



**College of  
Policing**



# The Role of the YOT Police Officer

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# Forewords

The local and national youth justice landscape within which youth justice services are delivered has changed significantly since the first multi-agency youth offending teams (YOTs) were established. There is increased co-ordination between YOTs and partner agencies, and the role of seconded staff, particularly warranted police officers, has evolved significantly over the years. This has allowed for much greater scope in how young people are dealt with and greater opportunities for YOTs to be innovative in their local approach.



Despite the changes, the primary duty of seconded police officers remains the same: to prevent offending by children and young people. This refreshed guidance is timely and will undoubtedly assist the police service and YOTs with understanding the role of the YOT police officer, and, in turn, the effective deployment of diminished resources. I reinforce the need to ensure that YOT police officers carry out the core functions set out within this guidance.

I am encouraged to see how local authorities, their statutory partners and YOTs are developing ways of working which best suit the local environment. There is no 'one size fits all' model for success, as the examples in this guidance clearly show. But I hope that all agencies delivering youth justice services locally will be inspired to consider how they could adapt the practice examples to meet their needs and to continue to deliver effective youth justice outcomes for our young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olivia Pinkney'.

**Deputy Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney**

**National Police Lead for Children and Young People**

The Youth Justice Board recognises the importance of multi-agency working and the unique skills and qualities that the partner agencies bring to the youth justice system. It is the strength of this partnership approach that has proved so successful in ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people who have offended.



We welcome the current reduction in offending by young people and in particular the reduction in the number of young people entering the system for the first time. We recognise that it is the people directly delivering services, with a wealth of experience at local level, that continue to drive innovation and achieve these results. The contribution to this work made by YOTs is highly valued. We seek to support this work by the provision of up-to-date and relevant guidance to underpin existing legislation.

Seconded police officers play a vital role that both complements and enhances YOTs' provision of services under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In a changing landscape, serving and future police secondees to YOTs should be well equipped and responsive, and this document will undoubtedly support their work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lin Hinnigan', written over a light blue grid background.

**Lin Hinnigan**

**Chief Executive, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales**

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2010, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), in consultation with ACPO, produced a document setting out the functions and role of the youth offending team (YOT) police officer, *The YOT Police Officer Review and Role Development*. This present document updates and revises this guidance, taking account of developments such as:
- the new out-of-court disposals framework introduced by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
  - changes in funding arrangements introduced by police and crime commissioner appointments
  - the inevitable reduction in resources across all public bodies as a result of ongoing austerity measures.
- 1.2 As part of the evidence base for this review, individuals and members of the following groups and agencies were consulted:
- the National Police Lead for Children and Young People
  - YOT staff and managers
  - YOT police officers
  - the Association of YOT Managers
  - chairs of YOT management boards
  - YJB staff.
- 1.3 We are grateful to all those who gave up their time to assist the review process. We hope that, as a result, the core role of YOT police officer is clearly defined and can be adopted nationally to ensure consistency and added value.
- 1.4 With ever reducing resources across local authorities, YOTs and the police service as a whole, the review concentrated on setting a minimum required standard of delivery and engagement for the YOT police officer role.
- 1.5 Prior to this review, the YJB consulted YOTs on a review of *Sustaining the Success* (YJB, 2004), which was published as [Modern Youth Offending Partnerships: Guidance on Effective Youth Offending Team Governance in England](#) (YJB, 2013). This present document incorporates learning and information from this review, specifically in relation to working practices, governance and strategic alignment.

- 1.6 Since their inception on 1 April 2000, YOTs have been the epitome of multi-agency teams, whereby staff from a variety of parent agencies work together to achieve the aims of the youth justice system. This configuration has since informed how adult integrated offender management is structured.
- 1.7 Each person within the YOT brings their own unique skills to the team, as well as their essential link to their parent organisation. YOT staff work to achieve the same goals from shared accommodation, with joint funding from the parent agencies, the YJB and, more recently, police and crime commissioners.
- 1.8 [Section 39\(3\) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) places a duty on every chief officer of police to co-operate with the local authority(ies) within their area in the discharge by the local authority of its duty to establish a YOT. Section 39(5) of the Act also specifies that a YOT shall include at least one police officer. In addition, under the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), the police and crime commissioner (or mayor in London) is under a statutory duty to ensure an “efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area”.
- 1.9 While the involvement of the police as a statutory partner is clear in law, it must not be solely the legal requirement that retains the police as a significant partner within the YOT. The YOT police officer possesses unique skills and warranted powers that must be utilised to best effect within the team. The strength and effectiveness of YOTs depends on the specialist skills of *all* partner agencies and the skills and expertise of seconded staff need to be embraced and promoted in order to ensure continued YOT successes.
- 1.10 This document aims to ensure that YOTs continue to make full and effective contributions to reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, supporting young people within the criminal justice system, and delivering meaningful interventions to reduce reoffending. To achieve this, it is important that the needs of young people are firstly identified through effective assessment, and secondly that these needs are sufficiently met. Through this work, YOTs will continue to contribute to protecting the public and work restoratively with victims of crime. In the longer term, YOTs’ work to reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system and provide effective interventions to reduce the risk of young people reoffending will be the investment that leads to fewer adult offenders.
- 1.11 In this document, the term ‘practice example’ is used to describe emerging or promising practice, and should therefore not be taken to mean that evaluation of impact has been carried out.

## 2. The purpose of this document

- 2.1 The National Police Lead for Children and Young People and the YJB recognise that in terms of operational delivery, it is for the chief constable and local YOT manager to determine the size, scope and deployment of staff to YOTs. They alone are tasked to deliver the best possible services to their communities and have the greatest knowledge of local needs. This document does not seek to remove such autonomy, as it is vital that local agencies are able to manage their own services in the way they consider most appropriate.
- 2.2 This document should be regarded as definitive joint guidance from the National Police Lead and the YJB as to the expected *minimum core functions* that the YOT police officer is expected to carry out. The delivery mechanism and expansion of the role is left to the professional judgement of the respective heads of service and management boards. It is hoped that this will allow YOT managers, in consultation with police supervisors, the capacity to innovate and be flexible in terms of local service delivery, while at the same time enabling police officers to be used to their best effect, making maximum use of their policing skills and warranted powers.
- 2.3 Nothing within this document should change those roles where police officers have been deployed as additional resources to the YOT, for example officers specifically recruited to fulfil Intensive Supervision and Surveillance roles or officers of supervisory rank who form part of the YOT management team. Such roles are not within the scope of this document.

## 3. Developing existing practice

3.1 There is a vast array of practice in existence for the YOT police officer role. However, this falls into five main themes:

- intelligence and information sharing
- early intervention and prevention
- youth caution and youth conditional caution delivery
- offender management
- partnership working.

### Intelligence and information sharing

3.2 The police service has invested much time, money and effort in enhancing its intelligence-handling capacity, along with its use of problem solving approaches to crime and anti-social behaviour and integrated offender management, through the use of the National Intelligence Model. Of all areas of police work within the YOT, the access to and sharing of intelligence was highlighted during this review as the single most valued role performed by the YOT police officer.

3.3 YOTs should be joined up with wider police intelligence, tasking and co-ordination processes. The YOT police officer should keep themselves abreast of current local crime problems, directing their time to high-risk individuals and hotspot areas. This can only be achieved by ensuring there is a requirement for the YOT police officer (or their line manager) to attend both daily management meetings and Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group meetings where possible. YOT police officers should also have access to a daily police briefing system to enable them to remain up to date with local crime, incident and offender information.

3.4 This correlation between daily policing challenges and the work of the YOT should be a minimum standard of engagement.

3.5 In areas where there is gang activity or serious youth violence, the YOT police officer should act as the two-way conduit of intelligence sharing between the YOT and the local police, where this function is not being undertaken through other means. It is particularly important that the YOT police officer promotes a culture of intelligence sharing and is also focused on safeguarding issues, particularly in relation to girls and other vulnerable young people connected to gangs.

3.6 The YOT police officer should engage with processes for sharing information on serious/violent offenders and young people who are subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). This is very important to the management of risk by the YOT (as an agency with a duty to co-operate) and the agencies responsible for young people subject to MAPPA (police, probation and secure accommodation). It is also crucial



in ensuring the YOT is aware of any intelligence that is relevant to the management of a particular case, in terms of safeguarding of the young person and staff, as well as risk management processes.

- 3.7 Intelligence and information sharing between the YOT and the police is a vital area of work undertaken by the YOT police officer. However, while it is accepted that each member of the YOT will be used as a link to their respective parent organisation, the YOT should look to build strategic and operational links to the police service. This is to enable routine intelligence enquiries to be made of trained intelligence officers where at all possible, rather than sole reliance on the YOT police officer. Without these working partnerships there is no resilience and the YOT police officer is at risk of being diverted from operational tasks to fulfil administrative functions.
- 3.8 Many YOTs have developed a structure that sees the YOT police officer designated as the single point of contact for police colleagues within the intelligence role. However, as police officer numbers reduce in some areas, the use of a single point of contact can create a 'bottleneck' for the exchange of information. It is therefore crucial that, wherever possible, processes are established to obtain information required on a daily basis. For example, information on arrest and summons data and out-of-court disposals issued solely by the police should be provided through a process other than the YOT police officer interrogating systems daily.

#### **Practice example: Sandwell Youth Offending Service**

Police in the Sandwell Youth Offending Service (YOS) area prepare an intelligence pack on any new young person coming to the attention of the youth justice system (not necessarily as a first-time entrant). This will contain all basic information regarding known family members, domestic violence issues, school and social services history.

This pack comes to the YOS at the point the young person first comes to their attention and clearly reduces administrative burdens on the YOS police officer.

### **Early intervention and prevention**

- 3.9 Over time the role of prevention has become more a part of the neighbourhood policing team remit.
- 3.10 Joint working by YOT police officers with neighbourhood policing/safer neighbourhood teams in identifying and managing young people at risk of entering the youth justice system is crucial to provide the best possible service for those young people. The welcome involvement of school-based officers, neighbourhood policing teams, community safety partnerships and wider children's services means that YOT police officers are no longer solely responsible for such matters, and this frees their time to focus attention elsewhere.

- 3.11 One area of early intervention that has grown significantly is triage, and in Wales, the bureau scheme. These schemes aim to divert suitable first-time and low-level offenders out of the youth justice system. This normally involves them undertaking a restorative approach to their offending. The YOT police officer has a clear role in providing the link between police custody and the diversion process, as well as ensuring a consistent application of the scheme.
- 3.12 Working with victims of crime and sharing their details (with permission) to the YOT is vital to ensure they can be involved in restorative low-level out-of-court disposals.
- 3.13 Although not solely the role of the YOT police officer, police involvement with victims is a prominent area of work for many YOT police officers. It helps victims of crime understand that the out-of-court process is part of the youth justice system, as they see the restorative work delivered by police officers.
- 3.14 YOTs and YOT police officers play a significant role in early intervention programmes. In particular, both play a pivotal role in the management and the effective execution of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) for young people.
- 3.15 New provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for dealing with anti-social behaviour are due to be brought into force in the autumn of 2014. Any applicant for an order against a young person under that Act is subject to a statutory duty to 'consult' with the local YOT before the application reaches court. (New guidance on anti-social behaviour – to be issued by the Home Office, with a supplementary attachment for young people from the YJB – should be checked in cases relating to such offences.) The consultation should be directed to the offender's caseworker or a member of the YOT with a working knowledge of the young person. The YOT police officer should remain aware of the case and support the YOT caseworker by providing additional intelligence as and when required. The YOT police officer should not, however, be the sole point of contact for 'consultation'.

## Youth cautions and youth conditional cautions

- 3.16 The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 created the youth caution (i.e. a caution without conditions) and also revised the process for dealing with youth conditional cautions. Potentially a significant amount of YOT police officer time could be spent administering and delivering youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. Nationally, there is a variety of delivery models in place, ranging from the YOT police officer completing only the *Asset* assessment, with local inspectors delivering the youth conditional caution itself, through to the YOT police officer supporting YOT administrators to arrange YOT 'caution clinics', and contributing to appropriate interventions for the young person following administration of the caution.
- 3.17 The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 sets out clearly the roles of each partner agency in delivering youth cautions and youth conditional cautions.

- 3.18 It is highly recommended that the mandatory assessment required for out-of-court disposals is carried out by a trained youth justice worker. The YOT police officer will be expected to contribute to the assessment process in relation to current offending and intelligence, but should not be expected to undertake the assessment alone. It is a matter for local determination as to how youth cautions and youth conditional cautions are delivered, by whom and in what setting. Reference to the [Director's Guidance on Charging](#) (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013) is required to ensure that youth conditional cautions are administered within the correct legal framework.
- 3.19 Failure by the young person to comply with any conditions set as part of the youth conditional caution will be for the YOT to manage and the YOT police officer should be utilised to accurately record evidence of any wilful failures to comply. Recording the breaches in an evidential manner will ensure that, when considering prosecution for the original offence, the decision maker is fully informed of the circumstances and reasons for the failed youth conditional caution.
- 3.20 Where any out-of-court disposal is carried out by the YOT or the YOT police officer, the YOT police officer should inform their local neighbourhood policing teams, so that information on local young people who have offended can be shared and fed back to the community or victim of crime where necessary. Building these links should be a core part of the YOT police officer's role.

## 4. Offender management

- 4.1 The role of offender management within the YOT is a complex one. The YOT police officer often has responsibility for delivering many out-of-court disposals for low-level offending. At the same time, there is a need for the YOT police officer's role to include working with young people who have a greater likelihood of reoffending, particularly those historically identified as belonging to the Deter Young Offenders (DYO) cohort. While many YOTs still choose to have a DYO process, this is often part of an overall integrated offender management (IOM) approach. It is recommended, therefore, that DYO activity should now be captured locally within IOM or remaining DYO processes. Consequently, DYO is not specifically referenced within this guidance.
- 4.2 There has never been a greater need to drive efficiencies in all partnerships. In order to maintain effective front line services, each partner must utilise the skills of their staff to their fullest effect. Historically, those young people posing the highest likelihood of reoffending have been mainly managed by social care colleagues within the YOT. With the exception of some police officers involved in Intensive Supervision and Surveillance work, the YOT police officer has traditionally had little contact with the cohort, other than engaging with the IOM team and facilitating the transfer of cases for those young people aged 18 years and over.
- 4.3 However, as the level of risk with these young people is high and their management important, the YOT police officer should offer their YOT colleagues support in working with these groups. It is not the intention of this document to transfer responsibility for the management of this group to the YOT police officer, but the YOT police officer should use the 'supporting to engage' element of their role to secure young people's compliance with the intervention required. They should also use this element of their skills with young people to promote re-engagement when the young person is in breach.
- 4.4 The rationale for increasing the focus towards those most likely to reoffend is aligned to the need to target activity where it is most needed. The number of first-time entrants (young people receiving their first youth caution, youth conditional caution or conviction) has seen some dramatic decreases since the peak in 2007/08.
- 4.5 The reduction achieved in first-time entrant rates has been attributed to a number of factors, but smaller cohorts of more persistent offenders have meant that the frequency and binary rates of reoffending by young people have remained stubbornly high.
- 4.6 The YOT police officer's role in relation to IOM should be:
- ensuring the neighbourhood policing teams are aware of IOM cohorts in their area and any interventions/conditions that young people are subject to

- joint management of young people within the IOM cohort with YOT caseworkers
  - joint custody visit pre-release, where appropriate
  - home visits if the young person is in breach. The YOT police officer should also assist other YOT colleagues in undertaking home visits or interviews where there is a level of risk attached to the young person. Where appropriate, a joint visit with a warranted officer will reduce risk to all concerned.
- 4.7 A number of forces already focus their staff on young people who pose a higher risk due to their higher likelihood of reoffending.
- 4.8 An example of how Kirklees YOT has changed its practice is provided in the following case study.

### **Case study: Kirklees YOT DYO management within wider IOM workstream**

Kirklees YOT has embedded the management of DYO within their IOM scheme. They have done so by holding regular multi-agency meetings, where YOT staff, adult IOM staff, YOT police officers, and partners from housing, education and social care attend to discuss the joint management of these young people. At these meetings, a YOT police officer is allocated to the young person. The YOT police officer will work with the existing caseworker to meet the young person's needs and ensure they do not breach appointments.

Young people in custody receive a joint visit by the YOT police officer and YOT officer, in which roles, responsibilities and expectations are explained. It is made clear to the young person that the YOT police officer will have ongoing involvement in the case, including the possibility of home visits etc.

The results of this approach in terms of reductions in reoffending and breach have been very positive.

### **Relationship to integrated offender management (adult)**

- 4.9 There is no doubt that YOTs are widely regarded as a successful example of multi-agency working, and they are the model from which the adult IOM team model has been drawn. While there is always the risk that the adult IOM process takes precedence in terms of focus and resource, it should not be forgotten that future success in reducing adult offending is very heavily influenced by the intervention in young offenders' lives, which helps prevent them becoming adult offenders in the first place.
- 4.10 Although there have been some dramatic reductions in young people's first-time entrant rates (which will eventually impact on the numbers entering the adult system), it is not possible to prevent all young people from becoming adult offenders. It is therefore crucial to ensure the management of these young people does not stop when they reach 18, but that the adult system is both aware of and ready to deal with these

young people when they make the transition to adulthood. It is both a failure and a waste of resources to allow such young people to regress to offending for lack of support; where this occurs, the chances of them remaining as life-course offenders is much higher.

- 4.11 Although IOM is not yet fully established nationally, where IOM services exist, it is vital for the YOT, and in particular the YOT police officer, to establish and maintain good working links with their colleagues in adult IOM teams. They should jointly ensure a comprehensive transition from YOT to IOM for young people who continue to pose a risk.

## Joint line management

- 4.12 All YOT police officers should have joint line management in place, including for the completion of performance development reviews and any HR requirements. The YOT should provide the YOT police officer with a day-to-day manager for operational deployment, while the police force should also maintain effective management of, and links with, the YOT police officer. In some cases, the YOT police officer is line managed by the IOM supervisor within the home force, but this is often a notional management arrangement, providing little direction and influence on the deployment of the officer. For both the YOT and the police force to ensure they achieve value from the seconded staff member, it is important that management arrangements are truly joint and co-ordinated.

### Practice example: Solihull Youth Offending Service police officer

The Solihull Youth Offending Service (YOS) police officer is jointly line managed by the YOS team manager for day-to-day activities, but retains a police manager for links to the police and performance reviews.

Both managers meet quarterly to set objectives for the officer that meet both the Local Police and Crime Plan objectives and also the YOS Service Plan.

This ensures that both the host and parent organisation contribute to the direction and control of the officer and also ensures that the annual performance review is jointly contributed to.

## Use of warranted powers

- 4.13 Additional responsibilities for the YOT police officer include the use of their warranted powers as enforcement where required and appropriate. This can include dealing with breaches of Parenting Orders, bail support schemes, youth conditional cautions, and taking appropriate action against individuals who are considered wanted for other matters.

- 4.14 This activity does not mean that every young person in the area should be dealt with by the YOT police officer. However, where the YOT police officer is present or already engaged with the young person when an offence or issue is raised, the YOT police officer should act accordingly in line with their warranted powers where required. This will include taking statements and investigating substantive offences, and, where appropriate, arresting and transferring young people wanted for other matters to support their police colleagues within the parent organisation. This activity is part of the core role of the YOT police officer, but it is recognised that this needs to be managed sensitively and appropriately.
- 4.15 There has always been some tension between the police and YOTs as to the level at which the YOT police officer should utilise their policing powers within the YOT's working domain. This has, on occasion, seen YOT police officers calling the police to arrest young people who are at the YOT for a range of offences, from being wanted on warrant to committing offences at the YOT in the police officer's presence. While it is accepted that the YOT environment needs to be one where the young person feels safe to attend and where they will do so even when they are wanted for other matters, it is wholly inappropriate that the YOT police officer should be expected not to intervene when they are present with the young person.
- 4.16 The YOT police officer should work with YOT management staff to arrange arrests of wanted young people, ensuring that, where possible, the integrity of the YOT is maintained and the welfare needs of young people are met. This would include encouraging a young person to surrender at a police station at a time where YOT staff will be readily on hand to deal with them. However, this does not and should not preclude the YOT police officer from making arrests, where the necessity test is met.



## 5. Partnership working

- 5.1 YOTs are firmly grounded in the multi-agency partnership approach, in terms of both team composition and co-location. As partnerships, YOTs provide targeted prevention and early intervention work to keep young people from becoming entrants to the formal youth justice system – or, once they have entered the system, to reduce the severity and frequency of reoffending. During this review, both police and YOTs highlighted that, without close working relationships, there would be a detrimental loss of service in relation to information sharing and joint problem solving. To maintain close working partnerships, it is therefore expected and strongly advised that, in the majority of cases, the YOT police officer will remain co-located within the YOT.

### Neighbourhood policing/safer neighbourhoods

- 5.2 Neighbourhood policing teams are a key partner for YOT police officers; they have good knowledge not only of their areas, but also the young people within them. They are ideally placed to fulfil a low-level intervention and support role with young people who are offending, or who are at risk of doing so. In order to support the partnership between the YOT and neighbourhood policing teams, it is imperative that YOT police officers work closely with these teams to:

- identify young people at risk
- identify and share knowledge of diversionary activities that can be delivered or attended by young people
- assist in making appropriate referrals to any youth early intervention programmes
- consult on new anti-social behaviour options or Acceptable Behaviour Contract applications sought against young people
- ensure that the local neighbourhood policing team is aware of young people who have been given DYO/IOM status, along with any activity they could undertake to assist the young person in complying with YOT interventions. The focus should firmly be on supporting young people within their communities and not purely finding opportunities to conduct enforcement activities.

### Schools

- 5.3 Local policing structures and the availability of school-based police officers and police community support officers vary across the country, and therefore YOT police officers need to be aware of their own local structures. What is vital is that the YOT police officer remains a point of contact for schools-linked officers (and where these are not in place, the



local neighbourhood officers) and ensures there are joined-up practices for information sharing between schools, pupil referral units and the YOT.

## Partnerships in general

- 5.4 The YOT is a vital part of wider partnership groups such as the community safety partnership and local strategic partnership. As such, the YOT police officer, along with other YOT colleagues, plays a vital role in this wider multi-agency work. In particular, YOTs have an important role in anti-social behaviour problem solving forums. They should continue to work in partnership with their neighbourhood policing teams and children's services concerning safeguarding issues, and with their local community safety partnership to address local community needs.
- 5.5 The YOT police officer should:
- represent the police element of the YOT at appropriate external multi-agency forums, for example serious youth violence or guns, gangs and weapons forums
  - contribute to public meetings involving partners from within community safety partnerships to help illustrate the YOT's positive impact in delivering the community safety partnership's priorities in terms of young people, and to build confidence in the youth justice system more widely
  - provide feedback to police colleagues on interventions with young people referred to the YOT and ensure they promote the rehabilitative work of the YOT.

### Practice example: Police Community Credit Recognition Scheme (Somerset)

Avon and Somerset Constabulary, in partnership with Somerset County Council, has developed the 'Positive Ticketing Scheme'. The scheme recognises and rewards young people for making a positive contribution within their community by awarding 'community credit tickets'. The accumulation of these credits leads to recognition and reward in the form of retail vouchers. This has been adapted from a similar scheme run by the Canadian Mounted Police, and allows for positive interactions with the police, positive role modelling and personal satisfaction for young people involved.

## 6. Recommendations and conclusion

- 6.1 Police officers are a specialist and finite resource and should be employed accordingly, utilising their unique policing skills in assessing risk, sharing information, obtaining evidence regarding breaches and representing the police element of the YOT to the wider community. They should not be deployed on purely administrative tasks, or tasks that do not require the skills of a warranted officer.
- 6.2 Local arrangements should be considered in the form of a service level agreement, created in conjunction with crime and disorder partnerships, YOT management boards and other key partners, to set out the duration of secondment opportunities for their staff. As a guide, a minimum of two years is seen as good practice, with a requirement for all seconded staff to remain current and up to date with the mandatory training of their parent organisation. For YOT police officers this includes staff safety training, annual fitness tests, and personal and protective equipment reclassifications. These must be undertaken for the police officer to remain fully operational and fulfil relevant operational roles connected with their secondment, such as presence at events to support their neighbourhood policing team colleagues, in managing young people known to the YOT.

### Police profile

- 6.3 As the YOT police officer is a unique role within the YOT, performing specific tasks and duties, it is important for young people and their families to know that the YOT has police officers working with them. Therefore, the role should be a uniformed post. While YOT police officers will not wear uniform at all times, they should do so whenever appropriate, for example during any enforcement activity and higher risk home visits. It is also important that YOT police officers carry their airwave when out and wear personal protective equipment in line with their own force's policy. This approach to uniform makes it clear that the person is a warranted police officer and allows the parent organisation another avenue of public visibility and community engagement.
- 6.4 It is imperative for the YOT police officer to be able to work unsupervised, to be self-motivated and to possess excellent communication skills. The role is suitable for police officers from all policing backgrounds who have completed their probationary period.
- 6.5 The post of YOT police officer is an operational post requiring the use of police powers in supporting colleagues by reducing risk associated with home visits, visits to secure accommodation, and some enforcement activity where required. As already stated, the YOT police officer should therefore have available to them full personal protective equipment and be a fully operational officer.

- 6.6 The YOT police officer should at all times be encouraged to use their warranted police powers to reduce burdens on other police services and ensure that they bring the full range of police specialist skills to the YOT partnership.

## **Management information**

- 6.7 The transfer of data from one source to another should not be considered police work, except in cases where such transactions require the officer to apply policing knowledge, for example in accessing police intelligence systems or determining risk. In all other cases, if the administrative tasks impinge on the YOT police officer's ability to fulfil the role, then YOT managers will need to consider the redeployment of these tasks to more appropriate staff.

## **Assessments and caseloads**

- 6.8 The YOT police officer should contribute to the assessment process by providing information and intelligence known by the police, but should not routinely conduct assessments.
- 6.9 Caseloads are carried by some YOT police officers and usually relate to out-of-court disposals that the officer will be engaged with. This would be an appropriate caseload to hold, but, as stated above, any required assessment should be conducted by a suitably trained YOT team member.

## **Management and supervision**

- 6.10 The management and development of the YOT police officer should be a continuous process throughout their seconded period. This should include all mandatory police training, including some operational deployments to ensure they maintain their operational competence and policing skills, as well as specialised training for the role.
- 6.11 The YOT police officer should be jointly line managed, both by the YOT and the home police force to ensure links are maintained with both organisations. This review found evidence of notional police line management, with no effective direction from the home police force. To ensure that both the police and YOT obtain a valued service from the YOT police officer, it is clear that strong joint management is required, including regular meetings between the two managers.

## **Absences**

- 6.12 With a reduced police presence within some YOTs, it is imperative that absences from the role are managed carefully, such as leave, sickness and mandatory training. YOTs may wish to consider establishing a 'buddy system' with a neighbouring YOT police officer to offer some resilience during essential absence periods.

## Strategic overview

6.13 Many police force areas cover more than one local authority and therefore more than one YOT. If this is the case, it is imperative that the force develops a strategic overview to enable management of all YOT police work undertaken in their force area.

## Conclusion

6.14 The YOT police officer role is a key element of any YOT and the role should be protected. In order for that to happen, both the parent organisation and the YOT need to understand the value of the position.

6.15 Although the number of young people entering the youth justice system is reducing, it cannot be assumed that workloads are similarly shrinking. There is a wide range of resource-intensive preventative work being undertaken, such as early intervention, triage, bureau (in Wales) and diversion schemes, as well as community resolutions incorporating restorative practices. Such prevention work has contributed to the significant reductions in first-time entrants to the criminal justice system.

6.16 The YOT police officer is required to work with low-level offenders, as well as supporting the management of serious and prolific offenders.

6.17 The YOT police officer's role is an investment in future reductions in adult offending and has a key part to play in offender management of young people.

6.18 Although it is recognised that we currently face unprecedented pressure on resources, the role of the YOT police officer is not only a legislative requirement, but a vital and valuable role for the YOT partnership.

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