was receiving full or part-time provision prior to custody is recorded, and to ensure that SEN status is recorded properly.

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- Issue guidance, in conjunction with the DfES, to LEAs and Connexions partnerships (personal advisers have a key new statutory role in relation to SEN assessment) to ensure that crucial SEN information such as individual education plans and statements always speedily accompanies a young person to custody.
 - Devise and introduce an added-value measure that applies across the custodial and community components of the DTO and includes measures for education/training continuity. These measures should incorporate standardised assessments of young people's views on the quality of the education and training provision both in custody and in the community.
 - Give standardised summative educational assessments to all young people immediately prior to release.
 - Review existing systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring systems in all YOIs. Establish whether or not data on attendance and outcomes in the community could be recorded on the same system.

Teaching and learning

- Devise and introduce an incentive and rewards programme specific to education and training to further elevate the status of learning. This could be linked to regular achievement evenings and formal award ceremonies to celebrate success. Yot supervising officers should ensure that this programme occurs in the community part of the sentence as well as in custody.
- Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody to the highest standards that apply to young people in mainstream education, and that Yot supervising officers are accountable for ensuring its transition and continuation in the community part of the sentence.
- Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme that has national currency and can be overseen both in custody and in the community.
- Design and introduce a curricular framework with appropriate key performance targets that spans education and vocational training within custodial institutions and the transition to the community.
- Ensure that the new curriculum being developed has reintegration as a key theme, incorporating the necessary knowledge, planning skills and behavioural changes which may be necessary to facilitate this process on release from custody. It may be that for those on two-month custodial sentences, this reintegration theme forms the core of their education work.

Evidence-based practice and quality assurance

- Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for engaging young offenders, to bring about the most effective education and training gains in terms of reducing their offending.
- Commission research into establishing the true scale of out-of-school populations in Yot areas and the impact on offending, to provide essential benchmark data. Educational risk factors could then be quantified and mapped against each stage of intervention in the criminal justice system so that each Yot and education agencies can target their resources more effectively.
- Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate so that effective practice can be shared easily, and implementation of the education and training strategy can be better co-ordinated. This intranet could also be open to Yot staff, and could help to establish Young Offender Institutions as centres of expertise and support for those in the community.

Strategic partnership with the FE sector

- Negotiate through the Learning and Skills Council and key agencies such as the Association of Colleges a guarantee of full-time courses available immediately on release from custody for all young offenders aged 14 to 18.
- Develop jointly with the relevant bodies a training programme for college lecturers and learning support assistants, so that they have the requisite skills to work with juvenile offenders and are familiar with the assessment systems, teaching and learning styles, and materials used within the secure estate.
- Negotiate with local LSCs for funding for a college-based member of staff for each Yot.
- Pilot a grid for learning to link up FE colleges, Young Offender Institutions and Yots.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

- Develop and implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the secure estate, linking secure establishments to Yots and FE colleges. This would provide vital linkages for these dispersed and isolated staff groups, and facilitate distance learning for students and transmission of their learning records.

If the Board is not to prescribe the hardware and software to be purchased, at the least it ought to provide specifications in the following areas: assessing young people's learning needs; smart cards for recording attendance and other information; recording young people's learning gains and other progress measures; interactive learning materials; timetabling systems; intranets for students and staff; and training for all staff.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social policy background

There are two main areas where education appears to be significant in creating a likelihood of offending:

- educational under-achievement, particularly with respect to literacy and numeracy; and
- permanent exclusion and non-attendance at school.

The reform of education is one of the Government's key social policy priorities. But despite the importance of education to the criminal justice system, these reforms in themselves will not necessarily have the greatest potential impact on reducing offending. The sheer plethora of education initiatives may militate against this, as their scale both limits the knowledge of non-educationalists and makes educational institutions more inward-looking as they concentrate on restructuring. The audit of education and training in the juvenile secure estate, for example, demonstrated clearly that education in this sector is now lagging far behind the mainstream in nearly every way.

These reforms present considerable challenges which must also be seen in the context of the mainstream education and skills agenda exemplified in the DfES through the work of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, the Adult Basic Skills Strategy unit, the Connexions Service National Unit and the Prisoners Learning and Skills Unit. There will be major curricular shifts over the next two to three years principally involving the type of learning available for youngsters post 14 coupled to the advent of individual learning accounts. The divide between school type learning and FE type learning will continue to be eroded and the role of ICT as both a curriculum and learning tool will increase.

Many of the reforms – such as the literacy and numeracy initiatives, learning mentors, the introduction of threshold assessment or the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) – could, with some adaptations, be transferred to those involved in the education of young offenders in custody and in the community.

It is essential that all large-scale educational initiatives take full account of the Youth Justice Board's priorities. For example, the Connexions service has considerable potential to help the youth justice system to meet its statutory aim of preventing offending, but the service's latest guidance (on the allocation of personal advisers to young people being released from custody) indicates that young offenders are not its highest priority. Similarly, the draft national strategy issued by the new Learning and Skills Council makes no mention of the learning needs of young offenders.

In the implementation of large-scale educational initiatives, it is easy for particular aspects which are of crucial significance to those working in youth justice to drift. For example, by September 2002 every LEA must provide full-time, appropriate education for all young people excluded from school for more than 15 days. To meet the young offenders' needs revealed in this study, if typical of the problem nationally, the inference must be drawn that a massive expansion of out-of-school places needs to be put in place during the next 12 months.

The pressure on individual government departments to achieve implementation of new programmes could reduce the opportunity for significant joint working. The findings of both the previous audit report and this review imply the need for significant investment of new resources, possibly through bids in the next spending review. Hopefully, there are areas where the DfES will work in tandem with the Youth Justice Board. There is an obvious potential synergy in combining research approaches, particularly in the development of evidence-based practice for educationalists working with young people with multiple problems.

1.2 Evidence-based practice and education

Evidence-based practice is perhaps the key concept underpinning implementation of the recent reforms of the criminal justice system. The emergence and acceptance of evidence-based practice has, however, proceeded at a different pace across health, criminal justice, social care and education – arguably in this descending order (Trinder and Reynolds).

In most professional fields, the evolution of evidence-based practice is closely linked to the gap between research and practice. But in education much of the debate has centred around the alleged inadequacy of much of modern educational research. The term itself has only entered the vocabulary of educationalists comparatively recently, and then principally in the context of mainstream school teaching. It is therefore relatively underdeveloped, and as a leading educational commentator has asserted:

“there are few areas which have yielded a corpus of research evidence regarded as scientifically sound and as a worthwhile resource to guide professional action [in education]”
(Hargreaves, 1996)

Educational research has not supplied a body of well-grounded knowledge about the efficiency and effectiveness of various pedagogic techniques, and the most recent authoritative study made no mention of how these techniques might apply to young offenders (Mortimore, 1999).

The needs of those in the criminal justice system have not been examined by researchers from an educational perspective, but equally there are limitations in the research work of criminologists where education is concerned. Remarkably, a comprehensive survey of research on the antisocial behaviour of young people (Rutter, Giller and Hegel, 1998) did not make any reference to the phenomenon of rapidly rising school exclusions and the linkages with offending in the 1990s.

The findings from research which has identified a positive impact on reducing offending are summarised below, in broad principles that underpin the development of effective programmes. The principles, as summarised by McGuire (1995), are as follows:

- **Risk classification** – the level and intensity of intervention should be matched to the assessed seriousness of offending and/or risk of re-offending.
- **Criminogenic needs** – the priority is to ensure that programmes are focused on those needs or features of an individual offender that are most closely related or contribute to offending.

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- **Responsivity** – tailoring programmes so that they fit well with the preferred learning styles of individuals and are complemented by the teaching style of staff.
 - **Community based** – on balance, the research, although limited in some ways, indicates that programmes based in the community lead to more effective outcomes than those based in custodial environments.
 - **Intervention modality** – those programmes that match the multiple criminogenic needs of offenders with multi-modal approaches are more likely to be effective, particularly if they have a strong emphasis on a cognitive behavioural methodology.
 - **Programme integrity** – clarity of purpose, process and intended outcomes are critical elements of effective programmes. These elements are to be supported with adequate resources, including appropriately trained staff, and with rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
 - **Dosage** – the intensity and duration of programmes need to be commensurate with the seriousness or persistence of offending.

It is useful to look at these broad principles in the context of an assessment of the role and effectiveness of the DTO's education component.

These core principles provide a useful framework for educationalists to assess and adapt where necessary their pedagogy, curricula and all other elements of their service delivery to young offenders in both custody and the community. Educational research could perhaps usefully inform the further development of how these principles are translated into practice for those who work specifically in the criminal justice system.

The research by criminologists provides useful pointers for the direction that more educationally oriented research needs to take. The relevance of many of the findings to educationalists is clear. The well-established causal link between reduced offending and cognitive change, for example, illustrates the great potential of formal educational programmes in this area.

Work undertaken on the development of differentiation (i.e. teaching styles and materials) to provide the best fit with individual learners is not only closely related to the principle of responsivity, but may also contain lessons for practitioners delivering other programmes.

Given that compulsory education occupies 15,000 hours of a child and young person's life, formal education is potentially of critical importance in the context of findings that emphasise the importance of dosage. Again, the practice skills of educationalists in taking into account short concentration spans, working with learners who have repeatedly failed, and using imaginative and experiential techniques to re-engage them are essential skills that should be applied across the criminal justice system.

When it comes to judging the effectiveness of interventions in custody, there are interesting parallels between, on the one hand, community interventions and mainstream education and, on

the other, custody and segregated education. In terms of outcomes, the relative ineffectiveness of custodial interventions is echoed by that of pupil referral units and special schools. There may be a common cause. Robinson (1995) makes the point that:

“the impressive results obtained in the community suggest offenders gain more when they learn cognitive skills in the settings where they most need to directly apply the new skills – on the street.”

This has a resonance with the findings of educational research that positive behaviour, when it is learned in ‘abnormal’ environments, does not easily survive the challenge of transferring to a school, college or workplace (Stephenson, 2000).

Several studies (for example, Hobbs and Hook, 2001) have identified positive changes in young people’s attitudes within the custodial institution, and within segregated education institutions. This research project has produced very similar findings, but judged in terms of post-release reintegration into the community and reductions in re-offending, these changes have been seen to be ephemeral.

It has been suggested (Lipsey, 1995), however, that comparable outcomes could be achieved in either custody or the community, but that the essential elements of programme design and delivery need to be different in the two environments. It may be that the research finding that programme design and delivery in custody have more impact than the characteristics of the young offenders, and vice versa in the community, contains important messages for the design of education and training programmes.

There is very little literature on the impact of the transition from custody to the community, and none in relation to education (Hobbs and Hook, 2000). It is clear that this area is an urgent priority for the design and testing of rapid, well-structured models as these may be the keystone to lock gains made in custody as well as the potential gains to be made in the community.

It is an interesting question as to whether formal education should be regarded as a component of a multi-modal intervention programme, or whether it should provide the framework for other, more specific and lower dosage interventions. For example, it was found recently (Hobbs and Hook, 2001) and replicated in this study that many practitioners within custody prefer other behavioural change programmes to be integrated within education. Such an approach could be viewed as more likely to enable positive behavioural and attitudinal change, as these programmes would be proceeding within education an everyday, normal activity that in the outside world was a universal service and therefore much more acceptable to young people. Equally, there is a reasonable case for educationalists to look at some of the evolving tools of youth justice interventions in terms of their own practice.

It is clear that there is much potential for evidence-based practice to provide a framework for educationalists. Similarly, formal education must be viewed as being of critical importance when judged against the core principles of evidence-based practice summarised above.

It must be appreciated that there is a significant research gap which, if not filled in the near future, could not only impair the effectiveness of education for young offenders, but also have a potential negative impact on reducing the risks of re-offending. For example, the effect of such low levels of educational attainment or learning difficulties (as revealed in this review) on the effectiveness of intervention programmes is unknown. It is not simply that the very low reading skills revealed in this report might compromise the learning in the programmes, but equally that limited oracy could be a barrier for interventions such as programmes to overcome offending behaviour.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the review

This review aims to provide an authoritative picture of the provision for, and educational experiences of, young people prior to being sentenced to custody and post-release.

Areas for detailed examination include:

- the proportion of young people who were in full or part-time education or training prior to custody;
- those who were excluded or were persistent non-attenders;
- those in full or part-time employment; and
- those with statements of special educational need (SEN) or at other levels on the SEN code of practice.

With regard to post-release experiences, the review assessed:

- how many young people had full or part-time training and education (or employment) places arranged upon release;
- how many of these arrangements were full or part-time and why;
- how many went to education and training within a month of release; and
- how many left with no arrangements in place.

1.4 Methodology and data sources

Data was gathered from six main sources: the Youth Justice Board's secure accommodation placement database (SACHS), ASSET, Basic Skills Agency literacy and numeracy test scores, interviews with young people in custody, interviews with young people on release, and interviews with Yot supervising officers.

The custodial population in mid-March 2001 was taken as the starting point. The sample of young people selected for interview was drawn from a list of all those due to be released by mid-April. The total number of young people to be released from YOIs during this period was 415 (excluding those who were already 18 or would become 18 during this period). The aim was to interview approximately 200 young people, i.e. close to half of the custodial population due to be released in this month.

The sample was weighted towards young people of compulsory school age, as they formed a minority within custody and sufficient numbers were needed for the study. Although information was gathered on the whole of the secure estate, including Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres, all but five of the young people in the sample came from Young Offender Institutions. As the study concentrated on YOIs, it does not reflect the gender balance of the custodial population, because only three females were interviewed. In all other respects, the sample appears representative of the profile of the whole of the custodial population.

During the first phase, research was carried out within the secure estate. In all, 109 young people were interviewed. This shortfall was due to difficulties within particular establishments on the days when the researchers visited, and because a significant number of the young people were not at the particular establishment that the SACHS placement database indicated. The data gathered from the young people asked them about their educational experiences *before* and *during* custody. During Phase 1, it was intended that page 5 of ASSET (sections 3 and 4 on statutory education, and employment, training and further education) would be collected for everyone within the secure estate at the time of the research, in order to provide a snapshot of the whole DTO population. Of the total DTO custodial population of 2,376, it was possible to locate 1,157 copies of ASSET – 49 per cent. This was on the basis of quite detailed file searches at the institutions and a considerable amount of follow-up work. Very detailed literacy and numeracy scores were received for 1,680 young people in custody in mid-March – 71 per cent.

For Phase 2, the aim was to track all the young people who were interviewed in the first phase, and to ask them (and their supervising officers) about their post-custody educational experiences. In addition, a further 100 young people were targeted in order to review their educational experiences pre-, during and post-custody. Phase 1 of the research took place in February and March 2001. Phase 2 took place in May and early June 2001.

In both Phases 1 and 2, the research participation was voluntary, though a small incentive was offered to the young people for taking part in Phase 2. Despite this, there was a very high non-attendance rate for the young people at pre-arranged interviews, particularly in Phase 2. A number of young people from the first phase were also lost from the sample in Phase 2 because of factors such as moving to another area, absconding, being gate arrested, or returning to the

secure estate within a matter of days. In addition, there were a number of young people whose Yot area reported them as not known, or not having been released into their supervision on the expected date. Where data was available on the young person within the Yot, the relevant supervising officer was interviewed to review the educational experiences of the young person.

There was thus considerable attrition between Phase 1 and Phase 2 regarding the sample of young people. Of the Phase 1 sample, 11 remained in custody or were gate arrested, five absconded and six were not known to the Yot. Further, a number of Yot teams did not co-operate with the research within the given timetable, and had to be excluded from the tracking data. This was despite initial letters from the Youth Justice Board, repeated follow-up calls and e-mails from the research team, and eventually direct phone calls from staff at the Youth Justice Board. However, all this was to little avail with several Yots.

The final interview totals for the research were as follows:

Total interviews with young people across Phases 1 and 2 – 160, which represents just under 40 per cent of those released in the period of the study.

Interviews with supervising officers – 95 from 47 Yots. Where possible, Yots with high levels of custodial disposals were targeted.

The Phase 2 interviews with young people were carried out in a location recommended by their supervising officers. Typical locations were the Yot offices, the young person's place of education, or other suitable venues such as the offices of the careers service.

The interviews were semi-structured. Interviews with young people lasted up to 30 minutes; interviews with supervising officers were slightly shorter. A proportion of the interviews with supervising officers were carried out by telephone.

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was codified into fields and entered onto a database. Quantitative data was analysed using Excel software. Qualitative data was content analysed to establish where there were patterns and clusters of results. In addition, more detailed case studies and profiles of the experiences of young people were built from the qualitative data.

Full ASSET forms were collected from all the young people interviewed. This information was used to provide additional data on specific aspects of the young people's educational background and lifestyle. This data was also codified and entered onto the database and used to test the significance of the sample against the wider DTO population, using sections 3 and 4 of ASSET collected during Phase 1.

2.0 MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 Overview

The picture revealed by both the quantitative and qualitative evidence from this review depicts a chronic systemic failure in meeting the education and training needs of young offenders to such an extent that there is a significant increase in their propensity to offend. While the research base (let alone any body of evidence-based practice) is limited in this area, there is growing evidence that detachment from mainstream education is associated with a significant escalation of risk in offending.

There is abundant evidence of drift in terms of intervention with these young people as they become progressively detached from mainstream education. There is an unequivocal failure to provide an adequate volume of educational opportunities, in that the majority of the group have had either no or less than half-time provision made available for them while still of compulsory school age. Similarly, there is evidence that the quality and diversity of these educational opportunities are not appropriate for their learning needs.

From a youth justice perspective, educational social policy makes some unhelpful distinctions between supposed categories of young people, such as between those who are excluded and those who are non-attending. This can have a perverse impact as, for example, downward pressure on exclusions can result in schools adopting more informal methods to detach young people (see the Phase 3 report). What are already usually very limited monitoring systems are further compromised from a youth justice perspective when applied to these separate categories. The experience of many practitioners in the youth justice system, along with the indications from the Phase 3 report, is that the fact of being outside mainstream education rather than the route taken is far more significant in terms of risk of offending. Social policy should therefore focus on reducing the stock of out-of-school and training populations rather than restricting particular routes, as this simply displaces the flows.

Management information systems are notoriously weak in this area and fail both to track young people along the trajectory of their out-of-school career and to link horizontally with the systems of other agencies, which are nearly always involved. This may be partly symptomatic of diffused accountability and a jostling between education or social care, health and criminal justice agencies on who should take the lead. The lack of hard data on the lives of these young people does, however unconsciously, conveniently disguise the gaps in the resources and expertise required to meet their educational and training needs. Resources are currently still going to mainstream schools for young people who are manifestly detached from these institutions. Similarly, from September 2002, LEAs will have a duty to provide a full-time and appropriate education for all those excluded from school for more than 15 days. This research did not reveal any evidence that LEAs nationally would be able to fulfil this requirement where young people being released from custody are concerned.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that youth justice reforms have accelerated the throughput of young people in custody. There has not been a corresponding change in working practices, infrastructure and provision to enable more rapid intervention to occur. In fact for

many young people, particularly those on short sentences, the custodial episode may have further loosened existing ties – however tenuous – to the education and training system.

Of equal concern is the abundant evidence that in the context of education/training, which is the most important intervention in terms of ‘dosage’, the Detention and Training Order is a binary sentence. There is extremely limited continuity between education and training in custody and in the community. The length of time taken to arrange education and training provision for those released from YOIs, and the often part-time nature of this provision when it is arranged, were seen as significant risk factors for offending both by young people and by their supervising officers.

2.2 Detachment from mainstream education

Approximately 80 per cent of the sample appear to have formally ended their ties with mainstream education between the ages of 11 and 16. Of the 20 per cent who remained on a school roll, most had merely a nominal relationship with the school, with very lengthy periods of complete non-attendance – several years in some cases. The dynamics of detachment often involve multiple educational placements and a move to part-time education, and can affect some young people such as African-Caribbean males disproportionately. The importance of this as a feature of young people who end up receiving custodial sentences implies that it should be given a very high priority at any point in a young person’s involvement with the criminal justice process, from final-warning interventions onwards.

Clearly, permanent and fixed-term exclusions figure prominently as reasons given for becoming detached from mainstream school. But for just over half the sample it is very difficult to perceive any real distinctions of need and behaviour. In a given situation, a formal disciplinary exclusion may have occurred, but equally there could have been a statement of SEN leading to placement in a special school, part-time provision within a further education (FE) college, or on occasion authorised absence by the school.

Whatever the ostensible reason, once detached it was rare for young people aged over 14 ever to return to mainstream education. The disruptive influence of a custodial experience on coursework and exam preparation, and its accompanying stigma, could also sever the links with schools and colleges for the minority of young people who were still attached and achieving prior to custody.

2.3 Education and training provision prior to custody

Between a quarter and a third of the young people had no education/training available for them prior to their entry into custody. Of those who had provision arranged in either mainstream or alternative education, over a third had four hours or fewer a week and over half had nine hours or fewer arranged for them. Compared with their peers in mainstream school, the sample group had only about one-third of the total teaching and learning hours made available to them.

However, when non-participation was taken into account, this group was receiving approximately 15 per cent of the hours received by the equivalent mainstream group with

average attendance. In fact, a significant proportion (29 per cent) were still on school rolls when they entered custody, but the great majority of these had not been attending at all, some not for several years. Although the groups attending each particular type of alternative provision were small, more hours per placement tended to be offered by FE colleges than by pupil referral units and attendance was higher.

2.4 Education and training in custody

Education and training provision in custody tends to have significant weaknesses. The curriculum is not appropriate to the learning needs of many of the young people, individual support is often insufficient, and education and training programmes do not link well with other provision such as offending behaviour programmes. It is a turbulent environment with frequent disruption and cancellation of lessons. The new shorter sentences, coupled with institutional transfers, create a considerable degree of instability.

Sentence planning does not effectively incorporate education. Most young people are unaware of their planned educational placement on release. Any added value is measured in a fairly limited way. Preparation for reintegration into education or training in the community as part of the sentence is limited or non-existent.

There is evidence to suggest that young people who were sustaining themselves prior to custody in mainstream school or college and were relatively high attainers suffer particularly negative consequences. Young Offender Institutions are not geared up to deliver the full national curriculum, let alone GCE A-levels. The attenuated links between the professionals concerned with education in custody and the host school or college can result in a whole academic year being lost despite a relatively short sentence.

The introduction of the DTO has greatly accelerated the throughput of young people within the custodial system. The use of shorter sentences such as two and four-month custodial episodes means that Young Offender Institutions have to cope with high rates of turnover. The processing of such large numbers of young people in such short periods of time creates instability across the whole of an institution's regime.

These rates of turnover are being compounded by other factors where, for example, some establishments are now taking young people on remand. Transfers between Young Offender Institutions are not infrequent (between one-quarter and one-third of young people identified from the YJB's placement database and designated for interview were found not to be at that particular YOI). Little evidence was seen that the move's impact on education was taken into consideration.

The formation of stable learning groups becomes extremely difficult if not impossible in these circumstances. This affects the quality of lesson planning and the necessary differentiation of work for young people. It also undoubtedly depresses morale and reduces the effectiveness of planning with young people. The often ad hoc nature of educational provision is also exacerbated.

In addition, the Youth Justice Board needs to remedy the serious deficit in specialists such as educational psychologists, SEN co-ordinators and basic skills co-ordinators. The education departments simply do not have sufficient full-time teaching practitioners, learning support assistants or specialists. Consequently, there is a widespread failure to meet the special educational needs of the young people.

An appropriate curriculum for these young people needs to take full account of their very low levels of literacy and numeracy, the fact that they have often been outside full-time learning for a considerable period of time, and that their average sentence length is only four months.

Despite these weaknesses, the education and training provided in custody was for many young people the first significant formal learning undertaken in a considerable period of time. For others it represented a significant increase in the number of hours of learning per week. In these cases, education provided in custody could be seen as a real improvement. However, this only throws into relief the failure to secure an effective transition to education in the community.

2.5 The literacy and numeracy profile of young people in custody

One of the significant contributions made by YOIs to the education of these young people is by ensuring that there is consistent benchmarking of their literacy and numeracy levels on entry into custody. By using a standardised Basic Skills Agency test (in contrast to the LASUs and STCs), YOIs can achieve a reasonably accurate snapshot. No such standardised assessment takes place in the community.

Of the total YOI population, the study found that 10 per cent were functionally below that of the average seven year old in literacy and 12 per cent in numeracy. Nearly 20 per cent were functioning at or below the level of the average seven year old in literacy and almost a third (31 per cent) in numeracy.

Over half of the YOI population (51 per cent in literacy and 52 per cent in numeracy) were not functioning at the level of the average 11 year old on entry into the institution. Given that the average age of the custodial population in YOIs was 17, then the scale of the deficit compared to the general population of their peers can be appreciated.

Over one-third of those of compulsory school age had a reading age of seven or less; more than two-thirds were functioning below the level of an average 11 year old. Approximately 50 per cent were functioning at or below the numeracy level of an average seven year old.

The value of this baseline testing is negated in that there is no repeat testing to judge value added in custody or subsequently in the community. There is a methodological problem in that no current tests are valid if repeated within six months. In the custodial part of the sentence, this creates difficulties for most of the young people on the shorter DTOs. However, it offers an ideal opportunity to ensure integration of the two halves of the sentence by introducing re-testing at the end of the community part of the sentence.

2.6 *Young people's views on education*

Significantly, the researchers did not find a group of young people who described themselves as disaffected from formal education or completely anti-school. On the contrary, mainstream school scored relatively highly for most of them. If anything, the young people displayed extremely conventional attitudes towards education and demonstrated a yearning for structure and normality. They saw mainstream school as being 'proper', but time and again referred to the need for individual attention, particularly around literacy and numeracy.

This does not mean that education in custody was not seen as being beneficial to some young people. Indeed, for the majority – particularly those of compulsory school age who were experiencing part-time provision – the education provided in custody could seem a real improvement.

One area of very real concern, however, was the unequivocal failure of education in custody for the small minority of young people who had been relatively successful in education, or at least were still in mainstream school or college. For them, custody had the potential to be an educational disaster. Real anxiety was expressed about the damage done to their chances of getting back to school or college and the time lost because of their custodial sentence. Young Offender Institutions are simply not equipped to provide a broad, balanced curriculum and continuity in GCSEs, GNVQs or GCE A-levels for these young people.

Nearly 40 per cent of the young people rated their overall experience of mainstream school as very good or excellent. The aspect receiving the highest rating was that relating to their views on other students; 50 per cent rated them as very good or excellent. The two areas where relatively high levels of dissatisfaction were recorded were the quality and amount of individual support, and teachers.

Almost half the group gave low scorings on individual support in mainstream school, with over a quarter assessing it as poor. The majority (57 per cent) rated their teachers in mainstream school as good, very good or excellent, but nearly a quarter rated them as poor. Given that most of these young people had been formally rejected by their schools through disciplinary exclusions and that a quarter of them were 10 years or more behind their chronological age for functioning in literacy and numeracy, their attachment to the concept of mainstream education and their criticisms regarding levels of individual support need to be taken seriously.

The overall attitude towards their experience of education or training in custody was broadly similar, with 45 per cent assessing the provision as very good or excellent. Perhaps understandably a less favourable view was taken of other students – only a third rated them as very good or excellent. Individual support was rated more highly than in mainstream school, which again is understandable given that class sizes tend to be about a quarter of those in schools. However, significant levels of dissatisfaction were also recorded, with almost one in five young people being very dissatisfied with their individual support. Teaching staff tended to be viewed positively; almost a half of the young people assessed their teachers as very good or excellent.

It may be that the favourable ratings for aspects of custodial education are influenced by the context, in that education may be viewed as the most positive and constructive activity to be undertaken within the overall regime. Nevertheless, it is interesting that in conjunction with these positive ratings, the young people could be very critical of the teaching staff and the learning environment. They were particularly critical of disruption to classes and not being able to attend as a result of staff shortages of both teachers and prison officers.

For these young people, the impact of their education and training in custody and perhaps of the whole custodial experience appears to have been positive regarding their views on their future in education and training. Almost 40 per cent were very or extremely positive about further education or training after custody. There is evidence that these young people underestimated the barriers they would face on release. Nevertheless, the views of Yot supervising officers echoed these findings, with 45 per cent assessing the young people as more positive about education and training and only 10 per cent believing them to be less positive than before they entered custody.

2.7 Assessment, planning and review

These systems should provide the spine that runs through community and custodial interventions. The audit found that in the main the processes are fractured and limited, and education and training are not an integral part of them.

The work of custodial education departments is disconnected from the entry and exit points to the system. Educationalists are being set an impossible task to devise appropriate individual learning programmes for young people with such complex needs and chaotic prior educational careers, given the timescales available. There is an extremely low level of transmission of assessment information from the community into custody.

The principal educational assessment tool is the Basic Skills Agency test. This has significant limitations, is not a diagnostic tool, and may well not be appropriate for use with juveniles. ASSET has some fundamental flaws from an educational perspective. Crucially, it fails to distinguish whether the young person has been receiving, say, five hours of home tuition a week or a full-time programme, which is important from both an educational and a criminogenic risk perspective. It is difficult to see how systematic judgements can be made about defining risk factors associated with education and training issues if the amount of formal learning options available to a young person are unknown and unrecorded. ASSET does not have FE college as a separate category for provision, yet this is increasingly important for 14 to 16 year olds, particularly those at risk of detachment from mainstream education. But ASSET could be of some value to education departments.

Unfortunately, between a quarter and a third of young people in custody in Young Offender Institutions in March had arrived without an ASSET. Even when the ASSET does arrive, it is not shared in whole or in part with education departments as a matter of routine. Although the Youth Justice Board's database contained over 2,300 names of young people apparently placed in YOIs in mid-March, only 1,157 copies of ASSET could be located – just under 50 per cent.

In terms of throughcare, integrated case management does not really exist. Most education departments in Young Offender Institutions have very little input into the sentence planning processes carried out by casework/sentence planning teams.

Education departments tend to have no knowledge whatsoever of the planned education/training destination for young people following custody. Their work with each young person is therefore often in isolation from what has occurred before, and is unlikely to be used afterwards in the community. The opportunity to prepare young people for effective re-entry into education and training is denied to both the staff and the young people.

Despite the prevalence of special educational needs within the custodial population, these young people appear to be largely disconnected from the formal assessment and planning processes associated with the recently revised and reissued SEN code of practice.

Yot supervising officers were intended to have assumed a pivotal role in DTO sentence planning, by attending and chairing regular review meetings during the custodial part of the sentence. While it is clear that there has been a significant influx of Yot staff into custodial institutions, the quantity and quality of input appears to be very variable. There are significant logistical problems for Yots which may have very few young people in custody at any point in time and may be many miles away from a particular institution.

In order to overcome the educational isolation of Young Offender Institutions, there is a strong argument for strengthening their capacity to become much more involved in assessment and planning processes in the community part of the sentence. This should be done without relaxing efforts to strengthen the links of Yots with institutions.

2.8 *Transition to the community*

The ineffectiveness of the planning systems is highlighted by the failure to secure a smooth and timely transition from education in custody to appropriate and consistent education in the community. The study found that one month following discharge from custody, over half (58 per cent) of the young people had no education or training arranged. Only one in six young people released from custody had education, training or employment immediately available. For those who did have such opportunities, the majority were half-time or less. Fewer than one in 10 young people had full-time education, training or employment available during the first month following their release on a Detention and Training Order. When the evidence of an improved attitude towards education and training, and secure institutions' considerable efforts to enhance learning are taken into account, this must be seen as a major breach of expectations for the young people.

As so few young people had any provision arranged, it is difficult to assess with precision the degree of continuity in relation to courses undertaken, accreditation, materials, and teaching and learning styles. There is some evidence that the positive attitude towards education and training that was acquired in custody translated itself at least in these early stages into relatively high attendance rates.

Transition between the two halves of the DTO sentence was also marked by changes in accommodation, which could often have an impact on arranging appropriate education or training provision. 30 per cent of young people experienced a change in their place of accommodation between entry into custody and discharge to the community.

The combination of a change in living arrangements and an absence of education, training or employment appears to provide a significant increase in the risk of re-offending during the community part of the sentence. Yot supervising officers and the young people identified the lack of education and training provision as a significant risk factor for re-offending. According to the Yot supervising officers, over a quarter of the young people (27 per cent) had re-offended within the month following release on a Detention and Training Order.

2.9 *Yot supervising officers*

Significant non-compliance with the relevant national standards was revealed. Only 14 per cent of supervising officers had complied with National Standard 8.2.6, which requires that the Chief Officers' Steering Group must be informed if fewer than 25 hours per week education has been arranged for the young person leaving custody. Given that over 90 per cent of the young people did not have 20 hours or more arranged on transfer from custody, this is a very significant breach of the standards. No quantitative assessment was undertaken for the reasons for this, but they seem to range from those supervising officers who were unaware of the National Standard, through those who saw little point given the barriers to arranging appropriate provision locally, to those who had received informal messages from the Yot manager or members of the steering group that this would be a pointless exercise.

There was more compliance with National Standard 8.2.8, which requires the supervising officer to ensure that links with the Learning Gateway personal adviser are developed for offenders over school-leaving age. Approaching two-thirds of the young people had seen their Gateway personal adviser or equivalent careers adviser within four weeks of release. However, only 15 per cent had seen the personal adviser immediately on release.

Supervising officers expressed considerable frustration over what was perceived as a lack of urgency by LEAs, a lower priority given to young offenders than to other young people, and the slowness and ineffectiveness of communication between LEAs and schools.

Direct, effective working with schools appeared to be the exception rather than the rule, and Yot supervising officers emphasised how difficult it was to develop a common approach with a school regarding a young person. The ineffectiveness of communication was expressed through significant delays in arranging places or in the transmission of important SEN information, particularly the statement.

Yot supervising officers tended to feel that they were working in isolation from those delivering education and training in Young Offender Institutions. The lack of feedback from YOI education departments to LEAs and their officers was seen as another weakness. The fact that many courses started in custody were either not finished or not transferable to educational institutions in the community was also seen as a significant problem. Above all, speed was seen to be of the

essence; without the continuity of the structured environment, young people would become detached from full-time education or training again within a very short space of time.

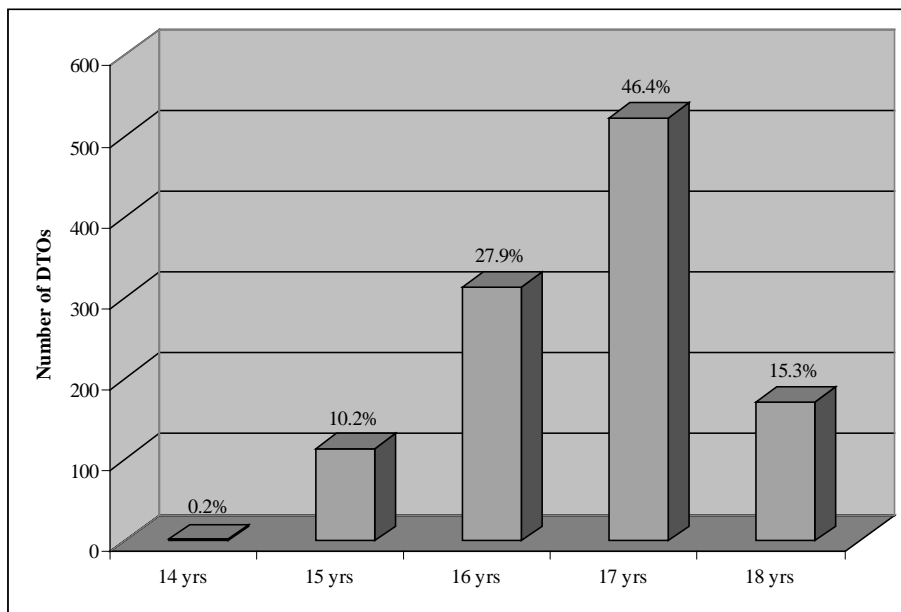
3.0 PROFILE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

In this section, the profile of the custodial population is reviewed in broad terms using the larger data sets such as the YJB's secure accommodation placement database and the information from ASSET. The profile of the smaller sample of young people who were interviewed is set against that of the whole custodial population in order to gauge its representativeness.

3.1 Age

It can be seen by comparing the age profile of just over 1,000 young offenders (Figure 3.1) that 17 is both the mean and mode age for the population. However, the sample who were interviewed was skewed towards the younger age group, for methodological reasons as discussed above. There were fewer 18 year olds in the interview sample as they were seen as having fewer workload implications for Yots and more relevance to programmes such as New Deal and the national Probation Service.

Figure 3.1: Analysis of 1,127 DTOs by age on 15 March 2001



For the interview sample, Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show that the proportions of 16 year olds and younger were very different to those in the larger population shown in Figure 3.1.

Table 3.1: Age of young people at time of interview, by total and percentage

Age at time of interview	Total	Percentage
13	3	2%
14	8	5%
15	27	17%
16	58	36%
17	54	34%
18	10	6%
Totals	160	100%

Figure 3.2: Age of young people at the time of interview, by totals

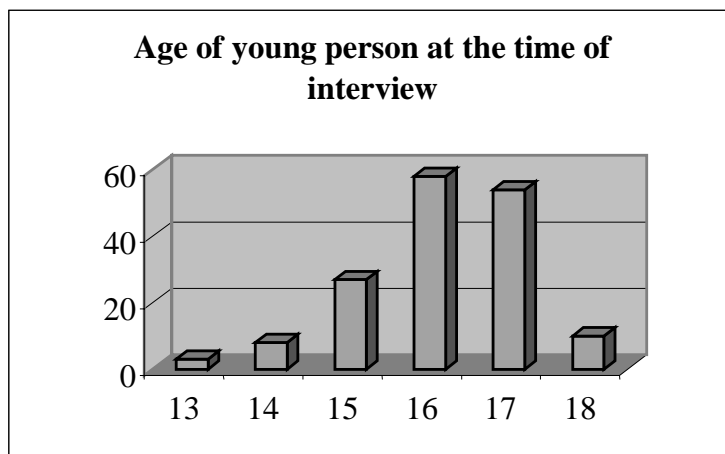


Table 3.2 additionally breaks the interview sample down into those of compulsory school age and those of post-compulsory school age.

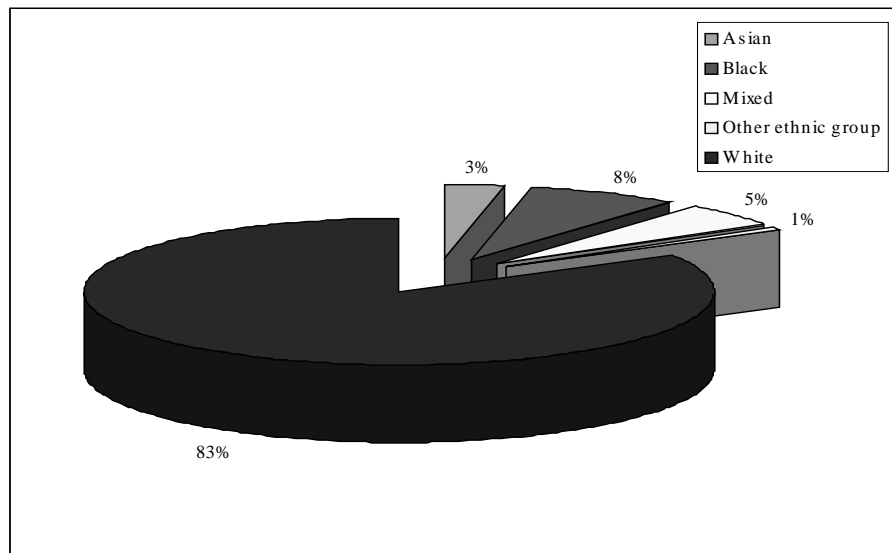
Table 3.2: Breakdown of interview sample by compulsory and post-compulsory school age

Of compulsory school age	
13	3
14	8
15	27
16	27
Total	65
Over compulsory school age	
16	31
17	54
18	10
Total	95

3.2 Ethnic origin

For the national population of DTOs in custody, the YJB's secure accommodation placements database gives the following breakdown by ethnic group (Figure 3.3).¹

Figure 3.3: Profile of DTO population by ethnic group



As can be seen from Table 3.3 and Figure 3.4, the interview sample was almost an exact match for the larger custodial population in terms of the proportions of young people from different ethnic groups.

Table 3.3: Ethnicity of interview sample

Ethnicity	Total	%
Asian Indian	1	1%
Asian Pakistani	2	1%
Asian Other	3	2%
Black African	1	1%
Black Caribbean	6	4%
Black Other	4	3%
Mixed White and Black African	1	1%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	6	4%
Not available	4	3%

¹ Ethnic groups are further defined as follows:

Asian includes Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Other;

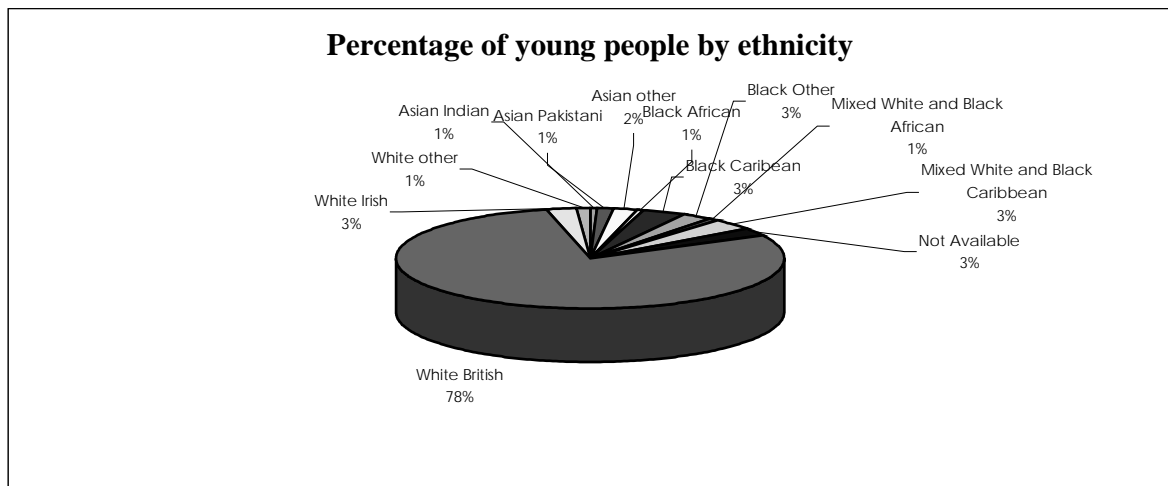
Black includes African, Caribbean, Other;

Mixed includes White and Asian, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean;

White includes British, Irish, Other.

Ethnicity	Total	%
White British	126	79%
White Irish	4	3%
White Other	2	1%
Total	160	100%

Figure 3.4: Percentage of young people in interview sample, by ethnicity



One important area for further analysis of linkages between being out of education and experiencing custody is the disproportionate number of young black men involved.

Similarly, in terms of the wider population the marked growth in permanent exclusion from school in the early to mid-1990s was paralleled by a doubling of the juvenile custodial population.

3.3 Mainstream educational career

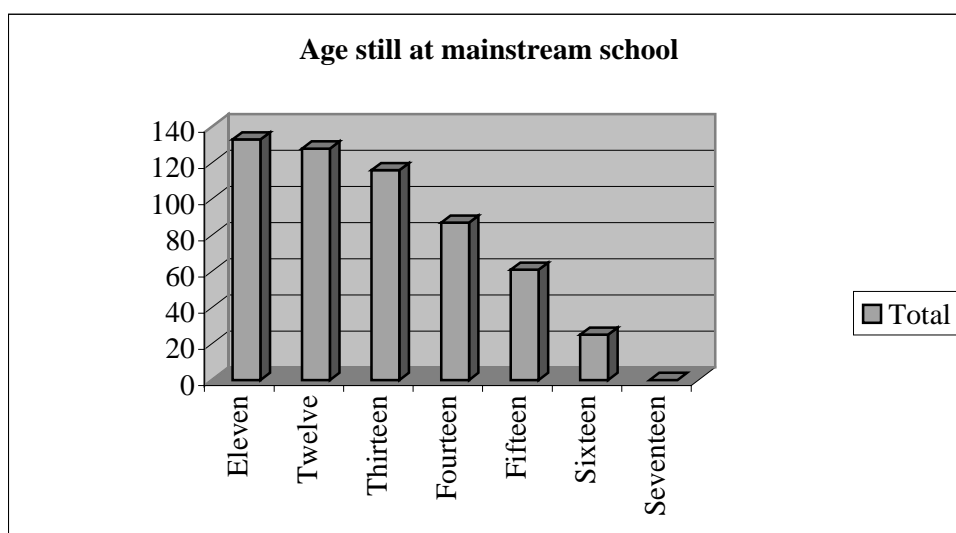
In attempting to trace the trajectory of the young people’s educational career, which had culminated in custody, the process of detachment from mainstream education was discussed in detail with the interview sample. In terms of assessing the risk of offending, it may be more productive to focus on the out-of-school population of young people rather than trying to detect differences in the characteristics of young people based on the category ascribed to them by the education system (such as ‘excluded’ or ‘truanting’).

As can be seen from Table 3.4 and Figure 3.5, detachment begins at a relatively early age: 17 per cent of the interview cohort were no longer in mainstream education at the age of 11. There is a marked acceleration in the numbers detaching between the ages of 13 and 15, by which time the great majority were out of mainstream education.

Table 3.4: Interview sample – age still at mainstream school, by totals and percentage

Age still at mainstream school	Total	Percentage
11	133	83%
12	128	80%
13	116	73%
14	87	54%
15	61	38%
16	25	16%

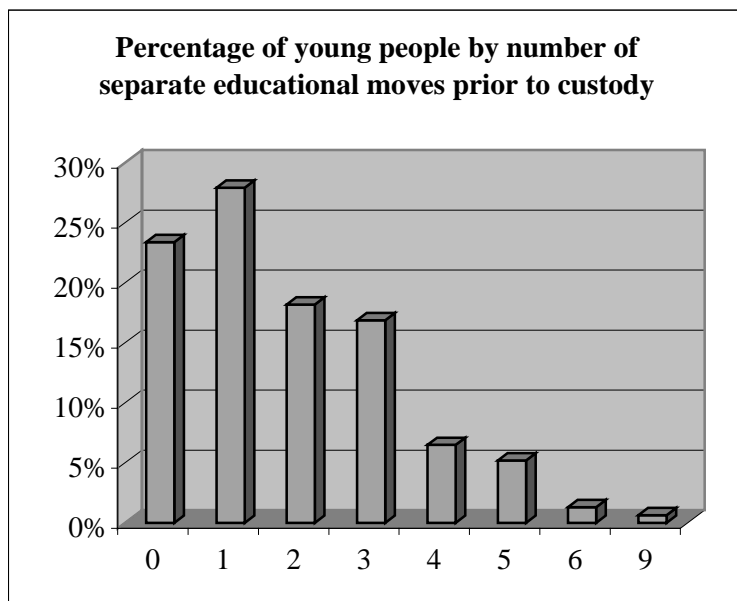
Figure 3.5: Interview sample – age still at mainstream school, by totals



Several of the young people had had multiple secondary schools, but there were no examples of young people experiencing detachment through permanent exclusion, persistent non-attendance or transfer to a special school who had finished their compulsory education in a mainstream school. Once detached from the mainstream, reintegration appears to be extremely difficult. It must also be noted that the relationship of many of the 16 year olds nominally still linked to mainstream education was extremely tenuous.

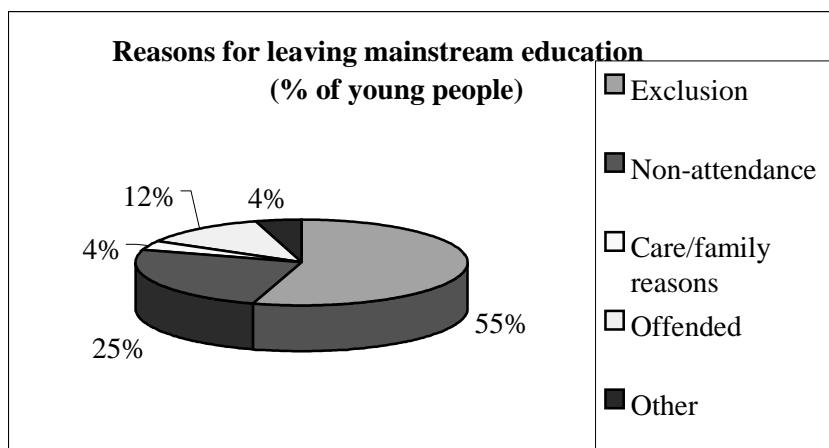
The dynamics of detachment often involve multiple educational placements, as Figure 3.6 illustrates, and usually a move to part-time provision (see below). It must be remembered that this graph only depicts the number of educational placement changes experienced prior to custody. The custodial sentence itself introduces a minimum of one additional educational placement, and often two or three when transfers between secure institutions are taken into account. In addition, a significant number of pre-custodial placements appear to be lost by the time the young people are released. The disruptive influence of a custodial experience on coursework and exam preparation, and the accompanying stigma, could also sever the links with schools and colleges for the minority of young people who are still attached and achieving prior to custody.

Figure 3.6: Percentage of young people by number of separate educational moves prior to custody



The young people interviewed cited exclusion as the most significant reason for their leaving mainstream education. As Figure 3.7 shows, over half identified exclusion, while only a quarter believed that non-attendance was the principal cause.

Figure 3.7: Reasons for leaving mainstream education (% of young people interviewed)



Analysis of the much larger ASSET sample indicated a much greater emphasis on non-attendance (Figures 3.8 and 3.9). Over half of the ASSET forms recorded young people as 'regularly truanting'. However, this is defined as two to three times a month whereas in the context of the discussion of detachment from mainstream education, young people were often referring to periods of complete non-attendance for many months or even years. Similarly, while the ASSET data indicates that only just over 20 per cent were currently excluded, the retrospective question yields the figure of 45 per cent who had at any stage experienced permanent exclusion.

Figure 3.8: Current exclusion (ASSET data)

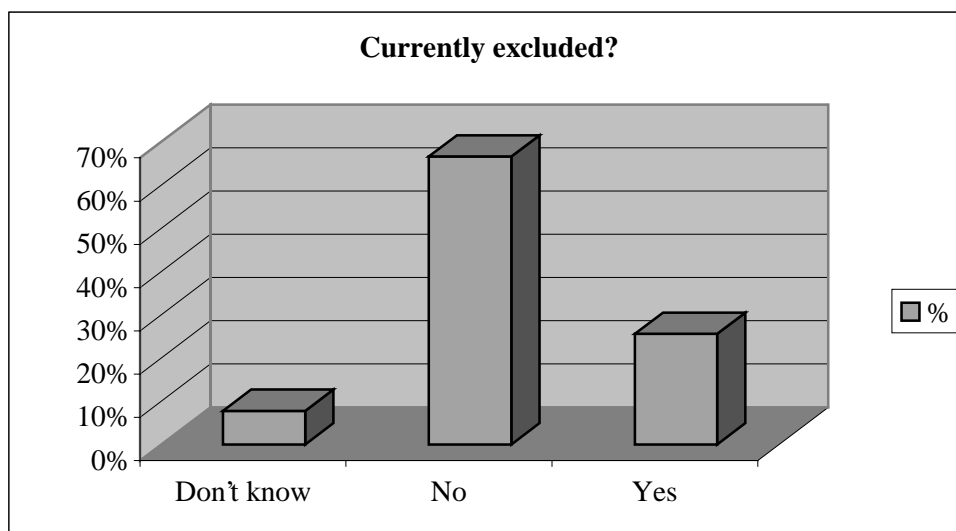
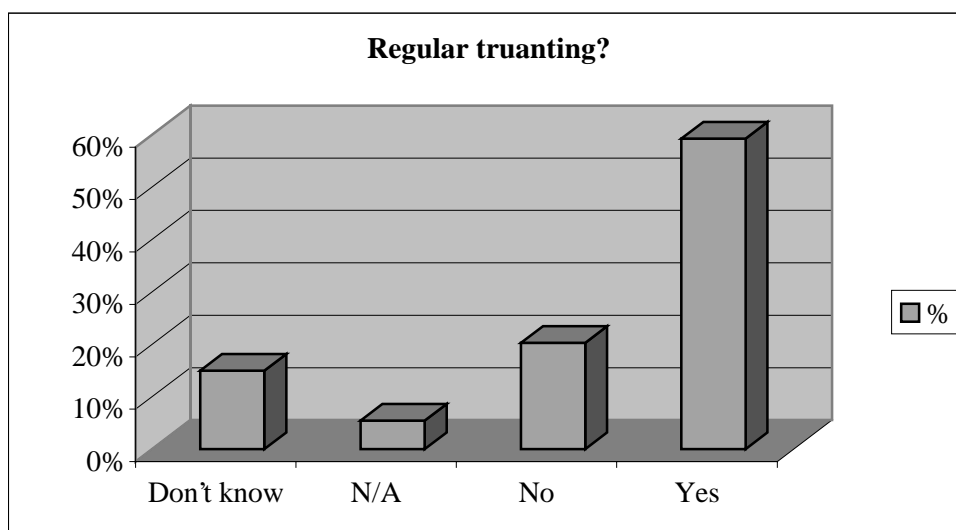


Figure 3.9: Regular truanting (ASSET data)



Permanent and fixed-term exclusions figure prominently in the young people's biographies of mainstream schooling. However, it is very difficult to perceive any real distinctions of need and behaviour. Rather, in a given situation a formal disciplinary exclusion may have occurred, but equally it could have been an SEN statement leading to placement in a special school, part-time provision within an FE college, or (as was apparently the case on several occasions) long-term authorised absence by the school.

3.4 Placement type immediately prior to custody

Examination of the educational placements of these young people in the period prior to their entry into custody shows just how fragmentary and chaotic their educational and training experiences tended to become. The destinations for young people who have become detached

from mainstream schooling appear to be the result as much of local and individual circumstances as of careful planning and allocation of alternative education.

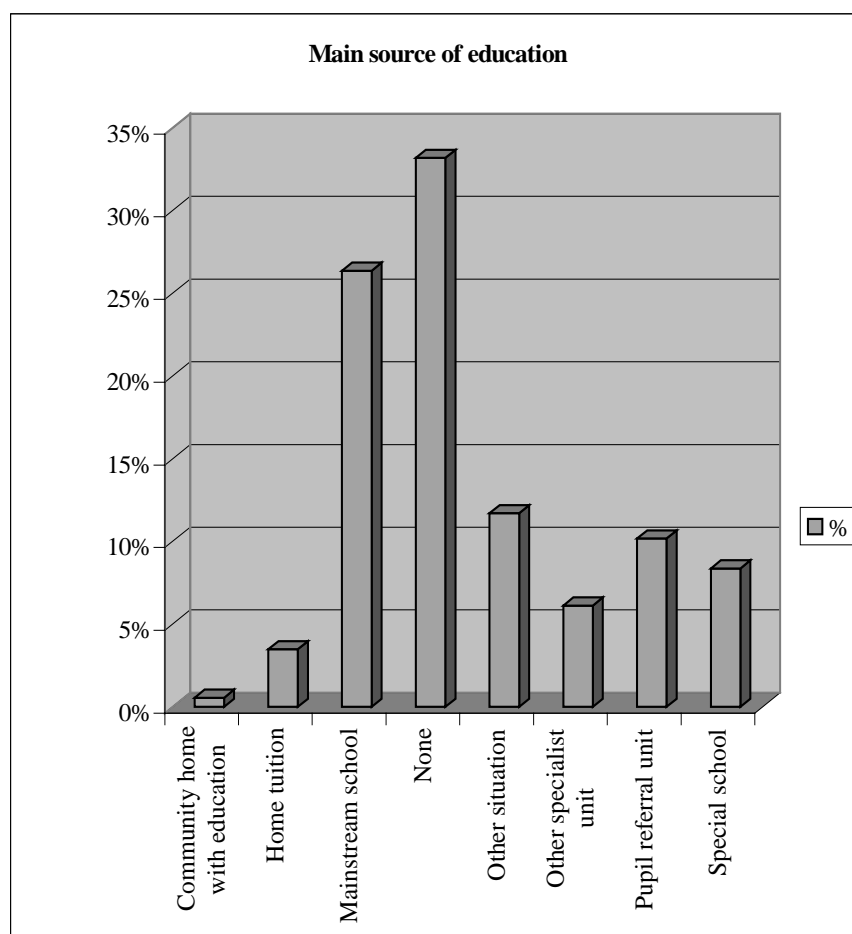
It is difficult to discern any common characteristics of the young people in any particular type of provision. Even though all those who were in special schools would be likely to be covered by a statement of special educational needs, other young people with SEN statements had not ended up in a special school.

The finding of most concern is that the ASSET data indicate that a third of the young people of compulsory school age had received no education/training in the last six months before custody (Table 3.5 and Figure 3.10). This figure is higher than for the sample of young people interviewed, but could be partly because the ASSET data may incorporate the realities of non-attendance as opposed to what was theoretically available for the young people.

Table 3.5: Main source of education (ASSET data)

Main source of education	Total	%
Community home with education	4	1%
Home tuition	25	3%
Mainstream school	189	26%
None	238	33%
Other situation	84	12%
Other specialist unit	44	6%
Pupil referral unit	73	10%
Special school	60	8%
Total	717	100%

Figure 3.10: Main source of education (ASSET data)



When the circumstances of the young people of post-compulsory school age are considered, 57 per cent were described as unemployed in ASSET (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Situation in regard to employment, training and FE

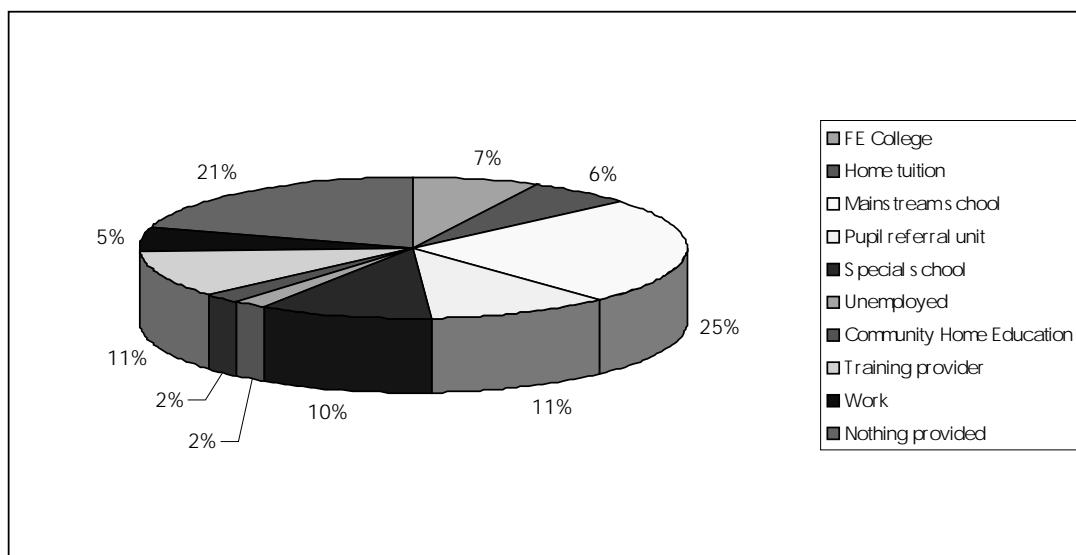
Situation	Total	%
Casual/temporary work	60	10.8%
College/further education	42	7.6%
College/further education part-time	1	0.2%
Full-time work	55	9.9%
N/A	13	2.3%
New Deal	1	0.2%
Other	7	1.3%
Other training course	5	0.9%
Part-time work	20	3.6%
Pre-employment/life skills training	31	5.6%
Unable to work	1	0.2%
Unemployed	318	57.4%
Total	554	100%

More detailed analysis was possible for the young people who were interviewed. Leaving aside those for whom no provision had been made, it can be seen in Table 3.7 that in terms of placement type, mainstream school was significantly more important than any of the other categories. For those of compulsory school-age, special schools and pupil referral units provided educational placements for 10 and 11 per cent of the sample respectively.

Table 3.7: Type of provision immediately prior to custody (interview sample)

Type of provision immediately prior to custody	Totals	%
FE college	11	7%
Home tuition	9	6%
Mainstream school	36	25%
Pupil referral unit	16	11%
Special school	15	10%
Unemployed	3	2%
Community home education	3	2%
Training provider	16	11%
Employment	8	5%
No provision	30	21%
Totals	147	100%

Figure 3.11: Type of provision immediately prior to custody (interview sample)



However, two other important aspects need to be factored in – the number of hours per week that each placement was offering and the take-up of these hours by the young people. The majority of young people who had placements officially arranged for them only had part-time provision on offer. When the young people who had no provision arranged are taken into account then a third had four hours or fewer a week arranged and over a half had nine hours or fewer arranged (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Number of hours per week, by type of provision (interview sample)

Type of provision immediately prior to custody	Number of hours per week						Totals	Totals
	0	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	Over 20		
FE college			4		2	5	11	9.1%
Home tuition		4	2	5			11	9.1%
Mainstream school	2			2	1	30	35	28.9%
Other	5	4		2		11	22	18.2%
Pupil referral unit		1	2	2	6	5	16	13.2%
Special school			1	3	1	8	13	10.7%
Training provider		1	1	1	3	7	13	10.7%
Total	7	10	10	15	13	66	121	100.0%

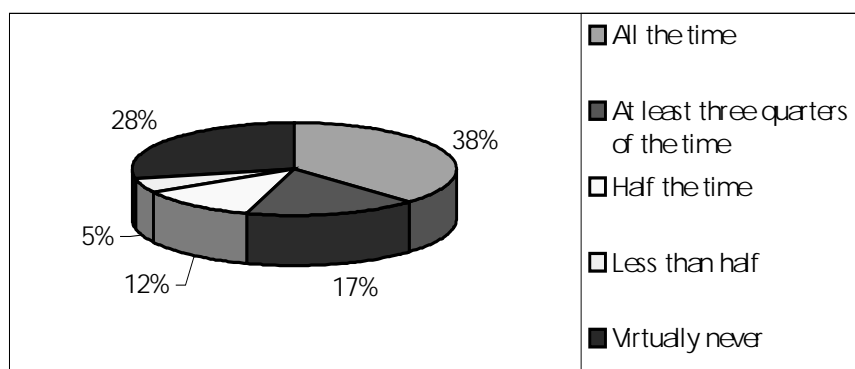
Here again, mainstream school appears to be the most significant provider, with the great majority of the young people who were still on a mainstream school roll having full-time provision available to them. Nearly 30 per cent of the sample had a mainstream school placement, and 86 per cent of these had full-time provision arranged.

When attendance is taken into account, the true picture of where these young people were receiving their education is revealed. Some 38 per cent of the young people claimed that they were attending their educational placement “all the time” (Table 3.9 and Figure 3.12). But the distribution of their pattern of attendance in relation to the amount of provision arranged for them determines the relative importance of each type of provision.

Table 3.9: Level of attendance (interview sample)

	Totals	%
All the time	44	38%
At least three-quarters of the time	20	17%
Half the time	14	12%
Less than half	6	5%
Virtually never	33	28%
Total	117	100%

Figure 3.12: Level of attendance (interview sample)



By plotting the attendance patterns against numbers of hours arranged per type of provision (Table 3.10), it can be seen that the importance of mainstream school is considerably diminished in terms of the total volume of teaching hours delivered and particularly the amount per young person. This is because a disproportionate amount of virtually complete non-attenders were still nominally attached to a mainstream school. In reality, many of this group of young people had not attended for months or in some cases years. Several Yot supervising officers identified these circumstances as particularly difficult, as money was still going to the school for the young people, and the fact that they were on a school roll appeared to block agency involvement.

Table 3.10: Attendance patterns per type of provision

Where was education taking place?	How many official hours were they receiving per week?	Actual attendance					Total
		All the time	At least three-quarters of the time	Half the time	Less than half	Virtually never	
FE college	5-9		2	1		1	4
	15-19	1	1				2
	Over 20	2	2			1	5
Home tuition	1-4	3				1	4
	5-9	2					2
	10-14	4				1	5
Mainstream school	0					1	2
	10-14		1			2	3
	15-19		1				1
	Over 20	4	4	5	3	14	30
Other	0						0
	1-4	2		1		1	4
	10-14	1					1
	Over 20	4		1		2	7

Where was education taking place?	How many official hours were they receiving per week?	Actual attendance						Total
		All the time	At least three-quarters of the time	Half the time	Less than half	Virtually never		
Pupil referral unit	1-4			1			1	
	5-9		1			1	2	
	10-14	1			1		2	
	15-19	3	1	1		1	6	
	Over 20	1	1		1	2	5	
Special school	5-9	1					1	
	10-14	1		1		1	3	
	15-19		1				1	
	Over 20	4	1	1	1	1	8	
Training provider	1-4					1	1	
	5-9	1					1	
	10-14			1			1	
	15-19	1	2				3	
	Over 20	6	2	1		1	10	
Total		43	20	14	6	32	115	

For young people of compulsory school age, the amount of formal education time they participated in each week was approximately six hours at mainstream school, nine hours at pupil referral units, 11 hours at FE colleges and 13 hours at special schools. When those young people who had no provision arranged for them are taken into account, it appears that the sample was receiving probably less than 25 per cent of the volume of education compared with their peers who had been successfully sustained in mainstream education.

3.5 Learning profiles

The two main sources of information that enable an assessment to be made of the attainment levels of these young people and any difficulties they may have are the results of their Basic Skills Agency tests on entry into custody and assessments made by their Yot supervising officers as recorded in ASSET.

The following analysis looks at the literacy and numeracy scores on entry for DTOs held in 11 YOIs in March 2001. It breaks them down between those who were of compulsory school age and those who were older.

It is interesting to note the comparatively high proportion who do not appear to have been tested for both literacy and numeracy: 226 of the 1,680 (13.5%) for whom information was received.

This includes those young people who refused to be tested, and those who were non-readers (possibly 5 per cent of the DTO population).

Methodological caveats include the fact that the very low scores may also be measuring to some extent young people's resistance to testing and learning, given their deficits in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the high rate of transfer between YOIs and the number of young people who have experienced multiple custodial episodes means that some young people have been given the tests repeatedly. As a result, they feel that they have now memorised the questions. These biases are likely to even themselves out if the unavailable scores are left out of the analysis. If anything, it means that these may be underestimates of the lower levels of literacy and numeracy.

Figures 3.13 and 3.14 give figures for literacy and numeracy scores by level. Entry level equates to the performance to be expected of an average seven year old, Level 1 is that expected of an average 11 year old, and Level 2 that of an average 16 year old.

Figure 3.13: Literacy scores by level of 1,454 DTOs in YOIs in March 2001

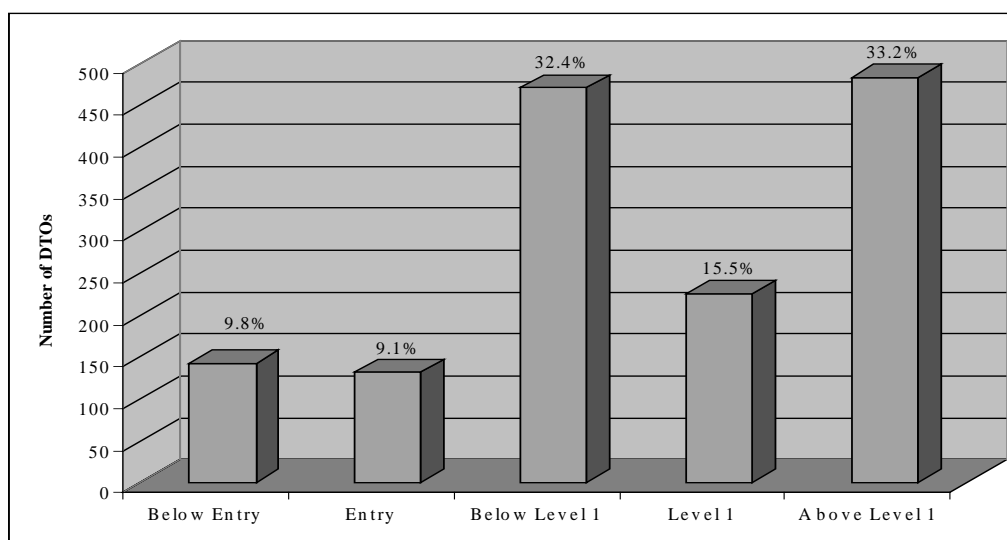
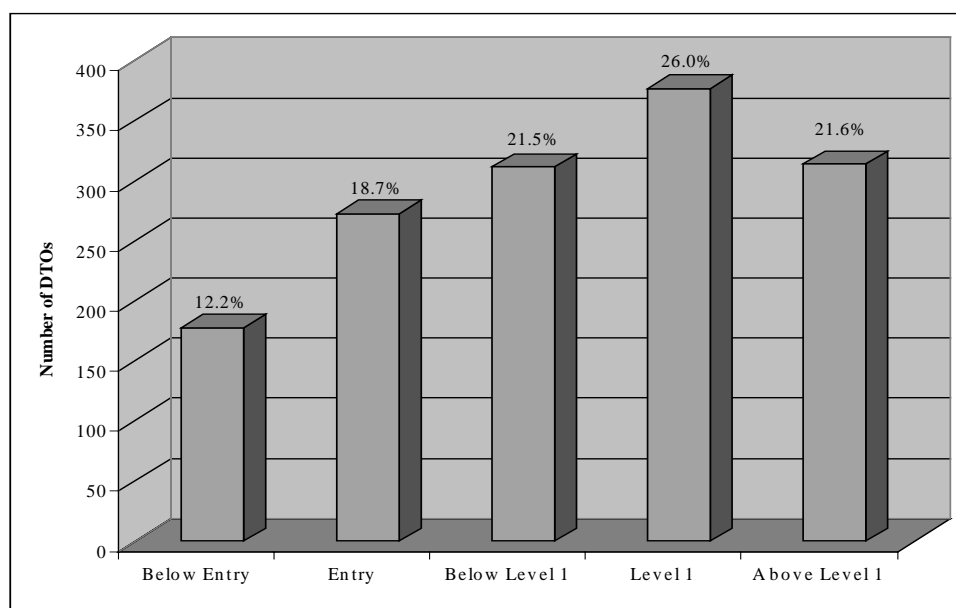


Table 3.14: Numeracy scores, by level, of 1,454 DTOs in YOIs in March 2001



Of the total YOI population in the analysis, nearly 10 per cent were functionally below that of the average seven year old in literacy, and 12 per cent in numeracy. Some 19 per cent were functioning at or below the level of the average seven year old in literacy and almost a third (31 per cent) in numeracy. Over half of the sample (51 per cent for literacy and 52 per cent for numeracy) were not functioning at the level of the average 11 year old on entry into the Young Offender Institution.

The number of learning hours suggested by the Basic Skills Agency for (adult) learners to achieve competence in any one level is very considerable in the context of short sentences. In the case of these young people, the task may be made greater by the fact that their ability to learn independently is often quite limited, their self-esteem is low, and they are often faced with a relatively narrow curriculum.

For a learner to move to entry level it is estimated that between 300 and 450 hours' learning are required. To move from entry level to Level 1 would require a further 210 to 329 hours' learning. The Basic Skills Agency recommends that "basic skills provision should be designed to ensure an average of 500 hours of direct basic skills training for trainees below foundation level, at foundation or at Level 1".

Within the context of the constraints on current YOI provision, and particularly the shortness of the average custodial sentence, a target of 500 hours is very unlikely to be achieved. If, however, intensive high-quality programmes spanned both halves of the Detention and Training Order (average length eight months) and contained 15 hours' relevant learning per week for literacy and numeracy, the necessary uplift could be realised.

Figures 3.15 and 3.16 show an analysis of the literacy and numeracy scores of those below school-leaving age. Figures 3.17 and 3.18 show an analysis of the literacy and numeracy scores of those over school-leaving age. Dates of birth were known for 1,127 of the 1,454 young people.

Of these, 259 were below school-leaving age – i.e. were born on or after 1 September 1984; 868 were over school-leaving age.

Figure 3.15: Literacy scores, by level, of 259 DTOs below school-leaving age

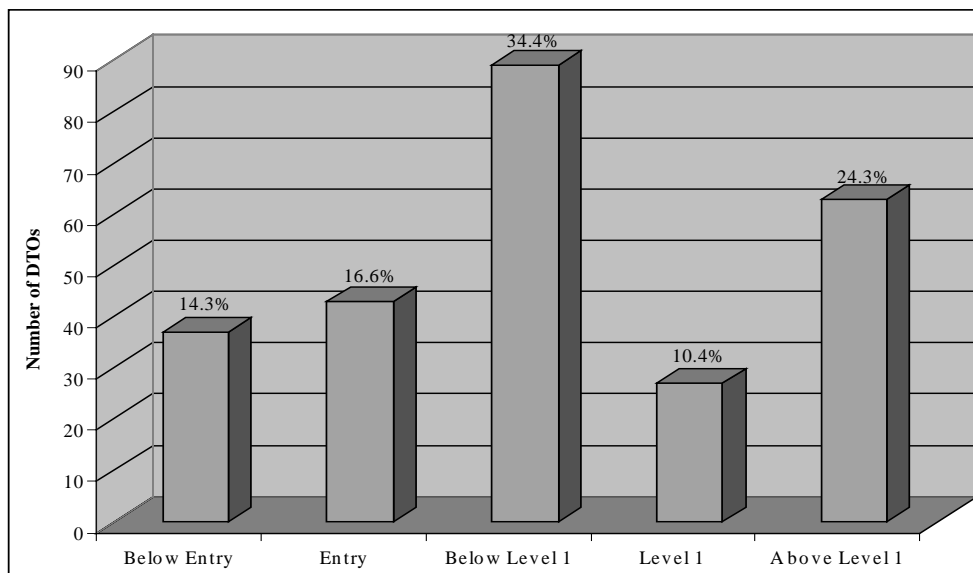


Figure 3.16: Numeracy scores, by level, of 259 DTOs below school-leaving age

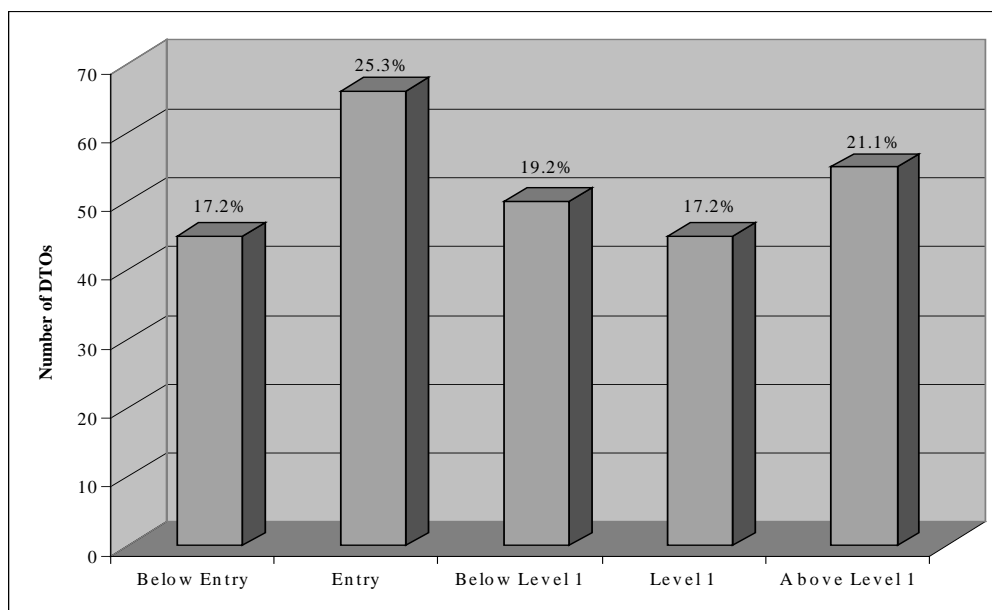


Figure 3.17: Literacy scores, by level, of 868 DTOs over school-leaving age

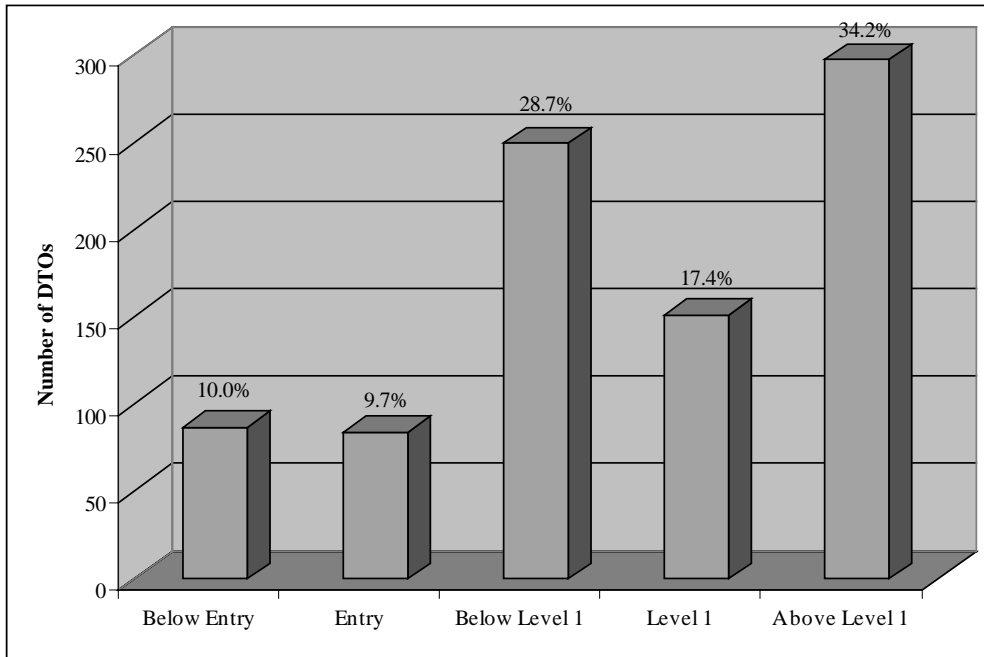
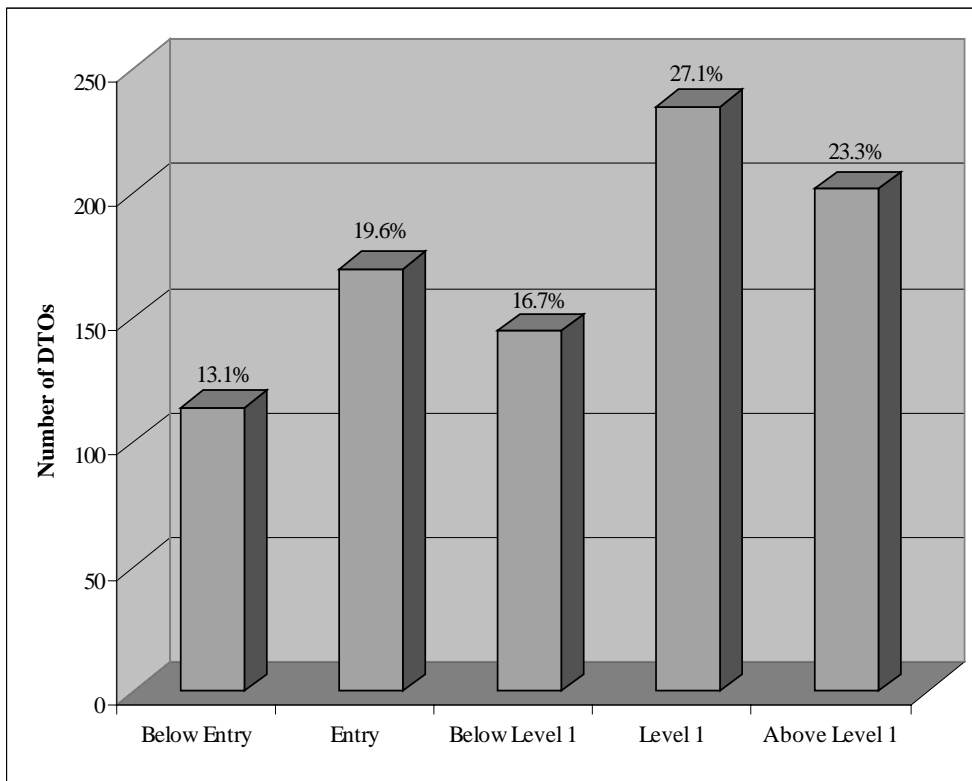
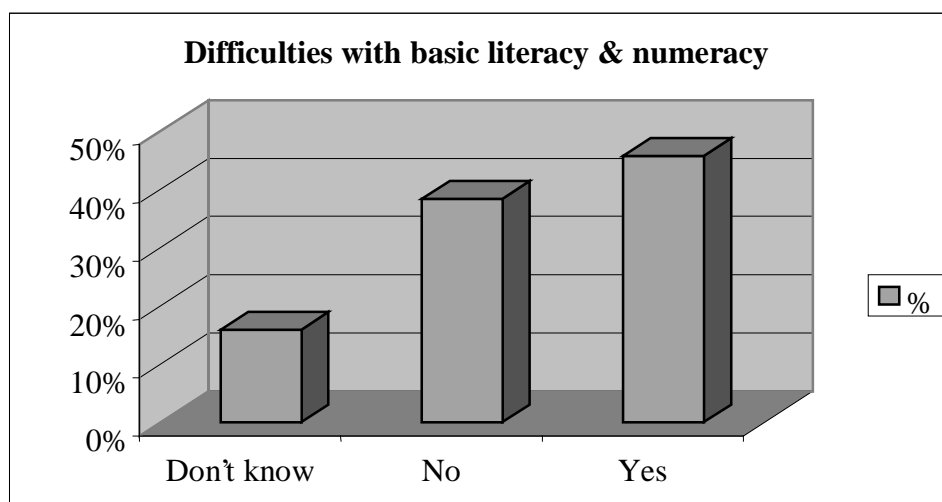


Figure 3.18: Numeracy scores, by level, of 868 DTOs over school-leaving age



The information from ASSET suggests that Yot supervising officers often underestimate just how far behind the attainment levels the majority of these young people are compared with their peers. Although their test scores demonstrated that two-thirds of the custodial population had significant difficulties with literacy (i.e. were performing at or below the level of an 11 year old) and over three-quarters with numeracy, only 46 per cent of Yot supervising officers recognised that there was a difficulty with literacy and numeracy (Figure 3.19).

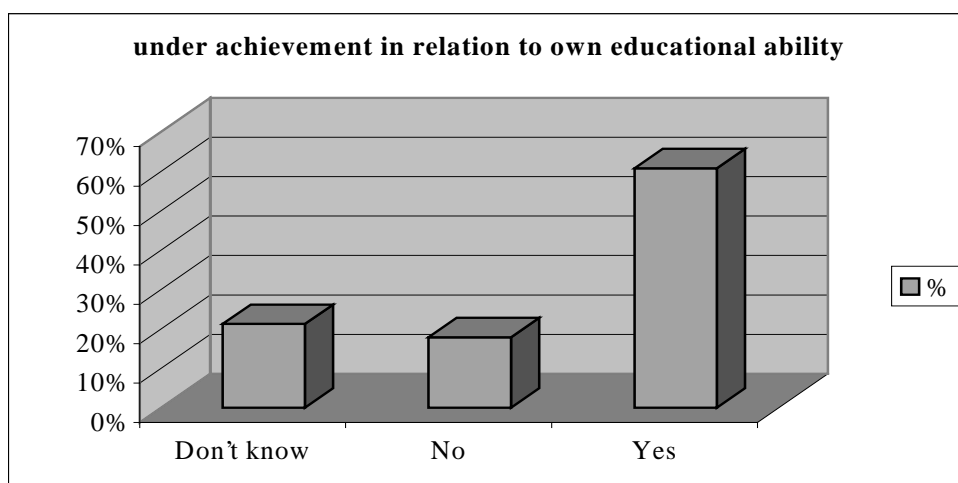
Figure 3.19: Difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy (from ASSET)



When it came to assessing whether young people were underachieving, a higher proportion of those completing ASSET (around 60 per cent) believed that the young people were underachieving than recognised their difficulties with literacy and numeracy (Figure 3.20).

For one in five of these young people, those completing the ASSET form were unable to say whether the young person was underachieving or not. This is a matter of concern and is perhaps indicative of both the lower rate of transmission of educational records and reports and the lack of adequate educational assessment time within Yots.

Figure 3.20: Underachievement in relation to own educational ability



3.6 *Special educational needs*

This is an area of major weakness in the educational practice and provision at Young Offender Institutions. In the auditors' view, many of the teaching groups they observed seemed to be composed of pupils with special educational needs of one kind or another, with many highly disturbed young people. It is likely that perhaps as many as three-quarters of the custodial population has special educational needs and if assessed would probably receive a statement. The best efforts of staff in these institutions are thwarted by lack of assessment information, SEN expertise and sufficient learning support assistant time.

The assessment process is clearly inadequate and the information flow is a trickle. ASSET is a blunt instrument as regards special educational needs, in that it refers only to the possession of a statement as opposed to the much greater population who have at some stage been on the SEN Code of Practice. Similarly, pre-sentence reports often make reference to special educational needs. However, it is rare for education departments to have any access to either ASSET or the pre-sentence reports.

The requirement is for SEN statements and other relevant tools such as individual education plans and the education component of care plans to accompany the transmission of ASSET. However, this happens so rarely that it is noted as exceptional. Many staff in the secure estate confirmed the experience of one education manager who had seen only two SEN statements in eight years. Reliance on the Basic Skills Agency test is no substitute for appropriate diagnostic assessment. Obviously, many of these young people may not have attended educational institutions in the community for some time and so may have escaped assessment. In any event, those young people who do have a statement should be accompanied to custody with it.

It is difficult to argue against the fact that such lapses in the education system are not only disadvantaging these young people, but are also wasting other educational professionals' valuable time and contributing significantly to criminogenic risk factors.

Evidence from Yots indicates that they are experiencing the same difficulties in acquiring SEN information from schools or in ensuring that these young people's rights are met through an appropriate assessment under the SEN code of practice. This is of particular concern when, for example, it was discovered that in one LEA Yot staff had found that access to a full-time education project was rationed by whether a young person had a statement or not.

ASSET asks two questions in relation to special educational needs. Firstly, whether special needs have been identified and, secondly, whether a statement of special educational needs has been issued where such needs have been identified. The first question relates to the formal identification of special educational needs. Given the evidence that many of these young people are missed by the formal identification process, the answers are very likely to be considerable underestimates of the true scale of need.

In over a third of cases (37 per cent) ASSET recorded that special educational needs had been formally identified. In 15 per cent of cases the completer of the ASSET form did not know whether there had been formal identification. It is probably a reasonable surmise that significant

numbers of those who recorded ‘no’ may not have had unequivocal evidence that this was the case.

The difficulties that Yot staff face in acquiring significant educational information are highlighted by Table 3.11. An SEN statement is a very important document representing the culmination of a lengthy and expensive process of specialist professional assessment and recording. It triggers the release of often significant resources from the LEA, and is nearly always highly relevant in forming judgements regarding criminal justice interventions. Despite this, information on SEN statements is not being transmitted to Youth Offending Teams for large numbers of young people.

Table 3.11: Statement of SEN issued?

Special needs identified?	Total	%
Don't know	132	25%
No	211	40%
Yes	182	35%
Total	525	100%

Table 3.11 actually understates the problem. A quarter of Yot staff did not know whether a statement had been issued (although they were aware that formal identification of SEN had occurred). However, those who answered ‘no’ did not necessarily mean that the young person’s needs had been assessed at a lower level than that requiring a statement, but that they were unaware of a statement having been issued. Furthermore, those who were aware that a statement had been issued did not often have a copy of it.

4.0 YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION

There are good reasons for routinely collecting and analysing young people's views on education services where highly intrusive interventions are being planned. It is even more important in this context where Yot staff are hampered by a lack of significant information and specialist input from the education system, and where their own expertise and knowledge cannot compensate for this. In these frustrating circumstances it can be relatively easy for practitioners to adopt stereotypical views regarding young people's attitudes to education.

The two main sources of information are the young people themselves and judgements made by those completing the ASSET forms. Clearly a more definitive assessment could be made if these results could be compared with those of young people who have not offended and have remained within mainstream education. Nevertheless, the findings provide some interesting insights which could inform approaches to preventing detachment from the mainstream and ensuring reintegration for those who have already detached.

Information has been gathered on:

- the young people's secondary school educational careers;
- the nature and scale of any education or training immediately prior to their entry to the custodial system;
- their experience of education within custody; and
- their education/training plans upon release.

Detailed ratings of the education and training provision during each of these episodes have been completed, to enable statistically valid comparisons to be made.

The researchers found the contributions of the young people to be very open, usually very detailed and relatively consistent. Many of the findings reflect those of other studies of socially excluded young people. However, in one or two important areas they run counter to received wisdom.

Most significantly, the researchers did not find a group of young people who described themselves as disaffected from formal education or completely anti-school. If anything, they displayed extremely conventional attitudes towards education and demonstrated a yearning for structure and normality. They saw mainstream school as being "proper", but repeatedly referred to the need for individual attention and support, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

This does not mean, however, that education in custody was not perceived as being beneficial for some young people. Indeed, for the majority of young people, education provided in custody could seem a real improvement – particularly for those of compulsory school age who were experiencing part-time provision of a few hours a week in a pupil referral unit, or home tuition, or were receiving no formal education whatsoever.

One area of very real concern, however, is the unequivocal failure of education in custody for the small minority of young people who had been relatively successful in education, or at least were still in mainstream school or college (see case study A). For these young people, custody has the

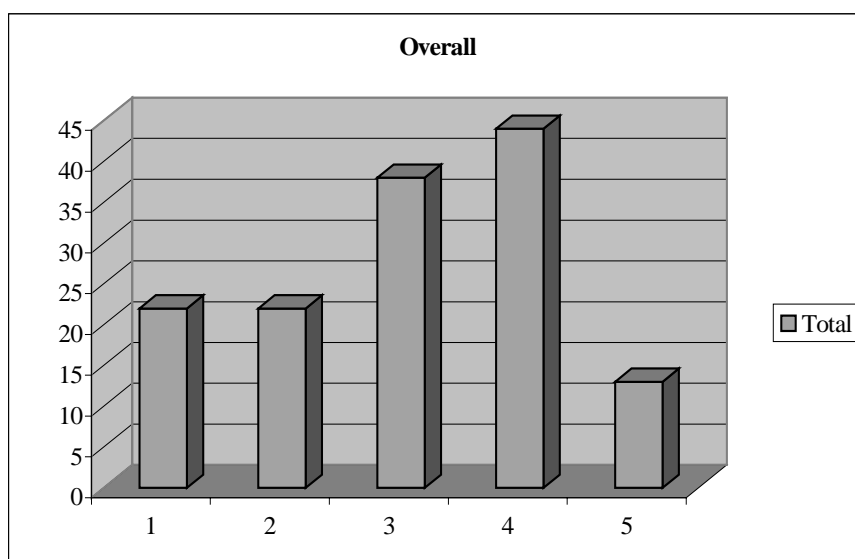
potential to be an educational disaster. Real anxiety was expressed about the damage done to their chances of getting back to school or college and the fact that they had usually lost a whole academic year because of their custodial sentence. Young Offender Institutions are simply not equipped to provide a broad, balanced curriculum which can offer the necessary continuity in GCSEs, GNVQs or GCE A-levels for this minority of young people.

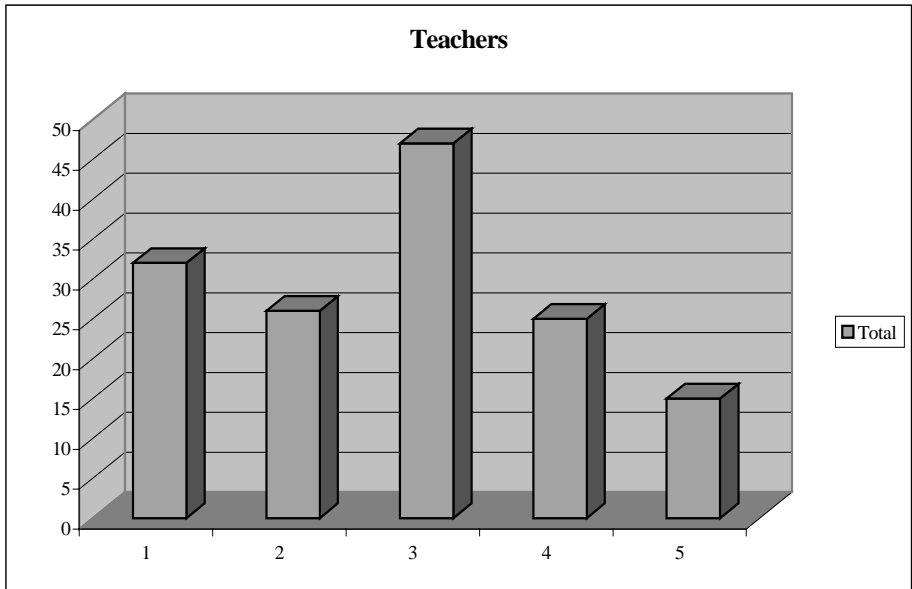
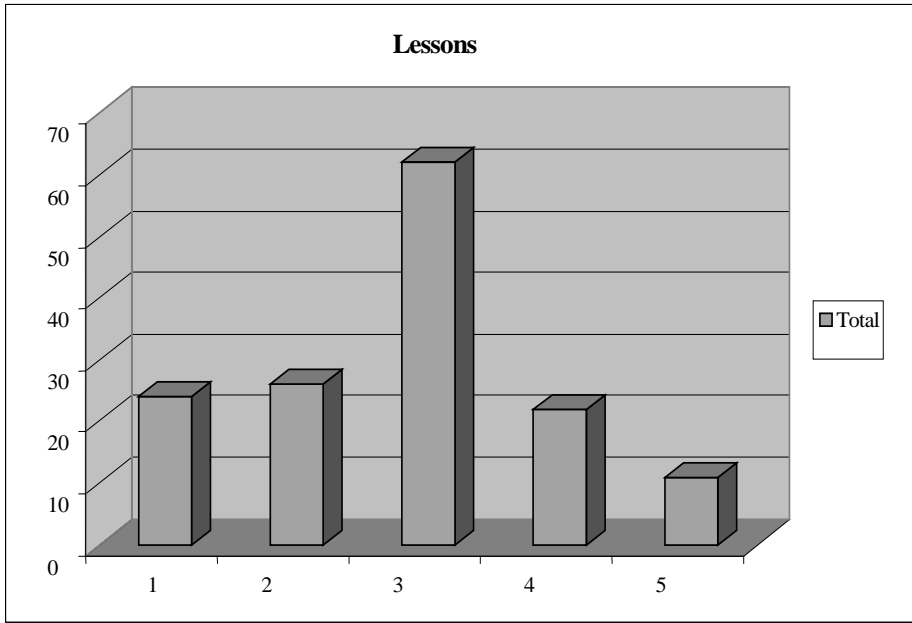
When it came to plans for education and training on release and the second half of the Detention and Training Order, the majority of the young people appeared relatively bemused. Only a minority appeared to be actively engaged in the planning process for their education or training. Here again, apathy and disaffection were absent in most of the young people. Instead, they appeared mystified or confused about the interventions of the professionals around them.

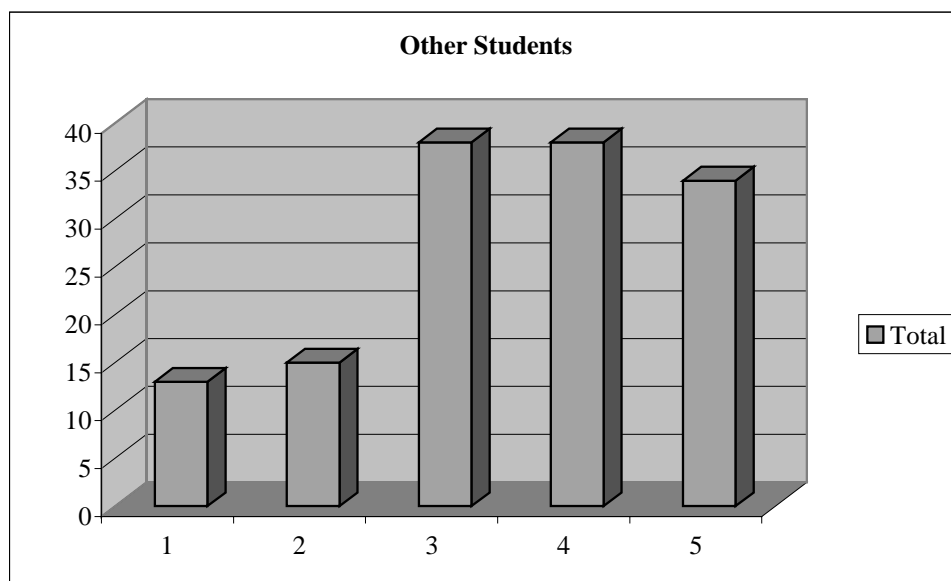
4.1 Attitudes to mainstream school

All the following graphs are derived from the young people's assessment of their educational careers, using a scoring system ranging from one equating to 'poor' up to five equating to 'excellent'. Several features of the educational experience at each stage in their career were assessed. These included lessons, teachers, organised activities, other students, support and an overall rating. A more detailed analysis was undertaken of support; this was also rated according to sub-categories of reading, writing, numeracy and ICT.

Figure 4.1: Attitudes to mainstream school







Analysing these separate aspects of young people’s experience of formal schooling forms an attempt to detect any issues that might relate to their subsequent detachment from mainstream education. For instance, is there a difference in the impact of the curriculum, relationships with teachers or with other young people? Nearly 40 per cent of young people rated their overall experience of mainstream school as very good or excellent. However, the distribution of their scores indicates a significant minority for whom school was an unrewarding experience (Figure 4.1). But this overall rating is certainly not indicative of wholesale disaffection with mainstream schooling .

Lessons – the balance of subjects, their content and other aspects – did not draw out significant feelings in terms of either very low or very high scoring (Figure 4.1). There was little evidence of widespread feelings that subjects taught were not relevant in terms of young people’s needs. Responses in interviews generally indicated a high level of awareness of the connection between qualifications and employment.

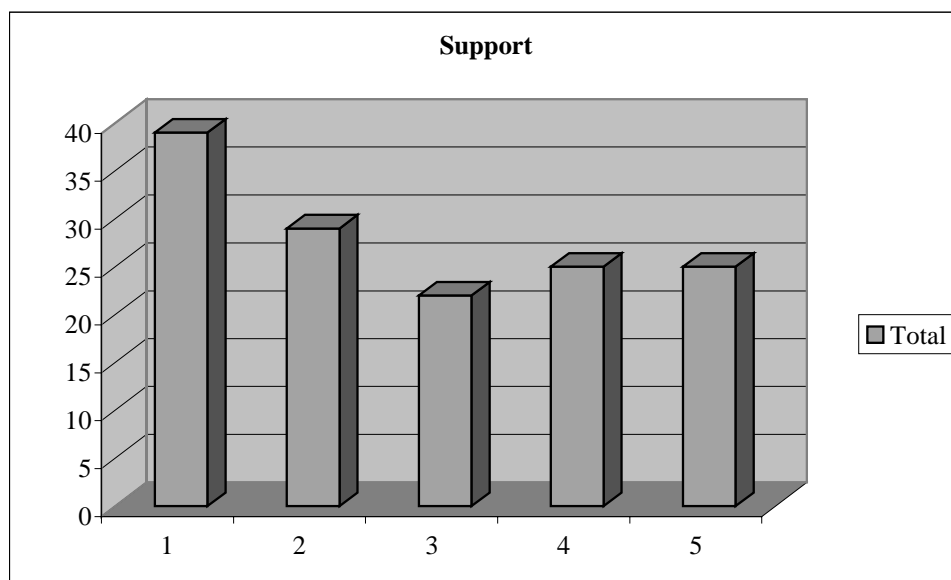
With regard to teachers, there was clearly a group of young people who had had difficult relationships with some teachers, as nearly a quarter of the sample rated them as ‘poor’ (Figure 4.1). However, this was not an issue for the majority (57 per cent), who rated their teachers in mainstream school as ‘good’, ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’. Analysis of Ofsted inspection reports reveals that the majority of exclusions within a school are associated with the interactions of students with a relatively small proportion of teachers (Ofsted, 1997). The evidence from the review of young people’s views appears consistent with the Ofsted finding.

Clearly, the most positive aspect of mainstream school for these young people was their relationship with other students (Figure 4.1). Over a third rated this aspect as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’.

The area that received the most negative ratings was that of individual support for learning, as can be seen in Figure 4.2. Nearly a quarter of the sample rated this as ‘poor’. Many young people expressed themselves very strongly on this issue; some of this is reflected in their comments

contained within this report. Support for literacy was seen to be the most deficient area, compared to support for numeracy and ICT.

Figure 4.2: Attitudes to support



Most of these young people had been formally rejected by their schools through disciplinary exclusions, and a quarter of them were 10 years or more behind their chronological age for their functioning in literacy and numeracy. Therefore, their attachment to the concept of mainstream education and their criticisms regarding levels of individual support need to be taken seriously in formulating interventions.

Even where young people rated some aspects of their mainstream schooling very highly, it had clearly been an extremely painful experience because of their learning failures and consequent feelings of humiliation. As so many had such severe literacy and numeracy deficits, it is hardly surprising that mainstream schooling was so difficult for them:

“No one knew about me, I kept myself to myself.”

“I didn’t want to feel as thick as I am.”

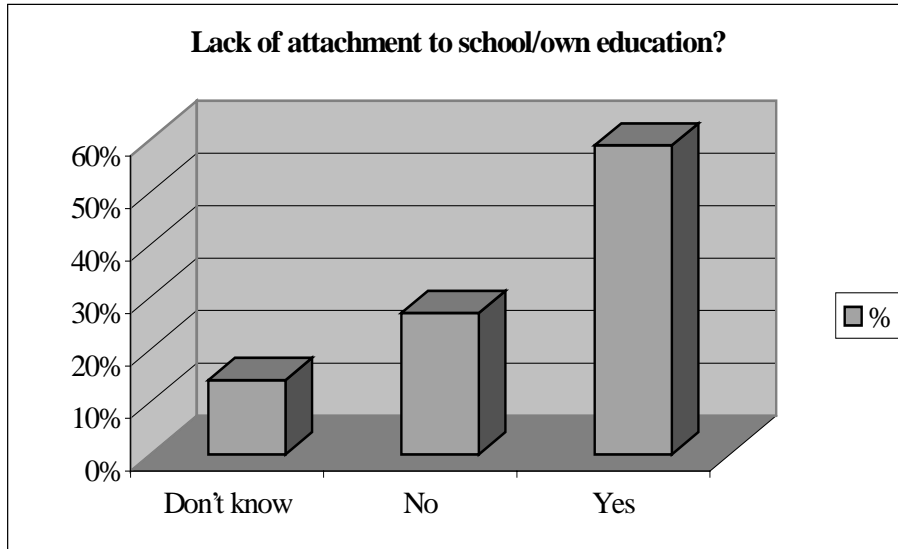
“You wouldn’t catch me reading for nothing.”

(Roger)

In contrast to the views expressed by the young people in response to the detailed questions of the interviewers, the Yot staff who completed the ASSET forms tended to ascribe a lower level of attachment to school or education (Figure 4.3). Part of the reason for this anomaly may be that Yot staff may be basing their judgements partly on the reality of detachment in terms of the young people’s attendance. It may also reflect Yot staff’s lack of understanding and confidence in relation to educational issues. The negative framing of many of the questions of the ASSET

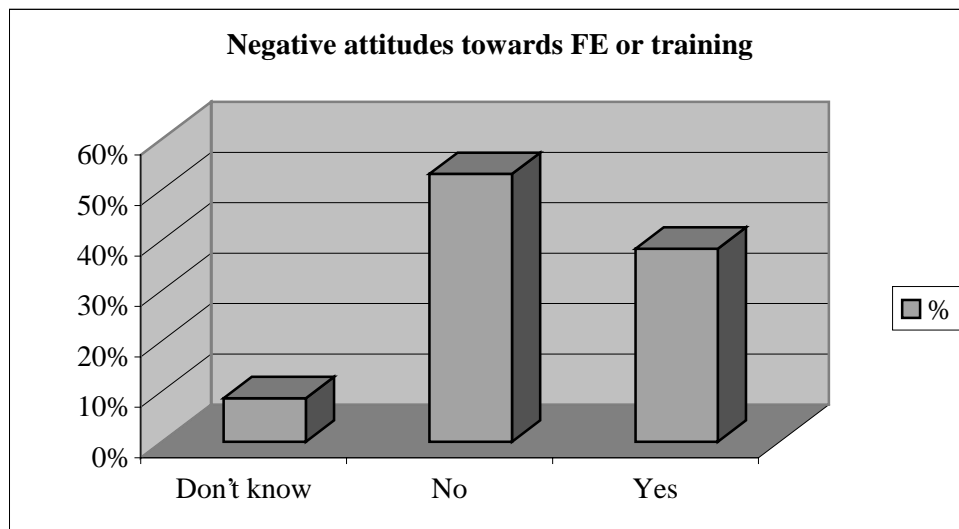
form in this area (understandable in that the approach focuses on risk) may well also distort responses.

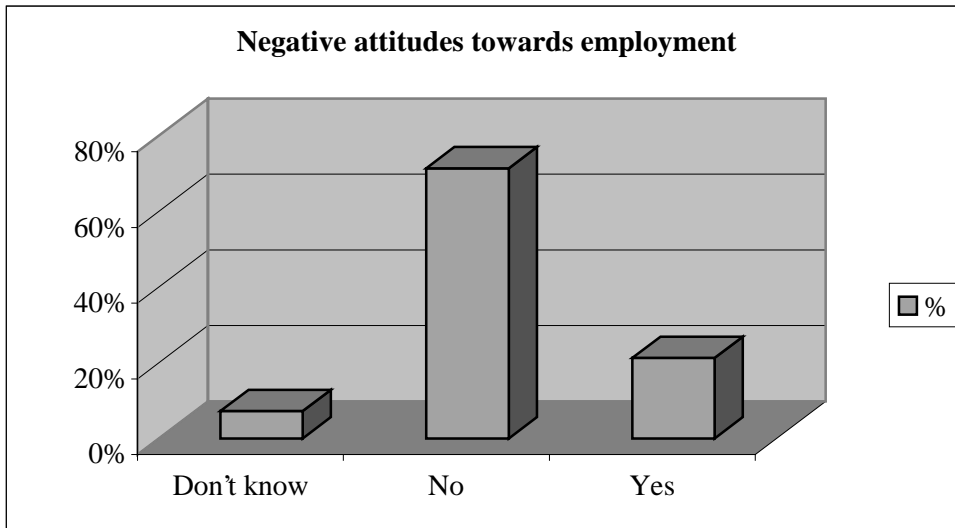
Figure 4.3: Lack of attachment to school/own education? (ASSET)



Interestingly, the analysis of the judgements of staff completing ASSET forms shows that they felt that a majority of young people had positive attitudes towards further education or training (or rather that they did not have negative attitudes). A much larger proportion of ASSET forms indicated a lack of negative attitudes among these young people towards employment (Figure 4.4).

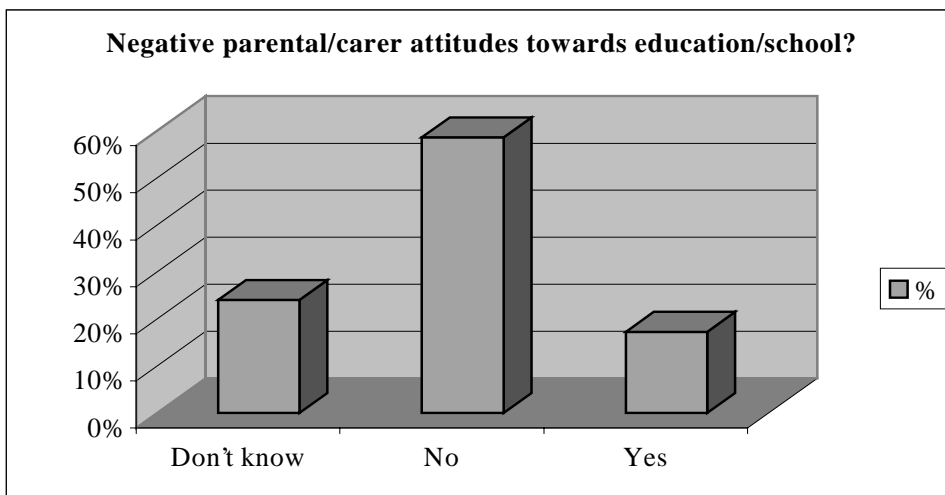
Figure 4.4: Negative attitude towards FE or training, and employment (ASSET)





An encouraging feature is the assessment by those completing the ASSET forms that a significant majority of parents/carers did not have negative attitudes towards the education and schooling of their children (Figure 4.5). This argues against the stereotypical view of disaffected young people, whose parents are also seen as unsupportive on educational matters. This is another finding that should be taken into account when evolving evidence-based practice for re-engaging these young people in formal education.

Figure 4.5: Negative parental/carer attitudes towards education/school?

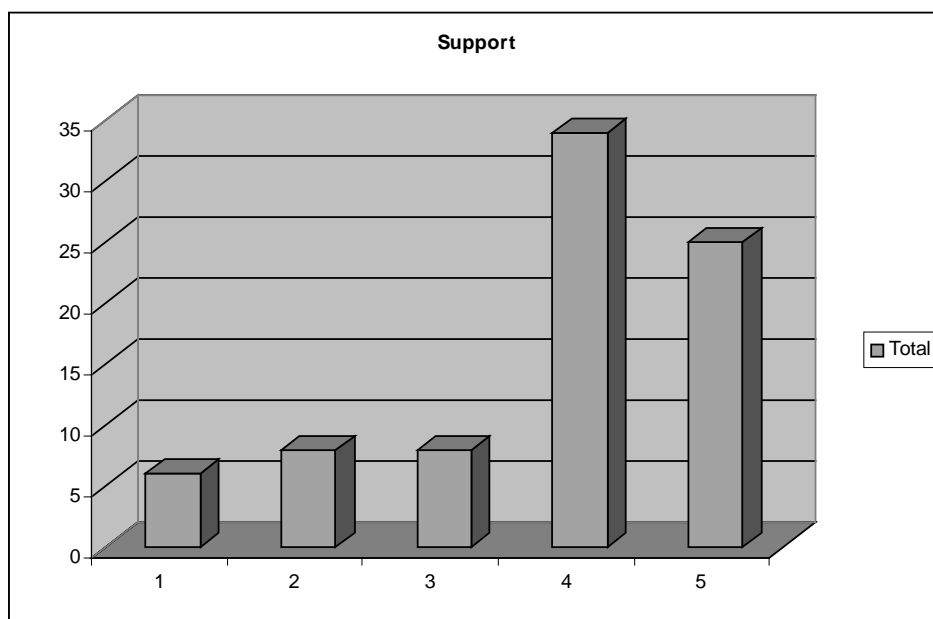


4.2 Attitudes to alternative placements

Young people's attitudes towards the various educational and training placements that they had experienced outside of mainstream education were very varied, bearing in mind that they had experienced a diversity of provision. The sample is also significantly reduced in size compared to those giving their views of mainstream and custodial education. Virtually all of the sample had experience of both of those, while a significant number of young people had no provision at all and so could not score on alternative provision.

The most interesting finding regarding young people’s experiences of alternative educational placements was that they scored very highly in relation to individual support (Figure 4.6). This aspect contrasted strongly with both mainstream educational experiences and to a lesser extent with custodial educational experiences. This finding is not necessarily a function of teacher-student ratios, as class sizes in custody can often be under 10 young people, although some alternative educational placements are highly individualised, such as home tuition.

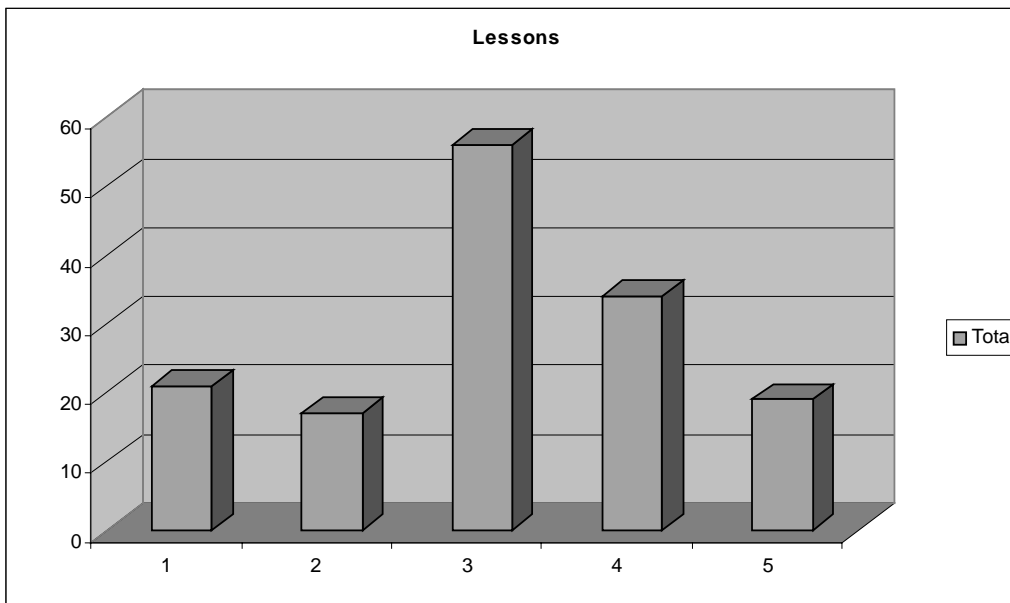
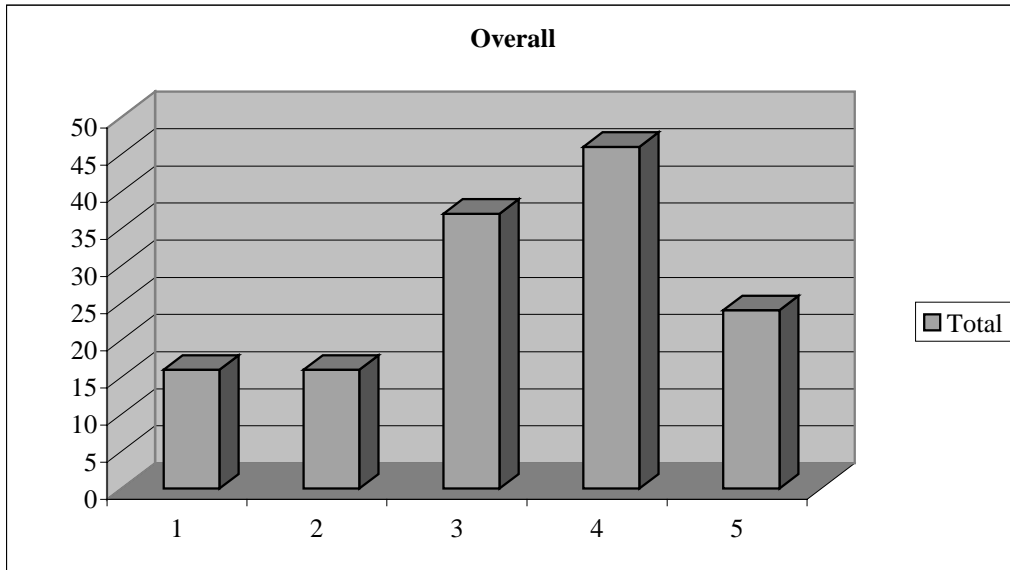
Figure 4.6: Attitudes to support in alternative placements

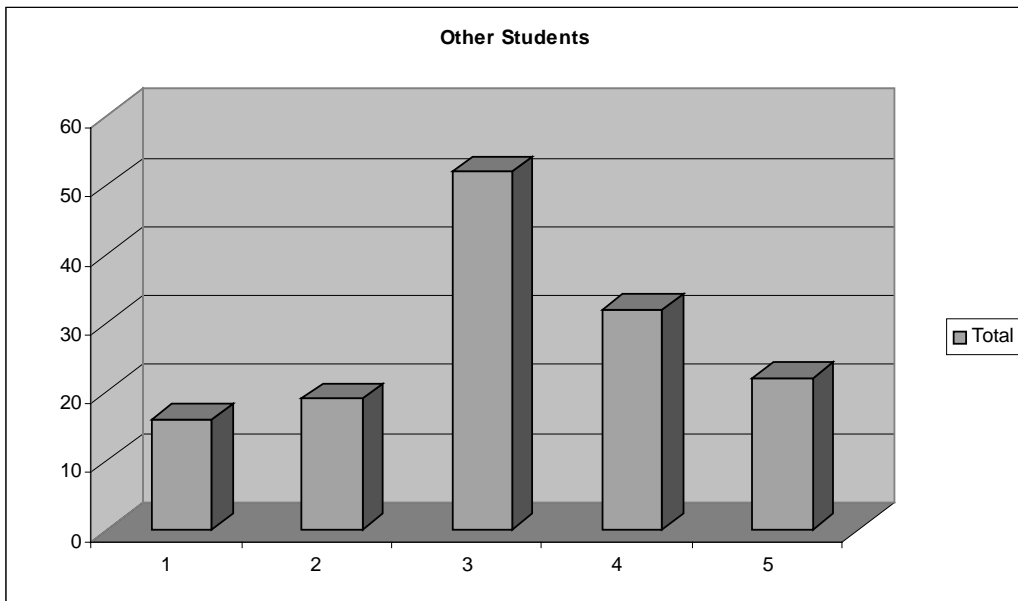
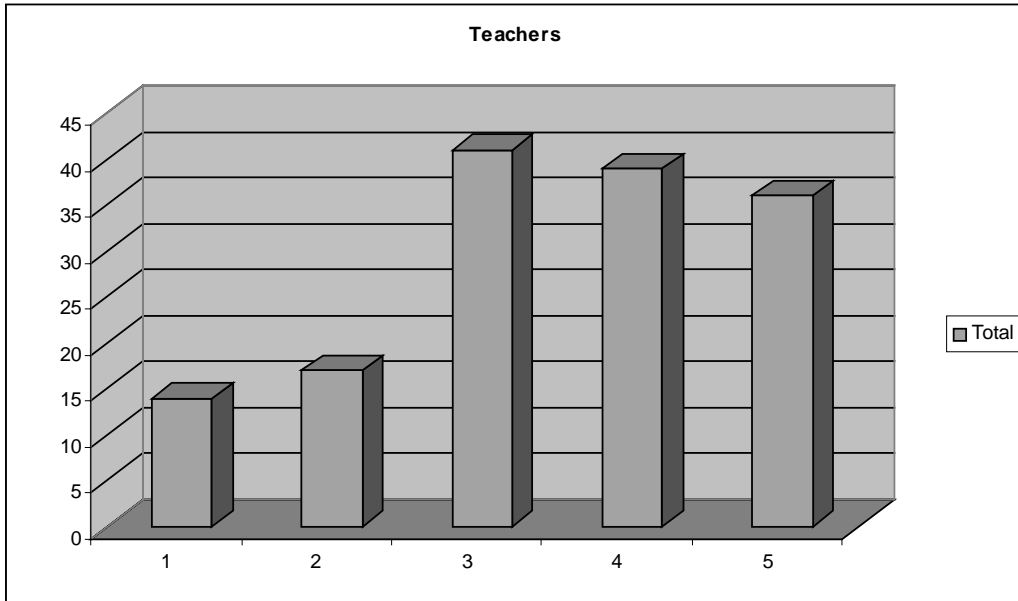


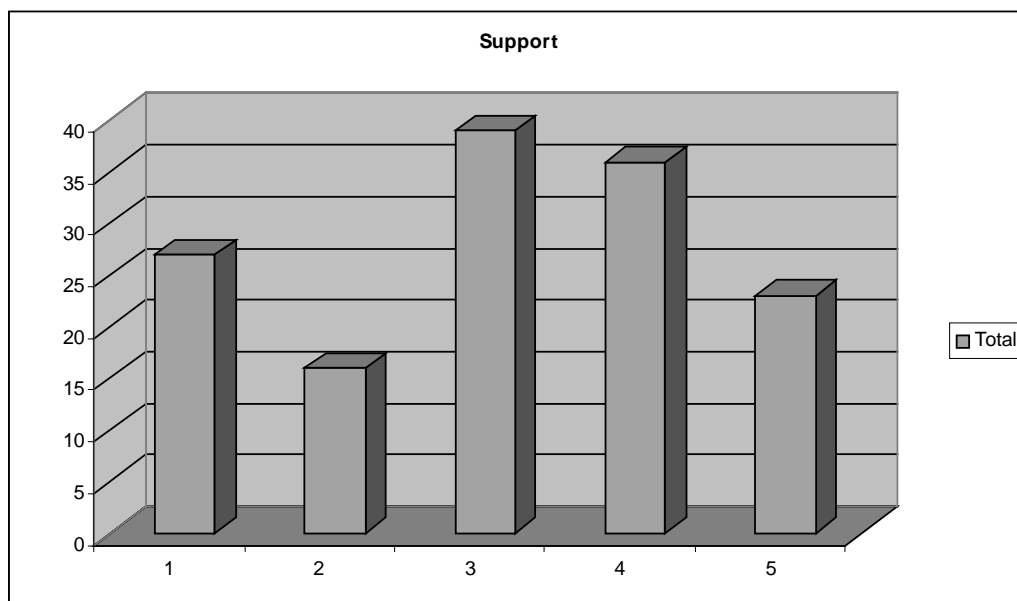
4.3 Attitudes to education in custody

Figure 4.7 shows that young people’s overall attitude towards their experience of education or training in custody was broadly similar, with 45 per cent assessing the provision as very good or excellent. Perhaps understandably a less favourable view was taken of other students – only a third rated them as very good or excellent. Individual support was rated more highly than for mainstream school, which again is understandable given class sizes that tend to be about a quarter of those in mainstream schools. However, significant levels of dissatisfaction were also recorded, with almost one in five being very dissatisfied with their individual support. Teaching staff tended to be viewed very positively; almost half of the young people assessed their teachers as very good or excellent.

Figure 4.7: Attitudes to education in custody







It may be that the favourable ratings for aspects of custodial education were influenced by the context, in that education may be viewed as the most positive and constructive activity undertaken within the overall regime. Nevertheless, in conjunction with these positive ratings the young people tended to be very critical of the teaching staff and the learning environment, particularly in relation to disruption to classes and not being able to attend as a result of staff shortages of both teachers and prison officers.

For some young people, custody represented educational sanctuary as there at least it was normal to have these learning difficulties:

“I never learnt anything at school. I always felt too embarrassed because I couldn’t do things, but here you’re not alone – everyone in the class is in the same position ... ”

(David)

But even where there was a positive attitude towards the education received in custody (bearing in mind that it was often the most positive aspect of custody) it was still not preferred to mainstream schooling:

“Alright, but not better than school.”

“The teachers help you more at school.”

(Brian)

There was a recognition, however, that there was no going back as far as mainstream schooling was concerned, despite hankering after it:

“Looking back it doesn’t seem as bad now as it seemed then.”

(Joseph)

Despite the systemic failings that this report draws attention to, it is important to record that individual triumphs do occur, thanks to the efforts of the education staff and the young people. In reducing criminogenic risk factors, enabling young people who are functionally illiterate and innumerate to read and write is in itself a major achievement:

“When I came in I couldn’t write to my mum or read her letters but now I’m able to write to her regularly and read.”

(Leroy)

“Since being in custody I’ve been taught to read – I never had that at school.”

(Darren)

“Here I’ve learnt more than in the whole of school.”

(James)

The impact of custody can produce beneficial responses, through the shock of incarceration, the reality of compulsion and the fact that – despite its shortfalls – provision is often considerably better in quantity and quality than that received previously (e.g. home tuition). All these factors combined to produce positive reactions:

“[It has] brought it all back to me, things I’d forgotten ... [I can] build on what I learnt before and I’m getting better at things.”

(Damien)

“Made me realise I need to get my head down and work.”

(Shane)

“In here [STC] the only time I want the lesson to end is when I’m hungry.”

(Billy)

“What’s happened has made me more positive – I could be smarter, could do better. It’s made me a lot more determined – but it’s getting late!”

(Paul)

For a small number of these young people, the support they have received in their learning in custody and the nature of the provision have resulted in their viewing it extremely positively. Were it not for the stigma associated with a criminal record, they would choose to undertake their education and training in these establishments:

“If I could have come here without a criminal record I would have come because of all the help I’ve had. If I weren’t here I’d be worse off – I’m more focused now.”

(Dean)

“I’d stay here [STC] for a year for my education but not in a YOI.”

(Jerome)

There were examples of the constructive use of incentives within custody to encourage learning and participation in education:

“You have to do work here and therefore you learn ... There’s an incentive scheme and that has a good influence. I would do better in mainstream school now.”

(Jane)

“You can’t miss ’em [lessons] otherwise they take your TV. I’ve been to most lessons. It is good that you have to go and it is boring sat in your pad all day. I might as well learn something while I’m in here.”

(Rob)

Attitudes towards discipline comprised the one area where there were very mixed reactions. There was a very even split within the sample between those who considered the custodial regime to be too ‘strict’, and those who thought it was less strict than, and therefore an improvement on, mainstream school.

“You’re not made to do things, they don’t push you like at school.”

(Adam)

“School is stricter – here you can do what you want, as long as you do your work.”

(Charles)

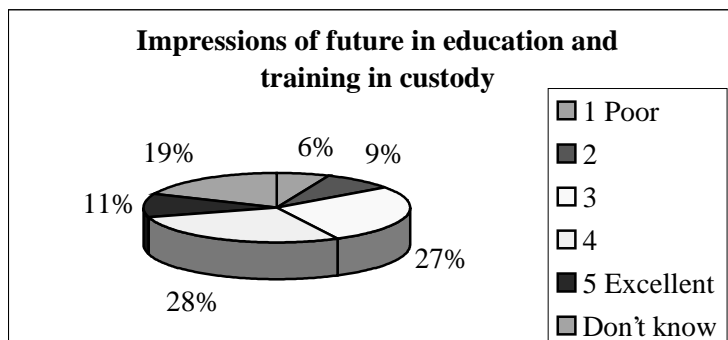
4.4 Attitudinal change

On balance, there appears to have been a positive impact on these young people’s attitudes towards education and training as a result of their custodial experience. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.8 show that only 15 per cent of those who expressed an opinion felt that their attitude was less positive than before; 39 per cent believed that their attitude was significantly more positive.

Table 4.1: More or less positive regarding future in education and training

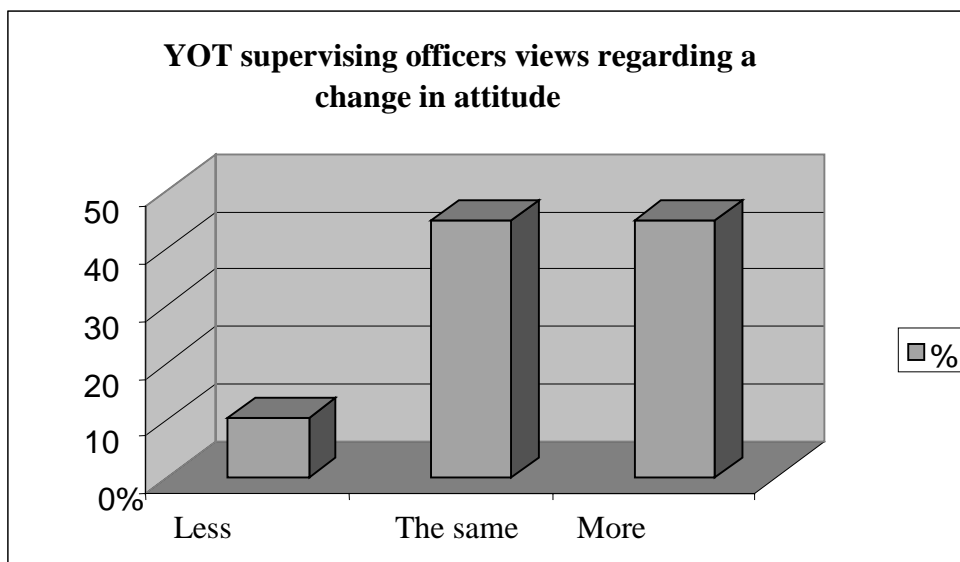
Rating	Total	%
1 Poor	10	6%
2	14	9%
3	44	28%
4	45	28%
5 Excellent	17	11%
Don't know	30	19%
Total	160	100%

Figure 4.8: Impressions of future in education and training



The opinions of the young people were supported by those of their supervising officers (Figure 4.9). Supervising officers believed that under 10 per cent of the young people were less positive about education and training as a result of their custodial experience.

Figure 4.9: Yot supervising officers' views on change in attitude



Despite the weaknesses indicated in this chapter, the education and training provided in custody was for many young people their first significant formal learning in a considerable period of time. For others, it represented a significant increase in the number of hours of education per week. Education provided in custody could therefore be seen as a real improvement, but this only throws into relief the failure to secure an effective transition to education in the community, as shown in the next chapter.

5.0 TRANSITION TO THE COMMUNITY

Interviews were carried out with Yot supervising officers, and with the young people who could be tracked between four and six weeks following their release from custody.

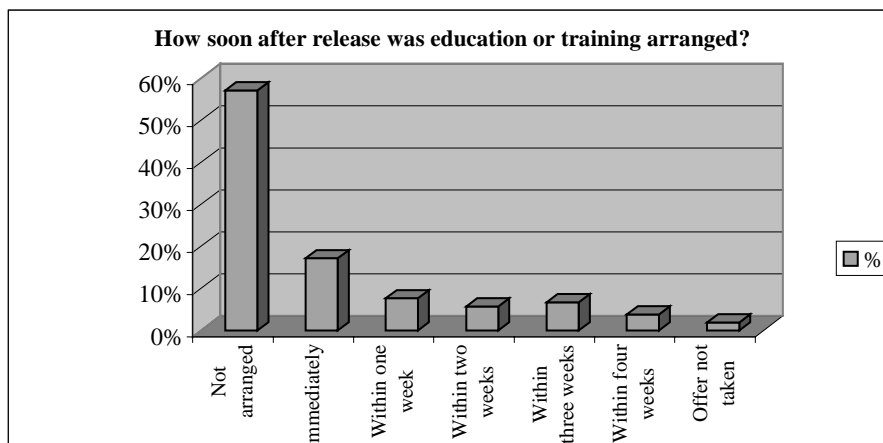
As far as education is concerned, the process of transition from custody to the community is a fundamental weakness in the current operation of the Detention and Training Order. There is no evidence to indicate that the situation has deteriorated, and it may have improved with the introduction of the new order. Nevertheless, the failure to secure a smooth and timely transition may well negate any beneficial impacts of the custodial experience in reintroducing young people to learning. In fact, so ill-adapted appear to be the current planning systems, administrative working practices and infrastructure that there was a significant deterioration in many of the young people's access to and participation in education and training on release compared with the period immediately prior to custody.

Even one month after discharge from custody, over half (57 per cent) of the young people had no education or training arranged (Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1). Only one in six young people released from custody had education, training or employment immediately available. For those who did have such opportunities, the majority of these were half-time or less.

Table 5.1: How soon after release was education, training or employment arranged?

How soon	Total	%
Not arranged	60	57%
Immediately	18	17%
Within one week	8	8%
Within two weeks	6	6%
Within three weeks	7	7%
Within four weeks	4	4%
Offer not taken	2	2%
Total	105	100%

Figure 5.1: How soon after release was education, training or employment arranged?



Fewer than one in 10 young people had full-time education, training or employment available during the first month following their release on a Detention and Training Order. Even these figures are likely to be over-estimates, as ‘arranged’ was not always synonymous with ‘available’.

The immediate effect of custody appears to have been to double the numbers who had no provision available to them at all, compared with the period immediately prior to custody. It also increased the proportion who had only part-time provision available.

It may be that for a certain number of young people, a return to the original placement was still being negotiated. This does not of course ameliorate the risk factor during the month when the young people were tracked. What appears to have happened in some instances – particularly where mainstream school or college was concerned – was that the young people, partly at least because of inappropriate courses followed in custodial education, had fallen so far behind in their work that they would have to wait for the start of the next academic year. There appear also to have been difficulties in arranging for alternative education, such as pupil referral units and home tuition, which had not necessarily kept places open for young people on release.

Another significant issue was that of accommodation. Many of the young people (30 per cent) had a different place of accommodation on release than that prior to custody.

One of the benefits of custody may be the introduction of a highly structured day and regular routines into relatively chaotic lifestyles. However, the very high levels of control may well lead to an erosion of planning and decision-making skills, and weaken young people’s ability to cope with change. For those young people for whom custody had reintroduced significant amounts of learning, to be released to no provision must thus have been doubly disappointing. When the evidence regarding an improved attitude towards education and training and the considerable efforts undertaken by secure institutions to enhance learning are taken into account, this must be seen as a major breach of expectations for the young people.

This reduction in the volume of learning opportunities available to the young people, and the lack of continuity regarding curriculum, qualifications, materials and teaching and learning styles must pose a very real threat to the effectiveness of the community part of the DTO.

5.1 Continuity

As so few young people had any provision arranged, it is difficult to assess with precision the degree of continuity in relation to courses undertaken, accreditation, materials and teaching and learning styles. However, it appears to be very limited.

Just over 70 per cent of those who had an educational or training placement arranged were not using all the same teaching and learning materials that they had when in custody. Similarly, 80 per cent were not following all the same courses that they had undertaken when in custody. Half of the group had less access to ICT in their new placements than they had in custody.

Nearly half of the supervising officers (46 per cent) felt that they did not receive adequate information on the education and training the young people had undertaken in custody.

There was some evidence that the positive attitude towards education and training acquired in custody translated itself, at least in the early stages, into relatively high attendance rates.

5.2 *Barriers to re-integration*

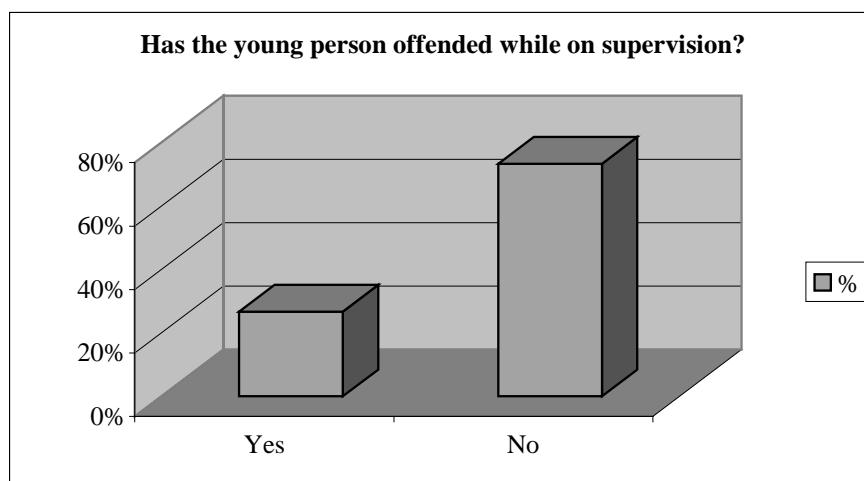
The young people interviewed were questioned about what they perceived as barriers to their success for reintegration into education and training on their release from custody. The four main threats identified were difficulties with accommodation, the lack of educational opportunities, the risk of re-offending, and involvement with peers.

The two most important threats cited were the risk of re-offending (22 per cent) and the lack of educational opportunities in the community (20 per cent). Only 9 per cent identified accommodation as the main threat.

5.3 *Re-offending*

According to their supervising officers, it appears that over a quarter of the sample (27 per cent) had re-offended within the first month or so of release (Table Figure 5.2). The great majority of these young people were the ones who had no provision arranged for them. None of those who had full-time education immediately available for them on release from custody had re-offended.

Figure 5.2: Has the young person offended while on supervision?



A direct causal relationship should not necessarily be inferred, as it may be that other factors which led to difficulties in arranging appropriate education could be linked with the re-offending. Closer analysis and tracking of offending patterns in relation to education and training provision both prior to and after the custodial element of the sentence would be necessary in order to derive more definitive conclusions.

5.4 Views of supervising officers

The responsibility for ensuring the coherence of the Detention and Training Order and an effective transition between custody and the community lies with the designated supervising officer within Yots. This is a pivotal role, but these practitioners are often having to face and surmount barriers for which they do not have either the authority or expertise. The interviews with Yot supervising officers revealed a consistent pattern regarding the everyday challenges they face in attempting to arrange this critical part of the Detention and Training Order. The illustrative comments provided in this section identify practitioners' key areas of concern. Given the difficult circumstances, it is perhaps understandable that these staff evinced considerable frustration with the current educational infrastructure and the attitudes of agencies.

The three principal areas identified by supervising officers as in need of urgent remedy were these:

Timing – the current pace of planning, communication and arrangement of learning opportunities is simply too slow.

Flexible provision – current educational providers, particularly schools and to a lesser extent colleges, are not structured flexibly enough to offer opportunities throughout the year so that young people can access them immediately on release from custody.

Recognition of risk – it was felt strongly that many of the agencies involved in education do not see the needs of these young people as a priority.

One supervising officer spoke for many in describing the operation of the DTO as follows:

“The pattern is community STOP custody STOP community STOP.”

Young people

“After a week with nothing you have lost them, they’ll not engage in full-time education or training.”

“Whereas if the structured environment is continued the self-discipline is still there and helps them to engage.”

“Young people do not want to be passed around agencies – they have enough involvement of professionals in their life already.”

“Timing is crucial to the outcome.”

“Young people need support in fitting back into the family and the community.”

“There is a need for a more structured support package including home and education.”

“There is a need to involve all stakeholder representative agencies to resolve issues for individuals.”

“There is a need to create resources to meet the needs gaps.”

Young Offender Institutions

Many Yot supervising officers were critical of the quality of education and training provision in Young Offender Institutions, and the fact that it did not link through appropriate accreditation and materials to equivalent learning opportunities upon release.

“There is no feedback unless it is from the young person.”

“There is a need for more focused education packages whilst young people are in custody.”

“There is no accountability for providing training recommended by the SO.”

“There is a need for more reporting from education in custody to LEA and education welfare, e.g. educational needs, targets.”

“Popular courses go to the ones with longer sentences.”

“Education provision in prison needs to be tightened up – it is too disruptive and too much disparity in ability and skills in the group.”

“It would help if the education department identified needs and reported to SO to help develop a package of support.”

“SOs assess for training needs and programmes, but the programmes do not exist.”

“Many custody courses are not general/transferrable courses – so cannot be continued or finished.”

“Courses are not started because they cannot finish in time or are abandoned on release.”

“Need to get a college qualification not an HM qualification.”

In addition to identifying these weaknesses in education and training provision in Young Offender Institutions, some Yot supervising officers were critical of YOIs’ handling of assessment information.

“YOI officers are concerned with discipline issues – not specialists in welfare, training and employment issues.”

“If needs are not displayed overtly then assessment carried out before is ignored and not acted upon.”

“It is only if behaviour is problematic then it is tackled and training is made available.”

“There is not recognition of the ASSET form.”

“They tick the ASSET form as arrived.”

“Prison officers do not read ASSET forms and don’t understand ASSET as they have had no training.”

Training provision

The use of training providers is very important for this group – not only as a resource for those over compulsory school age, but also potentially for those 14 to 16 year olds for whom

mainstream school places are not readily available. The Life Skills option within the Learning Gateway is intended to meet the needs of young people who need extra support in order to re-engage with mainstream education and training. However, practitioners pointed out that there are a number of fundamental weaknesses in the way this option is currently organised.

Those providing the Life Skills option, like other training providers, tend to be paid on a per capita basis. This penalises the providers who cannot afford to keep places open for the unpredictable flow of young people coming out of custody. The volume of learning opportunities is not always sufficient, in that the national guidance for the Learning Gateway defines full-time provision as 16 hours per week – barely over half the standard set by the Youth Justice Board for those to receive provision in custody. The length of the Life Skills option tends to be about 20 weeks, although instances were found in this study where local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) were only funding programmes for a maximum of 12 weeks. It was felt by many practitioners that this programme length is too short for many young people on Detention and Training Orders – particularly those with sentences of more than eight months.

“There needs to be a range of options.... It means trying to knock square pegs into round holes.”

“We find ourselves trying to plug the gaps from the Yot.”

“There needs to be tailored projects and staff to attend the DTO meetings.”

“Unless they have been in education they cannot be referred to a training project.”

“There is a need to have immediate provision to keep the impetus and motivation going.”

“There is no interim support available.”

“Courses do not motivate.”

“It is important to bridge the gap in access to provision.”

“There needs to be a combination of life skills and vocational skills – there is nothing like that available.”

LEAs

The role of LEAs received a certain amount of criticism. Little evidence was discovered to indicate that the education members of Yots had sufficient status with LEAs to ensure a speedy provision of adequate education places to young people of compulsory school age. Equally, Chief Officers’ Steering Groups were not, for whatever reason, receiving information highlighting the deficiency in provision.

“ The main problem is the lack of urgency on the part of the LEA and lack of awareness of the standards ... LEAs work at their own pace, causing a lot of pressure.”

“ The EWO (Education Welfare Officer) does not understand the emergency of the needs.”

“Year 11 are a low priority.”

“LEA – acknowledge the issue but do not have the teeth to react quickly enough – they do not have the necessary speed.”

“LEAs can be very discriminatory – YOs are considered less deserving.”

“Statement of educational needs can take a year to come through.”

“There is a need to strengthen the communication of schools with other LEAs when a young person leaves – it needs to be followed up.”

Schools

The role and attitude of schools received the most widespread criticism from Yot supervising officers. Many of them felt that these young people had simply been abandoned by mainstream education. As their comments show, considerable frustration was felt at the difficulties they had experienced in attempting to engage schools with these young people.

“They have to be attached to a school to access a college place as funding has to follow them.”

“Schools take no responsibility and dump the young person on other agencies.”

“We are given no timescale of when decisions will be made.”

“It is unusual for someone to be ready for mainstream school straight away.”

“There is a huge distance between social services and schools.”

“The Yot have good links with police, community health, etc and despite being a multi-disciplinary team it is still hard to work with schools.”

“It would have more impact if the custodial team invited the head teacher or head of year to DTO meetings – this would help them to understand how much a young person had improved – it would have more impact than the SO inviting them.”

[Statement of educational needs] *“need the school to recommend the assessment or there will not be enough evidence for a psychological assessment.”*

“Other options are blocked by him still being on the roll at the school.”

“If I had known about the school’s intentions earlier plans could have been put into place – now it is last minute.”

“Schools are NOT open about their position of accepting the young person – this creates a waiting time.”

“Schools’ attitudes to young people is the main blockage – issues lie unresolved.”

“Schools need to be more involved in the transition period – it is done third-hand by the SO – it would provide more reassurance for the young person.”

“Head teachers need to be more accountable – schools have a responsibility to follow up the young person.”

“The message sent to young people when they are excluded causes them to become disenfranchised.”

“Once out of mainstream school it is difficult to access anything except pupil referral units or home tutoring.”

Home tuition

Home tuition was seen as a potentially useful stop-gap service, but considerable dissatisfaction was expressed regarding its availability.

“Home tuition is only for a few hours a week whereas the young person needs a high level of provision and we have to build a programme of support.”

“There is a shortage of home tutors – it is a huge problem.”

“Need to use tutors who can offer group sessions at Yot centres.”

“Even provision for home tuition infringes national standards.”

“Home tutors do not get paid if young people fail to attend – if young people miss an appointment the tutor is reluctant to carry on educating the person and tells other tutors.”

“Do not have home tutors’ names until after release.”

“Education welfare would not put a home tutor in place whilst the young person is still in custody.”

Accommodation

The problems with accommodation loomed large for many Yot supervising officers. In some circumstances, accommodation was the first priority to arrange before education and training.

“There is no way of booking accommodation in a B&B before release.”

“Getting stable accommodation is the main problem.”

“There is a need for supported lodgings as a stepping stone.”

“There is no ready supply of accommodation – a lot will end up in bedsit accommodation which is a recipe for disaster.”

“Housing has more impact than drugs.”

“Prison establishment tell the young person it is their responsibility to find themselves accommodation.”

“Accommodation should be addressed earlier whilst still in custody.”

Careers service

Experience of the involvement of careers advisers was very variable. Where strong links had been made between careers information and advice in custody and the community, and where the adviser (particularly the Learning Gateway personal adviser) was pro-active, this was valued by Yot supervising officers. However, in many areas the relationship appeared to be relatively passive, with appointments simply being made at careers offices. Not all careers companies appeared to recognise the needs of these young people; one Yot manager commented on the refusal of their local service to work to offer one session with a group of young offenders recently released from custody.

“Connection between careers in custody and SO and community careers improves the speed of access to courses/education/training.”

“Careers in custody need to be more pro-active and liaise with community careers.”

“The Gateway Adviser attended the DTO meeting – this is very positive.”

“It helps to have attendance from providers at a DTO meeting.”

The picture that emerges from the interviews with these practitioners is one of considerable frustration. Supervising officers perceive their role in attempting to implement the DTO effectively and meet the needs of these young people as being blocked by other agencies. It is understandable that in these very difficult circumstances unproductive blame cultures can arise. The expectations for what can be delivered to the young people tend to be low. While the resource gaps identified by these practitioners appear undeniable, their lack of understanding regarding education and training issues hampers them both in supporting young people more effectively in re-engagement, and also in brokering learning opportunities confidently with LEAs, schools, colleges and training providers.

5.5 Evidence of promising approaches

Return to Mainstream

However, only a small proportion of the sample went back to mainstream school. The sample was reviewed to see what factors had enabled them to return to mainstream school. Five had returned to their previous school almost immediately. These were young people who had good continuity; their schools had taken a personal interest in their on-going education, had attended review meetings with Yots and liaised with YOIs. In one case the school supplied learning materials for the secure institution to ensure that the same curriculum was followed.

Schools’ willingness for young people to return depended on time interval since they left that school and the circumstances – e.g. whether they had been excluded, or were in the process of taking GCSEs. Those who were taking fewer GCSEs returned on a special timetable combined with work experience (often provided by their family or under the supervision of a FE College vocational training programme).

There were considerable barriers to a straight return to a previous school, including the lack of continuity in use of materials. For those who were working towards GCSEs immediately prior to custody, the work within the secure institutions could be too basic. Where young people were taking GCSEs lack of synergy between the systems inside and outside custody meant that subjects had to be dropped.

“When (teachers) turned up I didn’t have to work. We could watch videos. When I did work it was easy, and asked for harder work sometimes”.

(Sammy. Age 16, aiming to do A-level course, depending on GCSE results).

“Not my standard – either too hard or too easy. I need a little bit of help but not like that. It was all noise and racket. I was trying to do higher level maths, but I couldn’t

concentrate. I miss work experience. I would like a class full of quiet people with flexible teachers”.

(Michael. Age 16. Taken back by his original school for 2 days per week, and work experience with his father.)

“It was not organised. They did not know how to customise their provision for my needs...they didn’t know what to do with me. They had an incentive scheme whereby you could earn a PC in your cell. I qualified but they had no PC to give me.”

(Timothy, age 15. Taking 9 GCSEs prior to custody. School provided materials for continued study in the secure establishment.)

Enabling continuity was clearly a major issue, which some schools tried to tackle. In one case although the school and Yot made the YOI aware of the GCSE requirements for a young person entering custody, the YOI was unable to make provision for the young person’s exam entry because they and the school used different examination boards.

It should be noted that some of the interviewees found the curriculum and teaching styles within the secure institutions more suited than mainstream school to their educational needs. They liked the order and one-to-one support provided within the secure estate.

“Teachers were alright - some staff used to help with homework on the wings – it was better than school.”

(Luke. Age 15. Since release he is losing interest in mainstream school.)

For this group a return to mainstream was not suitable or desired and they sought a placement which could offer more one-to-one support or a wider variety of activities. A number of Yots have tried to find this type of placement, but are seriously hampered by the lack of provision.

Placement with ‘Alternative’ Provision

Analysis was carried out on the group for whom arrangements had been made quickly with an ‘alternative’ training/education provider. Six young people found placements quickly with such providers. Typical schemes were those specially funded for this target group by, for example, INCLUDE, NACRO, LEAs, voluntary sector providers, and ESF Objective 3 funded. These projects were generally part-time (10-14 hours), and involved a curriculum adapted to the needs of young people who were not deemed to be able or ready to return to mainstream education. These schemes were provided as a stop-gap for those who were nearing the end of compulsory schooling, to fill the gap over the Easter break, or to provide a stepping stone into organised activities of some kind. A number of schemes provided an activity-based timetable rather than academic activities, although one project funded through ESF Objective 3 offered places to persistent young offenders, operating a standard school day, and teaching the National Curriculum alongside more practical activities. This type of provision is scarce however, and the young person involved had to wait for a space on the scheme to become available.

These schemes provide a vital link for the young people who feel they are not suited to mainstream education. For example, Lee (age14), who was permanently excluded from his previous mainstream school, was found a place quickly on an LEA ‘alternative schooling

service'. Lee reports enjoying the mix of practical skills and written work, and has requested an increase in the number of hours he spends there. He is able to follow an Open College Course and has taken an ASDAN award with the scheme. This young man also reported being re-motivated by the custodial experience with the STC. He found the discipline of enforced attendance helpful, liked the structured curriculum, and felt the small classes and one-to-one support he received helpful.

Pre-release good practice

For those over school age the arrangements made from within the institution, and prior to release are equally important. It is an unfortunate fact that the only institutions which are consistently planning programmes of education for young people to enter on release are those which are drawing special funding streams to support specialist teams working on continuity issues. The European Social Fund has contributed to a continuity team within Thorn Cross YOI, and in the case of one interviewee ensured that provision was made for him within a week of release. The 'Headstart' specialist team includes a Careers advisor, housing worker, employment adviser and two education staff. The young person concerned commended the careers advice he had received, which helped him gain a direction for training post release. The team secured a suitable mainstream college place for him which he combines with his regular rugby training commitments.

Where funding has not been available for full continuity teams, the input from careers companies is a vital means of supporting young people to refocus on education and training. For those over school age it is a vital component in the re-engagement of young people with activities which will steer them towards sustainable employment in the longer term.

The role of the Yots in Continuity

Yot officers in a number of teams have attempted to make placement quickly as a means of ensuring continuity of educational or training provision. Durham Yot has a good success rate in finding placements for young people prior to release. The Yot workers and their 'feeder' YOIs Castington and Hassockfield have developed a good working relationship. Yot workers attending pre-release meetings, and key workers from the YOI attending post release meetings ensure that the majority of the DTOs are placed quickly after release. The Durham Yot has access to an INCLUDE scheme and a NACRO scheme within their locality which helps with the placing of young people who are unable to return to mainstream education directly. However, there is a lack of provision for the under 16's in the area, which means that special funding has to be found from the Local Authority to enable under 16's to enter the INCLUDE programme which is primarily for the 16-18 year old age group. This situation had arisen with one of the interviewees for this research. Nevertheless, the placement began with three weeks of release, despite the Easter break being within that period. Another interviewee from that area had mainstream training arranged within four weeks of release, following arrangements begun prior to release.

Accommodation and education

This Yot struggled, (as did a number of other Yots) with stabilising the accommodation situation for one interviewee, which they felt was the most pressing concern. The comment of this young person about their situation in three years time was: "I'll probably be dead from drug-taking."

Before custody he was sleeping rough and was placed in a hostel after release. The comment of the SO for this young person was:

“Accommodation, accommodation, accommodation! Social services should be required to support young people aged 16+ as it’s a serious blockage to accessing accommodation. A discretion budget in the Yot would help us to support access to accommodation.”

Within some of the secure institutions, the involvement of ‘Throughcare’ has enabled accommodation issues to be addressed though this service is not available for all young people or within all institutions. For one interviewee ‘Throughcare’ had arranged a secure children’s home as they had been in a hostel prior to their custodial spell.

6.0 ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, REVIEW

There is little sense of a continuum in relation to education and training. Given that education and training is by far the largest single component (in terms of time) for intervention in the life of a young offender, the Detention and Training Order appears fragmented.

Transmission of important information is often tardy, and extremely limited in terms of both quantity and quality. In March 2001, between a quarter and a third of young people in custody on DTOs in Young Offender Institutions had arrived without an ASSET. Only half of the ASSETs for the whole custodial population could be located. In itself, ASSET has some significant weaknesses in relation to education and training – crucially, it fails to record whether a young person has been receiving, say, five hours' home tuition a week or a full-time programme. However, ASSET is explicitly designed to be supplemented by vital specialist assessments and plans.

In most cases, individual education plans, SEN statements and care plans (which should contain a considerable amount of information on education and training needs) are conspicuous by their absence. Even on conservative estimates, in excess of half of the custodial population have special educational needs requiring a statement. However, this study indicates that perhaps under 1 per cent of the young people in custody have had their statements sent to the YOI. It might be argued that some young people would never have had a statement because of their absence from school. But this simply begs the question of why they were not followed up and assessed.

This problem of information transmission is nearly as great in Local Authority Secure Units. Yet with LASUs, given their small size and links to the local authority, it might be supposed that transmission of key information would be much easier. Some Local Authority Secure Units, however, have been much more successful in securing ASSETs as they have a policy of “no ASSET, no place”.

There is still a very low level of contact with external organisations, although there are signs of some increases in this area. The use of placements at college or work experience is very limited.

6.1 Youth Justice Board's national standards

The Youth Justice Board has issued national standards that span intervention both in custody and in the community. Those applying to the custodial phase of the Detention and Training Order constitute advice on good practice, and are currently being evaluated in the light of experience. The rest of the standards are expected to be achieved by Youth Offending Teams and others.

Where relevant, the level of compliance with the YJB standards was assessed. One of the objectives of the national standards is to improve the effectiveness of information sharing and exchange. There is a section dedicated to assessment, and several standards relate to integration of the community and custodial phases of the Detention and Training Order. Therefore the national standards are particularly relevant to this study.

Standard 3.1 requires that: “Before any intervention is made with a young person, ... an assessment must be undertaken using the Youth Justice Board ASSET assessment.”

Standard 3.2 further requires that “The assessment must be informed by: ... existing reports, including any previous assessment, pre-sentence report, list of previous convictions, statement of educational needs, and any information relevant to the offending about contact with police, health and social services.”

There was relatively little evidence to suggest that Yot staff have appropriate access to educational records (particularly in relation to special educational needs) when they are completing ASSET. The fact that 21 per cent of those in custody did not have an ASSET when they were interviewed nearing their release date may indicate non-transmission rather than failure to undertake the assessment.

The section on education, training and employment in ASSET is not always completed. It is worth pointing out that in the recent YJB evaluation of the validity and reliability of ASSET, the completion rate for education, training and employment was significantly less than for any other section of ASSET (Roberts, Baker, Merrington and Jones, 2001).

Standard 8.1.3 states that “The supervising officer must ensure that by the next working day following the court appearance, the secure facility has received a record of the current and previous assessments. This includes sentence or care plans, pre-sentence reports, previous convictions, health and all educational plans, and the post-court report form.”

As the evidence adduced above demonstrates, this responsibility of Yot managers has a very variable compliance. Where care plans and education plans are concerned, little evidence was found in YOIs in particular that this important material is routinely sent to secure facilities, let alone within the specified timescale.

An important distinguishing feature of the DTO is the emphasis on the Youth Offending Team’s accountability to ensure integrated provision within a common planning framework. **Standard 8.1.5** for example states that “Education, health and accommodation needs on transfer to the community must be addressed from the beginning of the sentence.”

But the education department in Young Offender Institutions is not an integral part of the planning process. Furthermore, the training plans reviewed by the audit team very rarely set objectives in terms of education and training needs, particularly in relation to placement on transfer to the community.

Again in the context of sentence planning for transfer to the community, **Standard 8.1.8** states that in the review before the return to the community, “The ASSET assessment must be updated. It must identify the progress made during the custodial phase as measured by ASSET, the programme to be provided on transfer, and the requirements to be made of the offender ...”

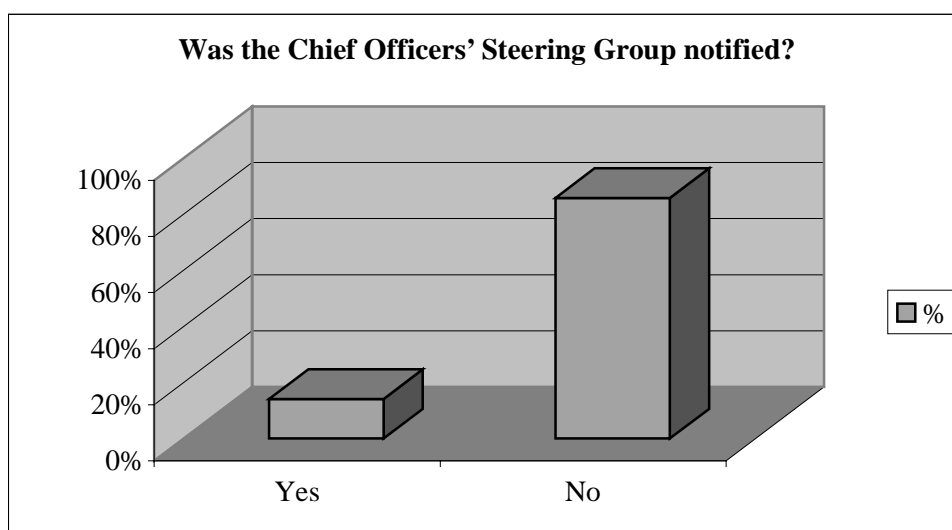
Very little evidence was found to suggest that this practice is widespread. This finding is also borne out by recent research into the validity and reliability of ASSET. Workload pressures mean

that practitioners feel that it is not practicable for them to complete an ASSET at this stage of the Detention and Training Order (Roberts, Baker, Merrington and Jones, 2001)

With regard to provision in the community, **Standard 8.2.6** requires that “The supervising officer must, where appropriate, monitor whether the home education authority provides a continuing programme of education of at least 25 hours per week on transfer, and must inform the Chief Officers’ Steering Group if this is not provided”. This is a crucial fail-safe standard .

Only 14 per cent of Yot supervising officers apparently informed the Chief Officers’ Steering Group when full-time educational provision had not been arranged for those of compulsory school age (Figure 6.1). There appear to be a variety of reasons for this non-compliance, ranging from ignorance of the standard, a belief that it would be a pointless exercise as provision would still not be forthcoming, through to instances where the Chief Officers’ Steering Group had informally communicated to the Yot manager that providing such information would be fruitless and would not be welcomed.

Figure 6.1: Was the Chief Officers’ Steering Group notified?



This is an important issue on two counts. Yot practitioners can quite understandably feel that the Youth Justice Board is imposing a standard that is of only bureaucratic significance if it makes no change to the quality of service for the young people they are responsible for. This is unlikely to encourage compliance with other standards, and could engender cynicism regarding the Youth Justice Board’s role.

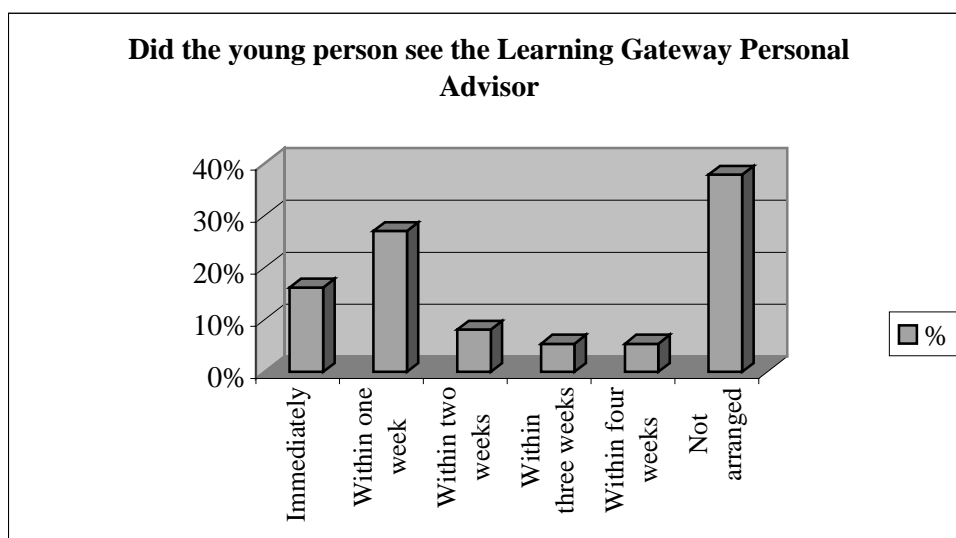
Secondly, the Youth Justice Board has, in return for significant funding, laid down a requirement for all Yots to have a written agreement with the relevant local LSC and LEA about the means of getting all young offenders (subject to formal intervention by the Yot) into education, training or employment. The implication of the finding that there is a very high level of non-compliance in this area is that the Youth Justice Board will need to be vigilant in monitoring the effectiveness of any such agreements. Several Yot managers have requested support from the YJB in

negotiating such an agreement, and would also welcome a standardised set of protocols. This would greatly assist the subsequent monitoring by the Youth Justice Board's staff.

For those above school-leaving age on discharge, a crucial link within the community regarding education or training is the Learning Gateway personal adviser. Accordingly, **Standard 8.2.9** requires that, "The supervising officer must ensure that links are developed for offenders over school-leaving age with the Gateway personal adviser".

Figure 6.2 shows that there was a much higher level of compliance with this standard. Nevertheless, over a third of the young people did not see the Learning Gateway personal adviser within a month of leaving custody. The standard appears to be interpreted in a slightly passive way by some supervising officers, in that simply making appointments for young people is not always sufficient to ensure that links are made.

Figure 6.2: Did the young person see the Learning Gateway personal adviser?



As can be seen from the graph there was a much higher level of compliance with this standard. Nevertheless over a third of young people did not see the learning gateway personal adviser during this period. The standard appears to be interpreted in a slightly passive way by some supervising officers in that simply making appointments for young people is not always sufficient to "ensure that links are made".

7.0 CASE-STUDIES

These Case-Studies are designed to illustrate what the educational career of these people looks like when the constituent parts that were analysed above are put together. While they cannot be representative of the secure estate as a whole each one exemplifies particular issues that are common to a large proportion of the young people who experience custody. It is important to note that these do not contain examples of that large group of young people who had wholly negative experiences with no provision arranged and who re-offended very shortly after release.

Case Study A: Jason

Background

Jason was a seventeen-year-old young black man from a north-western city. Prior to custody he lived with his foster-parents but on release he was accommodated in a hostel. His education attainment was on a par with his peers in mainstream school.

Educational history: Mainstream secondary education up to the age of 16 where gained 9 GCSEs. Moved to Sixth Form College to study full time for 4 A levels in Maths, Business Studies, English and Biology - had completed 6 months when taken into custody aged 17. Jason had been given 2 fixed term exclusions during the year before he went into custody.

Education prior to custody: Jason was 6-months into an A level course at Sixth Form College when taken into custody.

Education in custody: Although Jason's Initial Training Plan stated that he was to continue with A levels in custody, he was not been able to do this and followed the education department's DTO English, Maths and IT programme (total 4 hours a day). Although he said that he had requested extra work, he was not been given it. Jason put this down to teachers not having time to help him and the disruptiveness of other students.

Jason's Training Plan also stated that he was to do a NVQ in catering/cooking in order to prepare for semi-independent living. Jason said that the most that he has gained from education in custody was attending an IT course, provision that he did not receive at his 6th Form College. It took Jason some time to access this course in custody, and he was still waiting for CLAIT certification.

Jason stated that Maths and English classes had kept him "on his toes" although they were not challenging enough for him.

Jason's aspirations were to complete his A levels, and go to University and ultimately to work abroad in the Electronics Industry. Jason had no clarification whilst in custody what education and training provision had been arranged for the community aspect of his course. Jason thought that his Yot Supervising Officer was organising a place at College.

Jason was very anxious about having fallen behind as a result of going into custody and thought that might have to start at a lower level to catch up.

Post Custody Experience: Jason was unable to get back onto his A level course as he had missed too much of the work and modular tests whilst in custody. His Yot officer had investigated several alternative colleges but none had been able to help out in providing a reduced timetable to get him back on track. Jason had been seeing a Learning Gateway Personal Adviser, but no interim provision on training programmes had been available or appropriate to his needs.

Jason seemed to be resigned to restarting his A levels in the next academic year. Although Jason did not feel that he was likely to re-offend, he did discuss that being inactive in education, could leave him more vulnerable to getting involved with peers who were associated with criminal activity. Jason also said that it was hard to keep himself positive and motivated about his education whilst waiting for the new academic year in September.

Case Study B: Donald

Background

Donald was a 16 year-old white male (still of compulsory school-age) living with his sister in a city in the north-west of England. He was assessed in literacy at being below Level 1 (below the level of an average 11 year-old) and in numeracy at below Entry Level (below the level of an average seven year-old)

Educational History Donald had a series of temporary exclusions from secondary school preceding a permanent exclusion in year 9. This was followed by a special programme of 2 days school and three ½ days out of school provision – this was changed to 1 day school, three ½ days out of school provision and Friday outing awarded for good attendance. Donald returned to school for 4 months while Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme was running but permanently excluded again before completion. This was followed by a placement for 4 weeks with one to one basic skills support with a voluntary organisation. He enjoyed the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and Friday outings

Education pre custody Pre custody Donald was placed in a non -attenders unit which he did not attend, as he entered custody before the provision commenced.

Education in custody Although Donald was of compulsory school age he was not listed for education provision on the list held by prison officers on the 'wing'. Donald was 'working' serving / dishing up food but got 'sacked' – now goes into which ever class has room. There was no regular pattern to Donald's education provision – but he enjoyed art and craft when he was included in that. Donald would have liked to do cookery, but was unable to take part in this..

Arrangements for education post custody Donald was under the impression that he still had a place at the referral unit for school non attenders on his release from custody. He hoped that this and and wouim the chance to go to college in due course and to get a job although he had no idea about what kind of job.

Post Custody Experience Donald was unable to start the programme at the unit after being in custody. The programme refused to take him as the LEA believed that as he had attended a mainstream school earlier in an adjoining the local authority he should be the responsibility of that LEA. This issue was still being dealt with by the Yot at the time of the interview, with no resolution in sight. The Yot had not referred this case to the Chief Officers' Steering Group at that time.

Donald discussed that he felt frustrated at not being able to attend some type of education provision as he was very keen to get career ideas to help plan his next steps. He was quite aware of the problems he had experienced in mainstream education and wanted a clean start after custody. He was keeping occupied attending Yot organised activities, but felt that he needed more structure to help him to continue keep out of trouble.

Case Study: C

Background

Dean was a seventeen-year-old white young man from Midlands county. Prior to custody had been living with his father. He not been tested for literacy and numeracy in the young offender institution but was believed to be GCSE level.

Educational history: Dean had experienced problems with his attendance during mainstream education, finding it increasingly difficult to motivate himself. Dean had been of high educational ability, especially within arts subjects (music, English) and had recognised the efforts of his teachers to encourage him to take his education seriously. He had, however, resented the 'institutional' aspects of schooling, and had done much of his reading in his spare time.

At 15, Dean left school to undertake work experience, with the agreement that he would return to sit his exams.

Education, prior to custody: Dean went on to complete NVQ2 in hairdressing at a local FE college, following his GCSEs. He once again experienced motivational problems following this time, and was out of education and training for 3-4 months before offending.

Education in custody: Dean felt that the educational arrangements within the YOI were not appropriate to cater for his needs, and were far below his level of ability. The SO liaised with a tutor from a local college to visit Dean within custody and supervise his completion of NVQ3 hairdressing courseware. The SO indicated that there had been some difficulty in this respect, in transferring course-work from the College:

'The YOI tried to help, but the regime structure was not geared-up to help with this...education in custody is very much geared-up to the majority, there is not enough flexibility'.

Dean found the college materials to be stimulating, and had felt that the course 'focused' him. He had also completed a large amount of offending-related work, which made an impact. The SO felt that the 'gate pass' system was very important in allowing him to access the right level of support.

Dean had, however, found the other students to be intimidating, and had been aggravated during lessons. He felt that other students had resented his ability and ‘special treatment’. This led to an incident in which he was assaulted. The SO commented *‘It [custody] has been a catalyst. Dean has found it quite soul-destroying, but motivating, as well. It has helped to give him direction’*.

Post custody experience: No education had been arranged for Dean, following custody. He is now 17, and has secured a weekend job with an internet company. He also works as a DJ. Dean felt that this income would prevent him from re-offending and keep him focused; *‘so long as I have money, I’ll be OK’*. The SO stated that Dean would be registered for a college placement, following the DTO, in either Art of Photography. The SO had indicated that a lack of available educational opportunities could present a risk to re-offending, in the interim, and that his own influence over Dean was critical in keeping him motivated during this time.

Case Study D: Gary

Background

Gary was a 16 year-old young white man still of compulsory school-age living in a Midlands town. He had had several care episodes but was now living with his mother and her partner. His attainment levels in literacy and numeracy were low both being judged at Entry-level (that of the average seven year-old).

Education history: Gary had experienced difficulties with his schooling from an early age. He had struggled to keep up in classes, and rated the level of support from teaching staff within mainstream education as fairly poor *‘the teachers kept...hurrying you along at everything’*. Gary had been more interested in sports during this time.

Education prior to custody: At the age of 15, Gary left school to attend a local FE college on a part-time basis (4 days per week). The Supervising Officer indicated that no formal exclusion had taken place- the school had entered into an arrangement with Gary’s parents, and the college, for the young person to enrol on the college course. Gary had studied literacy and numeracy at ‘Entry’ level during this period.

While Gary stated at the interview that he had preferred the more ‘practical’ focus of the college work (welding, motor vehicle repairs, word processing), the SO felt that there was a link between the move to part-time education, and Gary’s offending behaviour. Gary had committed the offence during a period of non-attendance at the college. Social services had only been notified of the fact that he was not at the mainstream school when he offended.

Education in custody: Gary had generally found the experience of education in custody to be a ‘positive’ one, and felt that he had received a very satisfactory level of support at this time. However, Gary also felt that a lot of the learning materials were ‘too basic’.

Gary seemed to have become oriented towards an FE learning environment during his time at the college, prior to custody, and found it difficult to re-adjust to an environment that he felt was *‘more like being at school’*. There did not appear to be a great degree of continuity in his education, in this respect.

Post custody experience: The difficulties that the Yot had encountered with regard to the arrangement between the school and college became apparent when Gary completed the custodial part of his DTO. The Supervising Officer stated at the interview that the school had refused to take him back. She felt that the Yot did not have sufficient power to enforce this, and that a shortage of home tutors in the Yot area had exacerbated the problem by preventing an alternative arrangement from being found. Gary had been attending a careers club for 5 hours per week at the time of the interview. He was very dissatisfied with this arrangement, stating that

'I've got nothing to do all day, I just get bored... I want to go back to school and do my last year. My mates are all back in school, ...I miss them'.

Gary had rated the level of individual support that he received from the Supervising Officer very highly, but saw no point in the community phase, and even felt that it was directly increasing his chances of offending. He was keen to finish the DTO, so that he could get a job to keep him occupied; *'I want to get a job...but could do with doing GCSEs'*. Gary would ultimately like to complete a mechanics course- he had begun to learn some of the skills while at college.

Case Study D: Sean

Background

Sean was a 16 year-old young man of mixed race who was still of compulsory school-age. He lived in a London borough with his mother and her partner. His literacy attainment level was judged at Level 1 (equivalent to the average 11 year-old) and numeracy at below Level 1 (below the level of the average 11 year-old).

Educational History: Sean attended a boarding school from the age of 11 to 12, following which he was transferred to a mainstream school. Sean was unwilling to discuss the reasons for the move at the interview (custodial case file evidence suggests that a 'family move' took place).

Sean attended a mainstream school for around 1 year following this time. He had struggled with basic literacy during this period, for which he was allocated a 'special tutor'. Sean rated the support that he was given from this tutor highly, and felt that this was an important factor in keeping him motivated. He also found IT classes to be stimulating.

However, his behaviour gradually worsened, and he was excluded at the age of 13.

Education, Pre-Custody: Sean attended a Pupil Referral Unit up until the point of custody, on a part-time basis (3 days per week). He indicated that his attendance had initially been very good, and that he found he could cope better with the lower number of hours. He also found that he could develop his IT skills while at the PRU.

Sean began to lose interest in the lessons, criticising them for being 'too easy'. His motivation declined at this point, leading up to his offence.

Education in custody

Sean had arrived at the YOI to carry out the 2 month custodial phase of a 4 month DTO. Following an initial assessment, he was allocated to a programme of short courses on the appropriate wing. He had only attended the course once, when he was the victim of a bullying incident. The incident made it necessary for Sean to be transferred to a more secure wing. However, this made it impossible for him to continue with the courses that he had started.

Sean had found this to be a frustrating experience, and had felt strongly at the interview that he had not received a satisfactory level of education. Although he had been provided with several hours of English and Maths in his cell on a weekly basis, there had not been the opportunity to enrol on an alternative programme of short courses. Sean felt that, during this time, he had been given '*no education...just PE*'. In particular, he felt that he had wasted his time, when he could have been working towards some kind of qualification or certificate.

Sean felt that he needed '*someone to push you*', and that his motivation had been a long-term problem during his schooling. The lack of structure during the custodial sentence had left him angry, and had not met a need that he himself could recognise.

Arrangements for education, post-custody: Sean was adamant that he had not been given any guidance as to the education provision that had been arranged for him, post-release. It did not appear that Sean had attended a final review at the point of the interview, although this was difficult to ascertain. Sean indicated that he had discussed the possibility of enrolling on a Carpentry course at a meeting with the Careers Advisor, and hoped that he would be given some further assistance with this.

Sean's initial training plan included a recommendation from his supervisor that he be referred to the 'Social Education Group', run by a local voluntary organisation. It was also recommended in his case file that he should return to the PRU, to complete the IT course that he had been enrolled on prior to custody.

Post custody experience: The Yot had declined to arrange a follow-up interview with Sean, stating that his status was 'too vulnerable'.

Case Study F: Cameron

Background

Cameron was a 14 year-old white Scottish young man living in the south-west. He was accommodated with his mother brother and sister. There is no measure of his literacy and numeracy levels as he was in custody at a secure unit which did not use a standardised form of assessment.

Educational History: Cameron had been living with both parents, prior to custody. The family moved from Scotland in June 2000. Cameron had been attending mainstream education throughout this period, and was considered capable of going on to complete his GCSEs.

Following the move, however, his attendance worsened, and ceased completely in the 2 months leading up to the offence.

Education in custody: Cameron attended a local authority secure unit. He was placed there for 2 months, as part of a 4 month DTO. The S/O indicated that the availability of a place in the Secure Unit had been critical in encouraging Cameron to re-invest in his education. He felt strongly that a place at a YOI would not have provided the same results in Cameron's case.

Post-custody experience: Cameron was referred to a Pupil Referral Unit, following release. This placement was arranged within 1 week. Cameron is currently receiving 20 hours education per week at the PRU. The S/O felt that Cameron had become more positive towards his education, following custody, but that the PRU was not geared up to his level of academic ability and he had been frustrated by the education that he was given.

Cameron has attended all of his supervision sessions and has not received a warning/breach for non-compliance. He has not offended since leaving custody. The S/O felt that he has established a very positive relationship with Cameron, throughout the DTO. However, he felt that the 2 month community phase did not offer enough time to ensure that Cameron would continue to take an interest in his education:

'He'll listen to me... I have to sit on him [sic]... I had him prior to sentencing. If the supervision period was longer in this case, I could get him to a point where he is much more settled and doesn't need me knocking on his door'

Cameron has returned to his parent's home, post release. The S/O stated that this was a supportive arrangement, but was concerned that this would not be enough to push Cameron to achieve to his ability, when the DTO license expires. He felt that there should be greater flexibility for extending the community phase in specific cases where it was evident that the benefits are significant.

Case Study G: Dale

Background

Dale was a 15 year-old white young man living in the Midlands with his mother and older brothers. His literacy was assessed at Entry-level and his numeracy at below Entry Level.

Educational History: Dale had been attending mainstream education, prior to custody. He had previously been issued with a statement of SEN, and had recognised difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Dale's attendance record had also been poor. The school had removed a number of Dale's privileges (e.g., sports activities), in an effort to counteract this behaviour, but this had seemed to worsen his attendance.

Education prior to custody: Dale's attendance at the mainstream school ceased completely at the age of 14, prior to offending. He had been living with his mother and older brothers at this time. Both Yot Staff indicated that criminal influences within the family (esp. brothers and uncle) had contributed to Dale's offending behaviour.

Education in custody: The S/O felt that the level of communication between Dale's school and the YOI had been good. The school had been involved with the sentence plan, and had tried to make arrangements for Dale's education, while he was in the YOI (via the SENCO). Dale himself felt that the lessons he had received while in custody were good, and had rated the teachers highly. He had been unwilling to comment on any negative aspects of his education in custody when interviewed.

Communication with the Yot had not been as good- the S/O indicated that staff from the education department had not attended the supervision meetings (just 1 member of prison staff). This had made it difficult for the Yot to ascertain what level of education Dale had been receiving at the YOI;

'We don't really know what they offer, there... it is similar with x (another YOI)'.

Much of the communication during this time had been with the school SENCO, rather than directly with the education department at the YOI.

Post custody experience: Dale had initially seemed to have a more positive attitude towards his education, post-release, and was made aware of the arrangements that the Yot had been making for him. A place was agreed for Dale at a local PRU- this was arranged in liaison with the school, during the custodial phase. However, as Dale was released at the beginning of the school holiday, no education could be provided in the interim. The PRU placement was due to become available on 4th June, but the involvement of the Yot would cease around this time.

Both the S/O and EWO felt that Dale's attitude towards his education had worsened during his wait for the PRU placement. Dale has received 1 warning. The S/O had felt that a breach would not be effective, due to the short time remaining on the DTO. Dale has also lost interest in the Army career that he had previously wanted to follow through. The EWO felt that Dale's attitude might improve when he moves to live with his grandmother, which is planned in the near future.

Case Study H: Damian

Background

Damian was a 14 year-old white young man living in a large city in the Midlands with both his natural parents. His literacy and numeracy attainment level was not recorded as his custody was in a secure training centre this did not use a standardised assessment system.

Educational history: Damian was permanently excluded from mainstream school at the age of 12. He found mainstream school to be difficult and felt that the support he received there was inadequate. ASSET states that he was bullied, had poor relationships with teachers and that his parents had negative attitudes to education.

Education prior to custody: After leaving custody Damian went to two Pupil Referral Units. He felt that the second PRU that he went to was inappropriate and inadequate for he needs. According to Damian, it took him an hour to get to the centre and an hour to get home, yet he was only attending the centre for an hour each day. He stopped attending the centre after just one

month because he did not feel it was worth travelling for. Damian says the support he received in reading, writing and maths was inadequate at the PRU. After leaving this centre he did not receive any form of education for several months before going into custody.

Education in custody: According to both Damian and his Supervising Officer, Damian did well in his education in custody. The education in custody was full time and relevant to his needs. He had good relationships with some of his teachers. He says that the support he received in custody was better than support he had previously received in education.

Post Custody Experience: Damian has attended a voluntary organisation personal development course for one week (although his SO said that he would be attending this for four weeks). Damian really enjoyed this course, which was a full time course of outdoor activities, with no educational element. At the time of interview Damian was not attending any education/training placement and was waiting to start another course in a few weeks time. This is an educational course run by another voluntary organisations which is intended to help prepare Damian for a return to normal education.

The voluntary organisation course did not appear to build on the educational progress he made in custody. His SO says she has completed referral forms from the Behavioural Support Service, but has not heard a response back regarding a place for him. Damian's courses are an interim measure which she has set up before something more appropriate can be arranged (if it can be arranged). His SO was frustrated because Damian was much more positive about education since custody, however the type of supported education that he received in custody is not generally available in the community. The gains that Damian made in custody may well be wasted. She feels that someone like Damian needs extra support to cope with the transition back to education in the community and extra support to ensure he attends education. He is not getting this support from his family.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The failure to provide the appropriate volume and quality of education and training across what are still two very separate parts of the Detention and Training Order is in effect a fault line running through the criminal justice and education systems. Without radical change, the evidence from this audit suggests that, at best, for many young people the DTO will not decrease the educational risk factors associated with offending, and for a significant number it may well increase their likelihood of offending.

The research evidence, although it urgently needs augmenting, indicates that the statistical association between being out of education and offending is linked to two risk factors.

The simple fact of being outside of education, with either no provision arranged or being attended or at best a few hours per week, is likely to lead to more delinquent peer association and a significant increase in opportunities for offending. It is also likely to enhance risks in other areas of young people's lifestyle, such as substance misuse. Losing attachment to mainstream schools may also be associated with a failure to acquire sufficient resilience, which is a key protective factor identified with preventing offending. Alternative education in the community or in custody may well be far less effective in fostering resilience. There is also significant evidence that the transfer of learning acquired in segregated settings to the mainstream of education and life generally can be much more limited than for those young people in schools and colleges.

The second major risk factor is the very low levels of literacy and numeracy of many of these young people. To be 17 and unable to read better than a seven year old is perhaps the single most effective way of socially excluding someone. Many aspects of mainstream life are denied to these young people, particularly employment opportunities and participation in continuing learning. It is immaterial whether these deficits are viewed as the result of significant and inherent learning difficulties or are due to the lack of a sufficient volume of learning. In the first case, the formal SEN system appears to have bypassed these young people. In the second, the unequivocal messages regarding these young people's fundamental attachment to learning, but coupled with the need for high levels of individual support, cannot be ignored.

The challenge for the Youth Justice Board is to tackle these two risk factors in the context of the Detention and Training Order. However, it would be rational to extend this process throughout all contact that young people have with the criminal justice system, and to embed it in the preventive strategy of the Board and other key agencies.

The recommendations in the final chapter of this report are designed to tackle these two areas of risk and also to overcome the cultural challenges that the Youth Justice Board will face from the education system. The false dichotomy in educational social policy between exclusion and non-attendance has very real negative practical implications for Yot managers and their staff. Educational targets, monitoring procedures, confused accountabilities and the allocation of resources among LEAs, schools and Learning and Skills Councils interact to form a series of barriers that frustrate the effective operation of the youth justice system. Arguably, from the DfES downwards, young offenders are seen as a lower priority, perhaps because of their small numbers and their negative impact on attainment targets.

The recommendations require a combination of leadership from the Youth Justice Board and capacity-building within the custodial institutions and in the community – principally through further education colleges linked to the secure estate by robust bridging processes.

This is undeniably a large-scale and challenging business transformation exercise. The Youth Justice Board needs to be assured that it has sufficient quantity and level of expertise to manage the process. Assuming that the Board equips itself appropriately, it is still likely to need to move to a simpler, more direct and at times more directive role with the secure estate. Where community interventions are concerned, the Board will have a time-consuming and complex set of tasks in negotiating with all the stakeholders.

One of the most important and challenging cultural changes that needs to occur is to focus on the young person in devising and providing education and training. This means giving a reality to the Detention and Training Order so that all planning processes and teaching and learning create an integrated education and training programme. High-quality management information on access, participation and outcomes will be a prerequisite. This will be essential in gaining the confidence of the courts.

In order to ensure increased coherence of the DTO and to exert pressure on young people to participate in education and training, measures may be needed relating to both greater flexibility and greater prescription in sentencing, with an emphasis on programme completion. This could involve more use of deferred sentencing, potentially through intensive supervision and surveillance programmes. Progress could be monitored through reports on participation in learning, and ensuring that the community part of the DTO has specific and enforceable requirements regarding participation in education or training.

The Youth Justice Board's planned enhancement of education and training needs to occur within a strategic framework. Otherwise, it might compound some of the problems, exacerbate the inconsistency of provision between establishments, and do little to integrate provision within custody and in the community.

The recommendations concentrate on Young Offender Institutions because of their strategic importance (85 per cent of the custodial places), but also because the systemic weaknesses are very significant and there is currently considerable underfunding. However, the Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres also share the frustrations of Young Offender Institutions in trying to ensure a smooth and timely transition to the community part of the Detention and Training Order.

If the secure college concept is to become a reality, a whole series of measures will be necessary to ensure that the institutions become outward-looking, both culturally and practically. To do this, they will need to become recognised as having expertise not simply in control but also in the re-engagement of young people in learning, and as a real presence in educational planning and implementation in the community part of the sentence. This will have significant resource as well as cultural implications for existing Young Offender Institutions.

The recommendations also take full account of the Youth Justice Board's commissioned project to develop literacy and numeracy assessment of learning materials. This will be an important building block for the rest of the strategy, but it is crucial that it be designed and implemented as overarching both custody and community.

The education and training of young people whom mainstream schools find it difficult to deal with is a notoriously long-standing and slippery issue. The outcome of initiatives to tackle this issue tends to be displacement, and it is extremely difficult for professionals outside of education to keep a grip because of complex definitions and categories, exacerbated by the paucity of quantitative evidence. Success will only be achieved if due attention is paid to increasing the confidence and expertise of those in the criminal justice system in engaging their counterparts in education. This will necessitate creating a credible body of research, producing timely and accurate quantitative information both locally and centrally, and concentration on this issue by the Youth Justice Board's monitoring and development advisers in each region.

It is clear that much remains to be done if the Detention and Training Order is to fulfil its intended purpose.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations complement those put forward in the report ‘An Audit of Education Provision within the Juvenile Secure Estate’. Some of those recommendations have already been adopted by the Youth Justice Board, while some are closely connected to the issues discussed in this report and so are reproduced here.

These recommendations are designed to accelerate the responsiveness of the criminal justice system in both the community and custody in ensuring effective education and training provision for those young people on DTOs. In addition, the recommendations aim to bring about a step-change in the dosage of education and training received by these young people, by integrating the necessary planning processes, and equipping the relevant professionals with the essential knowledge and skills around which an effective infrastructure can be put in place.

Youth Justice Board leadership

The Board to:

- Ensure that all relevant agencies within the criminal justice system and in education appreciate that the Detention and Training Order is an integrated sentence which provides the teaching and learning framework within which all education and training will proceed. The statutory duty of preventing offending must be re-emphasised in defining the role of local education authorities (LEAs), schools and Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) in providing full-time appropriate education and training for all young people on DTOs.
- Prepare a strategic plan for education and training for young offenders on Detention and Training Orders, although it could be widened to include each stage of criminal justice intervention from prevention onwards. This plan would provide a framework for the development of education and training provision in the secure estate and the transition to the community. It also needs to influence the planning of the Connexions partnerships, and more importantly the 47 local LSCs. The plan must clarify the respective roles of the YJB, the Prisoners’ Learning and Skills Unit at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and the Prison Service. It must set out the Board’s vision for education and training, the rationale for the curriculum for young offenders on Detention and Training Orders, appropriate standards and targets, and a clear timetable for implementation.
- Extend the recently commissioned national specification for education and training for Young Offender Institutions to the education and training to be provided in the second half of the DTO, in the community.
- Prepare a protocol for Youth Offending Teams to act as the template for their written agreement with local LSCs and LEAs that is now required by the Youth Justice Board. This protocol will remind key agencies of their statutory duties and will contain clauses to enable effective local monitoring. This standardised approach will enable the Youth Justice Board to be prescriptive about what is acceptable in this context, and will facilitate monitoring on a national basis.

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- Modify Youth Justice Plans and the relevant guidance for quarterly returns so that there can be closer scrutiny of the speed with which education and training provision is arranged, its quality and the outcomes by the end of a DTO.
 - Negotiate with the DfES for the production of guidance on the education of young people in the criminal justice system (particularly those on DTOs). This would parallel the comprehensive guidance issued by the DfES on the education of young people in public care. It would incorporate monitoring procedures for the out-of-school population for each LEA, and set in place convergence targets for young people leaving custody with the national targets on attainment for all young people (again this would parallel aspects of the Quality Protects initiative for the education of young people in public care). Agreement should be secured from the Connexions National Unit that all young people leaving custody will already have been informed of the personal adviser in their home authority and have immediate access to this adviser.
 - Amend the national standards relating to DTOs to require that individual learning plans spanning both the custodial and community part of the sentence are in place within 10 working days; that all young people will be transferred to the community with a summative assessment of their progress in the first half of the sentence; and that there will be a literacy and numeracy re-test at the end of the sentence.
 - Develop a contracting regime to stimulate new providers of education, training and allied activities to enter the market with a view to providing services in both the custodial and community parts of the Detention and Training Order.

The secure college concept

- The YJB should aim to reverse the current approach of running secure institutions which provide education. Instead, the aim should be to enable the establishment of education and training centres where students are held in secure conditions. These colleges should not concern themselves solely with education in secure settings, but should be more outward-looking, developing strong links with local education providers and also with services in the young person's locality.
- Introduce a 'learning programme manager' post into each YOI. This person will ensure that an integrated individual learning plan based on full diagnostic assessment of learning needs will be prepared for each young person and will apply to both the custodial and community parts of the DTO.
- Establish personal advisers working within each YOI. The advisers' role from the point of sentence will be to accelerate and make far more effective the education planning process. They will do this by visiting the young person's home area, gathering relevant documentation, and assessing and brokering education or training provision in conjunction with the Yot supervising officer and the home Connexions personal adviser. These advisers

will also be the contact point for monitoring progress during the community part of the sentence, particularly in gathering outcome information.

- These adviser posts to complement the work of the learning programme manager; the advisers could be members of integrated case management teams within YOIs. With a recommended caseload of no more than 10, this would dramatically enhance the outreach capacity of YOIs. This system of advisers could be established effectively through a national contracting process as it could be run on a national or at least on a regional basis, given the catchment areas of YOIs.
- Judge the performance of YOIs against new measures of added value which include how far they have prepared young people for reintegration into education and training in the community, and young people's re-test scores at the end of the community part of the Detention and Training Order.
- Establish a formal education advisory group for each YOI (the Youth Justice Board to provide a formal induction programme and guidance on the choice of membership).

Human resources strategy

- Produce guidance and training so that practitioners within Youth Offending Teams are equipped to broker appropriate education and training provision from mainstream schools, further education (FE) colleges, training providers, pupil referral units, and other alternative provision. In addition, practitioners should have at least a working knowledge of relevant issues relating to the curriculum, accreditation, assessment, SEN and National Records of Achievement.
- Training for supervising officers should incorporate education and training issues as a major theme and should include visits/placements in education departments within YOIs and education within the community, such as FE colleges.

Assessment, planning and review

- Introduce an integrated and computerised assessment system across the secure estate and Yots to replace the current tests used by the Prison Service.
- Ensure (through contract) that education departments are integrated into sentence planning, particularly where preparation for post-custodial education and training provision is concerned. Education staff to attend all reviews.
- Amend ASSET so that it is clear that the education and training section of the document must be passed immediately to the education department. Modify this section so that information as to whether a student was receiving full or part-time provision prior to custody is recorded, and to ensure that SEN status is recorded properly.

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- Issue guidance, in conjunction with the DfES, to LEAs and Connexions partnerships (personal advisers have a key new statutory role in relation to SEN assessment) to ensure that crucial SEN information such as individual education plans and statements always speedily accompanies a young person to custody.
 - Devise and introduce an added-value measure that applies across the custodial and community components of the DTO and includes measures for education/training continuity. These measures should incorporate standardised assessments of young people's views on the quality of the education and training provision both in custody and in the community.
 - Give standardised summative educational assessments to all young people immediately prior to release.
 - Review existing systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring systems in all YOIs. Establish whether or not data on attendance and outcomes in the community could be recorded on the same system.

Teaching and learning

- Devise and introduce an incentive and rewards programme specific to education and training to further elevate the status of learning. This could be linked to regular achievement evenings and formal award ceremonies to celebrate success. Yot supervising officers should ensure that this programme occurs in the community part of the sentence as well as in custody.
- Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody to the highest standards that apply to young people in mainstream education, and that Yot supervising officers are accountable for ensuring its transition and continuation in the community part of the sentence.
- Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme that has national currency and can be overseen both in custody and in the community.
- Design and introduce a curricular framework with appropriate key performance targets that spans education and vocational training within custodial institutions and the transition to the community.
- Ensure that the new curriculum being developed has reintegration as a key theme, incorporating the necessary knowledge, planning skills and behavioural changes which may be necessary to facilitate this process on release from custody. It may be that for those on two-month custodial sentences, this reintegration theme forms the core of their education work.

Evidence-based practice and quality assurance

- Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for engaging young offenders, to bring about the most effective education and training gains in terms of reducing their offending.
- Commission research into establishing the true scale of out-of-school populations in Yot areas and the impact on offending, to provide essential benchmark data. Educational risk factors could then be quantified and mapped against each stage of intervention in the criminal justice system so that each Yot and education agencies can target their resources more effectively.
- Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate so that effective practice can be shared easily, and implementation of the education and training strategy can be better co-ordinated. This intranet could also be open to Yot staff, and could help to establish Young Offender Institutions as centres of expertise and support for those in the community.

Strategic partnership with the FE sector

- Negotiate through the Learning and Skills Council and key agencies such as the Association of Colleges a guarantee of full-time courses available immediately on release from custody for all young offenders aged 14 to 18.
- Develop jointly with the relevant bodies a training programme for college lecturers and learning support assistants, so that they have the requisite skills to work with juvenile offenders and are familiar with the assessment systems, teaching and learning styles, and materials used within the secure estate.
- Negotiate with local LSCs for funding for a college-based member of staff for each Yot.
- Pilot a grid for learning to link up FE colleges, Young Offender Institutions and Yots.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

- Develop and implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the secure estate, linking secure establishments to Yots and FE colleges. This would provide vital linkages for these dispersed and isolated staff groups, and facilitate distance learning for students and transmission of their learning records.

If the Board is not to prescribe the hardware and software to be purchased, at the least it ought to provide specifications in the following areas: assessing young people's learning needs; smart cards for recording attendance and other information; recording young people's learning gains and other progress measures; interactive learning materials; timetabling systems; intranets for students and staff; and training for all staff.

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A Review of the Relationship Between Non-attendance at School and Youth Offending

MAIN FINDINGS

1) The size of the total out-of-school population (comprising all forms of non-attendance and informal exclusion in addition to formal exclusions) is strongly linked to the rate of offending in a given area.

Using all absence data for the model, the correlation arrived at was 0.9. Taking account of indices of deprivation did not improve the predictive value of the model and strengthened the claim that the association between absence from school and youth crime represents a real link between the two.

2) Authorised absence from school is the major reason for pupils being out of school and this is the principal predictor of youth crime rates. Permanent exclusion from school, despite its high policy profile, represents only 1.6 per cent of the total days of schooling missed by secondary pupils. The average number of days of schooling missed per secondary pupil is 9.5 days with 7.5 days accounted for by authorized absence.

3) The current central monitoring by DfES does not provide the most relevant information for the Youth Justice Board. No distinction, for example, is made between those young people who may be absent for very short periods of time and those who become completely detached from mainstream schooling and have not attended for months and sometimes years.

Data held by Youth Offending Teams and Local education Authorities are variable and do not cover the same age ranges, population numbers and, in some cases, does not cover

the same areas. This makes for difficulties in understanding, monitoring and tackling 'joined up' problems.

4) The prevalence of part-time provision in PRUs and other forms of Education Otherwise (see also ECOTEC report 2) particularly for serious/persistent young offenders who have often not been excluded is an additional risk factor in their offending.

5) Where disclosed, "informal" exclusions were seen to be a significant cause of absence from school. Not only is this problem not being tackled it is rarely being detected.

6) In order to reduce juvenile offending social policy needs to measure and then take steps to reduce the total out-of-school population in a given YOT area. It needs to focus particularly on those who have become completely or largely detached from mainstream education and training. It follows that the relevant policy targets for both the Youth Justice Board and DfES initiatives should relate to reducing the stock of those out-of-school rather than focusing on particular annual flows such as the rate of exclusions.

Introduction

This review was commissioned by the Youth Justice Board as part of a suite of reports also including an "Audit of Education in the Juvenile Secure Estate "and "A Review of the Pre- And Post-Custodial Educational Experiences of Young People".

Social policy background

There is considerable concern over the continuing high levels of pupil out-of-school figures published by government departments and other researchers. There is a long history of non-attendance in relation to compulsory education, and in the past it has not always been perceived as a cause for concern. Boys will be boys, the common wisdom pronounced, and the lure of less arduous pastimes than school has to offer will always prove strong for a small number of pupils. The problem of pupils out of school, however, has grown enormously both in size and complexity, and can no longer be glossed over as a normal and acceptable part of the growing up process. The size of the problem can be illustrated through the following extract from *Missing Out* (1999), the Audit Commission report on attendance and exclusion, which provided the data for 1997/98.

“On any one day, just under 400,000 (5%) of the 8 million pupils who should be in school are not there. Absence unauthorised by the school (pupils truanting or parents keeping them off without permission) will account for just over 40,000 of these. In the whole school year, over 6 million of the 8 million pupils in England and Wales are likely to have at least one authorised absence; over 12,000 pupils will be permanently excluded from their schools and over 150,000 will be excluded for a fixed period.”

The complexity of the problem has multiplied beyond recognition. The greatest proportion of pupils out of school on any given day are those with authorised absence. Clear examples of authorised absence include illness, religious observance, study leave, bereavements and public performances. Areas requiring more discerning authorisation on the part of the school include family holidays during term-time and special occasions.

The second largest group of pupils out of school is those with unauthorised absence. In 1997/98 they numbered 40,000 on any one day, or more than one million over a year. Absence unauthorised by the school includes truancy or parents keeping their children out of school without permission.

The third largest group of pupils out of school will be those who have been excluded from school for a fixed period ranging from 1 to 45 days. During the year 1997/98 this group contained 150,000 pupils, concealing a vastly higher figure of days out of school. The fourth largest group of pupils out of school tends to be pupils who are permanently excluded. In the year 1997/98 a total of 12,800 pupils were permanently excluded from their schools, reducing to 10,400 in 1998/99. An added complexity in the case of permanently excluded pupils lies in the alternative educational provision, which is rarely full-time and may be as little as 3 hours per week, leaving them with a great deal of time on their hands.

Not surprisingly, permanently excluded pupils have attracted more attention than other groups, yet there are twelve times more fixed period than permanent exclusions. There is a strong connection between these groups that is equally unsurprising. Permanently excluded pupils normally have a history of fixed term exclusion, and may feature in both sets of figures during the same year. In *Missing Out* the Audit Commission reported that “studying files in two LEAs showed that over one quarter of those pupils permanently excluded had had two or more fixed-period exclusions in the preceding year.”

There is another, more shadowy group of pupils to take account of in any consideration of pupil out-of-school days. Little is known about this group in terms of size or make-up, but it represents pupils who are out of school yet not included in the figures above; they are in addition to official data. This group includes pupils who are present during registration but missing at other times of the day, perhaps only parts of the day, but absent at those times nevertheless. Then there are pupils who are unofficially excluded, when parents are advised to remove their child in order to avoid the stigma of permanent exclusion. The pupil is removed from the school roll and is not recorded in any set of figures until the parents find another school place and the pupil is once again included in the roll of a school. And there will undoubtedly be others.

There is compelling evidence to establish a strong connection between non-attendance and youth crime, and to none-attendance can be added other categories of out-of-school pupils, particularly those who are excluded. *Misspent Youth* (1996), the Audit Commission’s report on young people and crime, reported the following:

“Reducing the number of pupils who are not at school for reasons of truancy or exclusion could significantly reduce the number of young offenders in a local area. Half of truants offend, but only one quarter of non-truants do. If half of the truants returned to school, and the returned truants were as likely to offend as the non-truants, the percentage of offenders in the age group could be reduced from 35 to 30 per cent. Similarly, three-quarters of excluded pupils offend, but only one-third of those who are not excluded.”

Of all recorded crime, a disproportionate amount is committed by young people. In 1994, according to the Audit Commission (*Misspent Youth* 1996), two out of every five known offenders were under the age of 21, and a quarter were under 18. Assuming the latter group is responsible for a comparable proportion of all offences, offenders under the age of 18 commit about seven million offences a year against individuals, retailers and manufacturers. They are dealt with by the youth courts. Similarly, Ken Reid reports crime statistics for 1997 in London. (*Truancy and Schools* Routledge, 1999).

“The consequences of truancy are enormous. Consider a few simple facts. Forty per cent of all street robberies in London, and a third of car thefts, 25 per cent of burglaries and 20 per cent of criminal damage were committed by 10 to 16 year olds in 1997 and were blamed on truants. Truancy is the greatest single predictor of juvenile and adult crime. Two thirds of young offenders begin their criminal activities while truanting.”

Much of the crime recorded is committed by a relatively small proportion of offenders. The Audit Commission (*Misspent Youth* 1996) reports that while offending once or twice is common – about half of young men admit to having done so – a few persistent offenders commit most of the crimes by young people. Five per cent of the young men interviewed by Home Office researchers, who admitted to twenty or more crimes in the previous twelve months, were responsible for at least two-thirds of the offences reported by the whole group. An additional consequence of youth crime is the disturbing trend for the young offenders to continue to offend. Again the Audit Commission (*Misspent Youth* 1996) states that young males are not growing out of offending behaviour as they used to, echoing the point made by Ken Reid above. The known rate of offending by young adult males – aged 18 to 24 – has increased significantly. As a result, the peak age of known offending has increased from 15 years in 1986 to 18 years in 1994. The number of 18-20 year old males is expected to grow by one-sixth over the next ten years. If no action is taken, according to the Audit Commission, crime committed by young adult males is likely to increase.

Objectives

The primary objective is to assess and report on the strength of association between secondary pupil non-attendance rates and youth offending rates within a representative sample of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and their corresponding Youth Offending

Team (YOT) areas.

Methodology

A representative sample of 22 YOT areas and their corresponding LEAs was established. Data on school absences from the DfES 11-16 Performance Tables, and number of offenders from the YJB were used to select the sample. Two of the YOT areas each encompassed two LEAs. Two further LEAs and their associated YOT areas were added to ensure that the viable sample did not fall below 20. Consequently 22 YOT areas and 24 LEAs were involved in the research frame. The selection of LEAs is representative of County, Metropolitan, London Boroughs and Unitary Authorities.

Secondary school non-attendance and youth crime data for the 1999-2000 school year were sought. Much of the data required was held centrally, readily available and easily accessed. Some of the data sought was only available from the LEAs and proved much more difficult, and in some cases impossible, to extract.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) provided the youth crime figures available. Youth Offending Teams return data to the YJB on a quarterly basis which began in April 1999, therefore figures for three quarters of the year were available, April-December 1999.

The most recent figures for pupils out of school, for whatever reason, were for the school year September 1999-August 2000. The time-scales for the YJB and the DfES data overlap by only one set of quarterly returns from the YOTs.

The Department for Education and Skills(DfES) provided data for authorised and unauthorised absence but had no data for pupil exclusions. The annual Secondary school return (Form 7) requests figures for permanent exclusions by age, gender and ethnicity but not days out of school. There is no requirement or mechanism for reporting fixed-term exclusions to the DfES.

The twenty-two LEAs were approached for data on both fixed-term and permanent exclusion. Particular care was exercised in gathering data on permanent exclusion. There are several different paths for pupils to tread following exclusion and it is important to apply the correct one in each case. Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS) varies between LEAs. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) generally offer part-time provision and Home Tuition can be as little as three hours per week. In addition, LEAs were consulted over the unofficial out of school days that go unrecorded and unnoticed, examples of which were given in the Introduction above.

It was intended that both permanent and fixed-term exclusion data would be collected by national curriculum school year, gender and ethnicity. This was not possible in all cases. For fixed-term exclusions it was important to record in addition the duration of each exclusion, which could be any number of days between 1 and 45. In the case of permanent exclusions, the variety of ensuing scenarios posed particular difficulties and

great care had to be exercised in order to establish a reasonably accurate figure for recording purposes.

Research Findings

There is no difficulty in accessing data representing pupil absence from school according to whether it is authorised or unauthorised. It is available on the DfES website. Unfortunately this is not true in the case of data on exclusions. Fewer than one quarter (5) of the LEAs were able to respond with the appropriate or approximate data that was requested, within a reasonable time-scale. Others ignored the detail of the request and simply provided a copy of a report produced for internal consumption which was not susceptible to any significant interpretation of the data required. Most (18) managed to respond to repeated requests in a form that was useable although not quite as detailed as the research required, and clearly with some difficulty.

There is a particular problem over permanent exclusion data retrieval. The problem is directly attributable to the way in which LEAs record the details of permanent exclusions. All LEAs will have a record of the number of pupils who are permanently excluded according to date of exclusion, age, gender, ethnicity and Special Educational Needs category, because this forms part of the annual statistical return to the DfES known as Form 7, usually completed in February each year. Very few LEAs record data that go beyond this requirement. Of those which do, however, some track these out of school pupils with an array of figures which record each stage of a pupil's progress out of school until reintegration or alternative provision that can be considered to be the most appropriate for that pupil. In this case it is possible to calculate days out of school per pupil as well as a whole range of other significant outcomes, including the identification of helpful provision and the extent to which it is effective. Detailed records such as these would normally include the pupil's name, gender and date of birth, date of exclusion, excluding school and reason for exclusion; date and outcome of disciplinary hearing and appeal, if any; date and details of first and subsequent provisions, time involved and duration; continuing to track them until they arrived at their final placement.

We did not encounter such detailed data. More usual were data relating to a much narrower range of concern. For example, figures for exclusions by age, gender and ethnicity may well be recorded, but if gender and ethnicity figures are aggregated across the whole age range no analysis by age groups is possible, not even to distinguish between primary and secondary stages. In many cases exclusion data, either fixed term or permanent or both, were not broken down by gender or ethnicity.

It is also extremely unusual for LEA records to contain any reference to other agencies who may be involved with the pupil and/or the family, providing support and assistance in various ways. Cooperation between agencies is either non-existent or in its infancy, yet could be a powerful force for the effective targeting of limited resources.

Clearly the decisions about which data to record rely too much on statutory obligation, and the methods for recording and accessing data are currently too ponderous. The whole system needs a complete overhaul in order to make it far integrated and useable. At

present, LEAs are under pressure to produce different kinds of data for different purposes for different agencies and researchers, in addition to their own needs. Because the system of keeping records is not highly developed, retrieval takes time which LEAs do not have spare capacity. Even more disconcerting is the current situation whereby data are not only difficult to retrieve, they may not even have been recorded. If all useful data were appropriately recorded on a database they would become readily accessible and easy to retrieve.

Eighteen of the twenty-four LEAs targeted provided data of some sort on excluded pupils. There was a huge discrepancy between the LEAs with regard to the quality of their data. Two provided everything that was asked of them, but clearly the vast majority could not, rather than would not, simply because they did not record the detail that was required of them. The level of detail in the information provided varied greatly. Only data that could be unambiguously derived from the information provided were used in the analysis. To illustrate the point, when one LEA provided numbers for Year 7 and Year 8 combined, no estimate was made of the numbers for each year separately.

DfES tables for school absences and YJB tables of crime figures also showed evidence of problems in the record keeping systems. Each of these tables contained some discrepancies which were largely resolved by giving precedence to figures in the body of the tables rather than to marginal totals.

The data analysed here are thus as accurate as possible, though this has been at the cost of using a reduced sample. Since the data provided by LEAs have varied greatly in quality, it has not been possible to make use of that which was insufficiently detailed. Nine LEAs provided data both on the number and on the duration of fixed period exclusions. The correlation between the number and duration of these was very high (0.91) 1. (A correlation coefficient is a measure of how closely higher values of one variable are associated with higher values of the other. A correlation coefficient of one, would indicate a perfect relationship. The significance of a correlation coefficient indicates how likely it would be to have a correlation this large in a sample of this size purely by the chance of sample selection rather than because a real relationship existed. Significance at the five per cent level indicates that chance results of this magnitude would occur less than one time in 20.) the case of permanent exclusions the correlation was also very high (0.99). Numbers of pupils given fixed-term exclusions (without the duration of exclusions) were provided by most LEAs and only fourteen were able to give the number of days out of school for permanent exclusions. As a consequence, only the numbers of exclusions were used in the analysis.

Reasons for being out of school

The most common reasons for being out of school are as set out in table 1 below. This shows that the mean number of missed days of schooling per secondary pupil (total population in maintained secondary schools in England: 2,917,639) for five categories. The main reason for pupils being out of school is 'authorised absence'. This accounts for

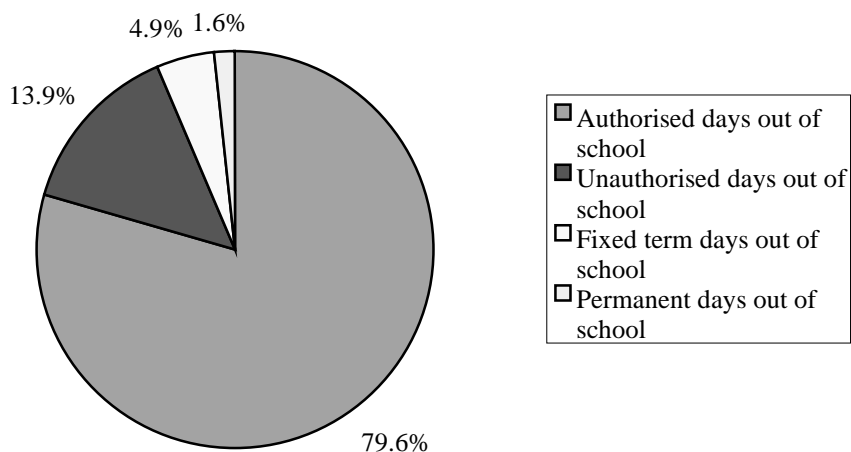
7.5 days of absence from school with the total of days out of school calculated at 9.5 days. It is difficult to quantify the scale of ‘unofficial exclusions’ but informants mentioned figures which lead to a magnitude of days out of school approaching the level for permanent exclusions – fewer children but more days per child because they are not so readily picked up.

Table 1: Reasons for absence and average days out of school for each

Reason for absence	Average days per year
Authorised days out of school	7.56
Unauthorised days out of school	1.32
Fixed term days out of school	0.47
Permanent days out of school	0.15
Unofficial exclusions days out of school	?????
Total	9.51

Figure 1 demonstrates the magnitude of authorized absence compared with the other reasons. Eighty per cent is accounted for by authorized absence.

Figure 1: Percentages of days out of school for different reasons



In pursuit of the major objectives of the research, to investigate the strength of association between the rates of youth crime and the proportion of time secondary pupils spend out of school, the adjusted total offences rate was modeled as being dependent on

the following six variables:

1. The number of fixed-period exclusions (in proportion to the secondary school population)
2. The number of permanent exclusions (in proportion to the secondary school populated)
3. The percentage of half days out of school through authorised absence
4. The average number of authorized half days out of school per absent pupil
5. The percentage of half days out of school through unauthorised absence
6. The average number of unauthorized half days out of school per absent pupil

As in the case of fixed-period and permanent exclusions, where two available variables were very closely correlated, the correlation of the two variables for authorised absence were high, 0.965 in this sample and 0.975 for all LEAs in England. In correlational terms the two variables give virtually the same information and could not both be included in an analysis of such a small sample. This was less true for unauthorised absence, with a correlation of 0.689 in the sample and 0.636 nationally.

Taking all six of these explanatory variables together, the multiple correlation with the youth crime rate was very high (0.907). However, the coefficient of ‘half days lost through unauthorized absence per absent pupil’ was very poorly estimated and removing this from the model reduced the multiple correlation very slightly to 0.906. In other words the removal of this variable from the equation failed to reduce the very high correlation that now remains between authorised absence, permanent and fixed-term exclusions on the one hand, and youth crime rates on the other.

Variables as indicators of youth crime rates

Each of the variables (listed above) is a potential candidate as a predictor of youth crime rates. It appears, however, that some rates, although positively correlated with crime rates and although predictors, are not significantly high predictors. To what extent is each of these variable a predictor of youth crime rates?

The equation (Appendix, page 13) might suggest that exclusions are a more important determinant of crime rates than ordinary school absence. However, although the coefficient for the permanent exclusion rate is nearly two hundred and thirty times as great as that for percentage authorized absence, the mean percentage authorized absence (7.9 in the sample used for this model) is about two thousand seven hundred times as great as the mean permanent exclusion rate (0.003). Thus the contribution of authorized absence to predicting the juvenile crime rate is about eleven and a half times as great as that of permanent exclusions. Similarly, percentage authorized absence is about three times as important as unauthorized absence and about four times as important as fixed-period exclusions. However, it is less than half as important as the number of half days lost through authorized absence per absent pupil. Authorised absence figures emerge as the major predictor of youth crime rates.

It should not be overlooked, however, that each of the variables, taken separately, has a positive correlation with youth crime rates. For percentage authorized absence this is 0.587, for half days authorized absence per absent pupil this is 0.615, for percentage unauthorized absence 0.383, for the fixed-period exclusion rate 0.432 and for the permanent exclusion rate 0.012.. However, these explanatory variables are also highly correlated amongst themselves. Taken separately they would predict very much the same areas to be high in youth crime. Taken together, the prediction is dominated by authorised absence rates, whilst the other variables merely make minor adjustments to the prediction based on authorised absence.

A significant outcome of the research shows that areas of high authorised absence have high youth crime as well as high exclusion rates. The implication is that within such areas, those with disproportionately high authorised absence rates (compared with other types of pupils out of school) and especially where this high rate is produced by fewer absent pupils, are likely to have more youth crime. The fact that prediction of youth crime rates is dominated by authorised absence rates requires some explanation (even though the sample is small and the equation may not generalise to a broader sample):

1. In so far as this analysis indicates a link between children out of school and youth crime, it is important to note that it is simply *absence* that matters, not the type of absence. (YOT managers generally perceive the problem that they face as directly related to the number of pupils out of school on any given day of the year, irrespective of the reason for that absence).
2. In so far as the type of absence is important, authorised absence is more important than other kinds of absence.

There is a range of possible explanations. It may be partly because the balance between authorised and unauthorised absence is largely a matter of the degree of complicity of parents. In a recent sweep of shopping malls and high streets to identify out-of-school pupils, 80% were found to be with an adult. It may be partly because absence due to the effect of social deprivation on health or economic pressure to be absent from school is likely to be authorised. Or it may be partly because in areas of very high authorised absence the pupils who are troublesome are less likely to be available in school to be excluded.

A further small analysis was carried out to investigate whether social backgrounds were associated with crime more closely than absence from school rates. This was based on data from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) Standard Spending Assessment tables for the 2001 Rate Support Grant calculations. As measured by the DETR, levels of Income Support claimants, children in single parent families and rates of free school meals eligibility had no appreciable predictive value. This suggests, therefore, that the association between absence from school and youth crime established in this research is a proper representation of a real link between the two.

Statistical analysis in itself cannot establish that absence from school is a cause of crime. The numerical data leaves open the possibility that it is a tendency towards crime and antisocial behaviour that leads to absence from school.

The investigation of gender differences was hampered by two factors. The DfES performance tables do not distinguish between absences for boys and girls. Also some LEAs did not provide a sufficiently detailed breakdown of their exclusion figures to enable the separation of boys' and girls' exclusions. For those areas where the data were available, the correlation between numbers of exclusions for boys and for girls was 0.936. the correlation between offence rates for boys and girls was 0.561. Unsurprisingly, the equations for boys and for girls separately resemble the equation for all pupils shown above. Similarly the investigation of differences by ethnicity proved impossible to develop because the data provided by the LEAs were insufficiently detailed.

Pointers for further investigation in the future

1. Smaller localities than YOT areas

The data relates to areas and not to individuals. It is possible that a significantly different picture of differences between areas would emerge if areas were defined on a smaller scale than those covered by YOTs. Many of the YOT areas targeted in this research encompass extremely diverse community regions and blanket coverage fails to expose differences contained within them. Real differences in crime rates and absence rates may be far more dramatic between localities within a single YOT area than between the areas themselves.

2. Unofficial exclusions and days out of school

Although each of the 24 LEAs targeted was approached with a request to estimate unofficial days out of school, only four responded. Of these, three declined the invitation to provide a guesstimate. Only one was prepared to make an educated estimate, based on some inside information, a reasonably accurate estimate of numbers of pupils involved and the number of days out of school in each case. The estimate runs as follows:

Pupils involved	=	20
Four out of school for 1 term (63 days)	=	252 days
Three out of school for 1 year (190 days)	=	570 days
Thirteen out of school for 10 days (10 days)	=	130 days
Total estimated days out of school	=	952 days
Total LEA 11-16 school population	=	15,000

This is one estimate. Even if it is significantly flawed it still amounts to a large number of pupil days out of school that are not recorded in any figures at all. Multiplied by the total number of LEAs across the country it becomes a significant statistic representing a problem that is not only not being addressed but remains undetected.

APPENDIX

The intention was to collect data for school non-attendance and youth crime for the school year September 1999 – August 2000. In the event this was not possible for the youth crime figures. Youth Offending Teams have only been required to make returns to the Youth Justice Board on a quarterly basis since April 1999. Data for school non-attendance represent September 1999 – August 2000, whereas data for youth crime represent April – December 2000. The time periods for the two data sets, therefore, overlap by only three months. Consequently any correspondences are bound to be blurred.

The YJB figures were converted to rates of offending using the YJB's own value for the 10-17 year old population in each area. The LEA school population, however, is markedly different in being based on the 11 – 16 year old school population. In order to make the youth crime rates more relevant to the LEA data, therefore, an adjusted total was calculated by excluding years 10 and 17, taking half the 11 year old and half the 16 year old figures, together with all the 12 to 15 year old figures. LEA figures were reduced to rates using the DfES value for pupils of statutory school age in secondary schools. LEA figures were reduced to rates using the DfES value for pupils of statutory school age in secondary schools. Note these figures do not represent proportions of the relevant age-groups. The offenders rate is not the number of secondary school age offenders as a percentage of the secondary school age population but a rate in proportion to the 10 to 17 year old population.

The adjusted total offences rate was modelled as dependent on four variables (see page 6) The contributions of individual variables was poorly estimated because of the small sample available. Only the estimated effect of the level of authorised absence differed significantly from zero (at the five per cent level).

The model which best combines accuracy with a high combined correlation is described below. It requires careful interpretation (see page 7).

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Juvenile Crime Rate} &= -0.290 \\ &+ 0.015 \times \text{Percent Half – days Lost through Authorised Absence} \\ &+ 0.011 \times \text{Authorised Half –days Lost per Absent Pupil} \\ &- 0.028 \times \text{Percent Half – days Lost through Unauthorised Absence} \\ &- 0.383 \times \text{Fixed – Period Exclusion Rate} \\ &- 3.451 \times \text{Permanent Exclusion Rate} \end{aligned}$$

The fact that both unauthorized absence and both types of exclusions have negative coefficients in the equation does not mean that, with high crime areas, young people excluded from school are less likely to become offenders.

Table 3: Correlations between school absence and youth crime

	Youth Crime Rate	Percentage Authorised Absence	Authorised Absence per Pupil	Percentage Unauthorised Absence	Fixed Term Exclusions
Percentage Authorised Absence	0.587*				
Authorised Absence per Pupil	0.615*	0.965*			
Percentage Unauthorised Absence	0.383*	0.879*	0.900*		
Fixed Period Exclusions	0.432	0.888*	0.905*	0.813*	
Permanent Exclusions	0.012	0.402	0.443	0.481	0.580*

* significance below 5%

Table 4: Offences, Absences and Exclusion Rates by LEA

Area	Overall offences rate	Per cent days absence per pupil	Per cent half authorised unauthorised absence	Per cent half days absence	Fixed term exclusion rate	Permanent exclusion rate
1	0.004	7.0		0.8		0.007
2	0.007	7.6		1.6	0.081	0.004
3	0.009	7.0		0.6		
4	0.010	8.6		1.7		
5	0.011	6.5		0.7	0.020	0.002
6	0.011	7.1		0.7	0.044	0.002
7	0.012	7.0		0.5		
8	0.012	7.3		0.6	0.078	0.001
9	0.015	8.0		1.5	0.081	0.003
10	0.017	6.9		0.4		
11	0.018	7.6		0.5		
12	0.018	9.0		2.3	0.034	0.001
13	0.019	7.4		0.9		0.004
14	0.019	9.3		2.9	0.108	0.006
15	0.022	7.8		0.9	0.027	0.001
16	0.024	9.0		2	0.108	0.005
17	0.025	8.8		1.3		
18	0.028	7.0		0.8		
19	0.036	7.6		1.6	0.140	0.002
20	0.039	7.0		0.6	0.045	0.003

21	0.055	8.6	1.7		
22	0.055	6.5	0.7	0.112	0.005
