

Reducing reoffending: furthering our understanding

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1. Executive summary

1.1 The YJB Reducing Reoffending Programme is now in its third year. This report provides an update on progress to date along with summaries of learning from national and local data, practice and research.

Learning from the data

National data

1.2 National-level analysis of statistics on proven reoffending over the past ten years from 2002 up to the year ending March 2013 (2012/13) has been published by the Ministry of Justice and the YJB as an official statistics report entitled [“National Analysis of Reoffending Data, for those aged 10-17”](#).

1.3 In summary, the findings are:

- In the year April 2012 to March 2013, around 52,600 young offenders¹ aged 10-17 were cautioned, convicted or released from custody. There were around 19,000 reoffenders and 56,800 reoffences in the same period.
- The number of young offenders (in the reoffending cohort), reoffenders and reoffences reached a peak in the 12 months ending March 2007, but has since reduced year on year. Both the binary and frequency reoffending rates have increased slightly over the same period.
- The cohort of young offenders (as well as the make-up of reoffenders) has changed considerably since 2002 and is comprised of young offenders whose characteristics mean they are more likely to reoffend than those in the 2002 cohort. Principally, that there are proportionately more young offenders with more entrenched offending behaviour.

1.4 The report also presents trends in reoffending by age, gender, ethnicity, number of previous offences and the time from release to first offence. The type of offence that led to the young offender being included in the reoffending cohort and the type of sentence the young offender received for this offence are also included.

Local data

1.5 The YJB has collated local retrospective case level data from programme youth offending teams (YOTs) in order to improve our understanding of the cohort and how this impacts on YOT reoffending performance. The findings from year two confirm and build on the learning from year one:

¹ This is the number of proven offenders who were matched on the Police National Computer. The number includes those receiving reprimands or final warnings.

- 6% of young people in the cohort went on to reoffend and become prolific (committing 5+ further offences). This small group accounted for 45% of all further offences.
- Amongst those who reoffended, 19% did so within the first month of entering the cohort, and 43% within 3 months of entering the cohort.
- 50.5% of those who went on to commit 5 or more further offences were initially assessed for standard intervention or entered the cohort on a disposal requiring no intervention at all. Only 12.8% were initially assessed for intensive intervention and 36.7% enhanced intervention.
- Looked-after children and those leaving care make up a small proportion of the total cohort, but reoffend at over twice the rate of those who have never been looked after.
- Almost a third of those entering the cohort received disposals which don't require YOT intervention (Police Cautions, Fines, and Conditional Discharges).

Toolkit work to address reoffending issues

- 1.6 There has been strong engagement with this initiative, with 75 YOT partnerships joining the programme to analyse and address reoffending issues at a local level. The toolkit has now been made available to all YOTs and we believe that many more are making use of it.
- 1.7 Improvements to reoffending performance can only be achieved if analysis is followed by concerted efforts to address the issues identified. A YJB review of the extent to which this is happening was undertaken in June 15 and found that 64% of programme YOTs had a plan in place and that it took an average of 12 months for the plan to reach the YJB. Where a plan was in place YOTs were likely to be addressing the key issues and were generally making good progress.
- 1.8 Following feedback from the sector, the Reoffending Toolkit has been extended to include 'Live Tracking' and Case Level Disproportionality tools. It also includes a new methodology to help YOTs assess the data on further offending for those who turn 18 during the cohort period.

Understanding practice

Developing YOT practice

- 1.9 YOT partnerships have invested a considerable amount of energy and ingenuity in learning from their local data. We have been encouraged and impressed at the range of creative and innovative practice examples that have come to our attention which reflect the strength of the sector.

Analysis and research

- 1.10 Work in this area has confirmed the ongoing relevance of the six lines of enquiry suggested in the YJB guidance to YOT management boards, [Reoffending: Developing a Local Understanding](#) (April 2014) and has also included:

- A preliminary study on drivers behind good reoffending performance which identified the importance of highly-motivated and engaged staff groups, wider partnership support and sufficient resources to meet minimum standards.
- The development of a project undertaken in partnership with the Welsh Government to test a new approach to case management with young people who have complex needs: The Enhanced Casework Model places a strong emphasis on the knowledge and skills required by practitioners to understand the needs and behaviour of this group of young people and to adapt practice to take account of them. An independent evaluation of this work will be conducted by Cordis Bright.
- A brief summary of the literature on reoffending (page 18), which will be supplemented in the future by a wider Ministry of Justice rapid evidence assessment of this area.

Moving Forward

1.11 The programme will be extended to include a fourth year (2016/17) in order to:

- fully embed the toolkit into YOT practice
- explore ways in which to embed the toolkit into IT systems
- continue to undertake analysis and research to deepen our understanding of related issues and ensure implications of learning to-date are fully implemented.

2. Introduction

Purpose

- 2.1 This report updates stakeholders on the progress of the YJB Reducing Reoffending Programme and presents key findings to date. It is a summary report with hyperlinks to more detailed reports. It covers:
- An update on progress and development from the developments Reducing Reoffending Programme in Year 2 and 3
 - Learning from national and local reoffending data
 - Practice examples from youth offending partnerships
 - A review of the extent to which learning gained thorough the programme is starting to drive changes in processes and practice
 - An update on progress with research and analysis.

Background

- 2.2 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) began a three-year Reoffending Programme in 2013/14 in order to:
- Help drive and support YOT efforts to reduce local reoffending rates
 - Develop a better understanding of the nature of reoffending and the drivers behind it.

3. Learning from the data

National data

3.1 National-level analysis of statistics on proven reoffending over the past ten years from 2002 up to the year ending March 2013 (2012/13) has been published by the Ministry of Justice and the YJB as an official statistics report entitled [“National Analysis of Reoffending Data, for those aged 10-17”](#).

3.2 In summary, the findings are:

- In the year April 2012 to March 2013, around 52,600 young offenders² aged 10-17 were cautioned, convicted or released from custody. There were around 19,000 reoffenders and 56,800 reoffences in the same period.
- The number of young offenders (in the reoffending cohort), reoffenders and reoffences reached a peak in the 12 months ending March 2007, but has since reduced year on year. Both the binary and frequency reoffending rates have increased slightly over the same period.
- The cohort of young offenders (as well as the make-up of reoffenders) has changed considerably since 2002 and is comprised of young offenders whose characteristics mean they are more likely to reoffend than those in the 2002 cohort. Principally, that there are proportionately more young offenders with more entrenched offending behaviour.

3.3 The report also presents trends in reoffending by age, gender, ethnicity, number of previous offences and the time from release to first offence. The type of offence that led to the young offender being included in the reoffending cohort and the type of sentence the young offender received for this offence are also included. More details about this are in the full report.

Local Data

Introduction

3.4 Throughout the programme we have been collating local case level data to see if it can tell us anything new, particularly in areas not covered by the national statistics.

3.5 The findings below are based on returns from year 1 programme YOTs (13,567 young people from the April 2010 to March 2011 offending cohort) and year 2 programme YOTs (13,071 young people from the April 2011 to March 2012 offending cohort). While these samples are not directly necessarily representative of all YOTs they do represent around

² This is the number of proven offenders who were matched on the Police National Computer. The number includes those receiving reprimands or warnings.

a quarter of the national cohort and may therefore provide some useful insights.

Summary of the main messages from the case level local data

3.6 [Annex A](#) provides the analysis of case-level data drawn from the returned Year 2 local pre-populated tools. The main messages are:

- 6% of young people in the cohort went on to reoffend and become prolific (committing 5+ further offences). This small group accounted for 45% of all further offences. To reduce their frequency rate YOTs need to be able to identify which young people are most likely to be in this group and to ensure they get the right type and intensity of intervention right from the start, or at least to provide such intervention as soon as the reoffending becomes apparent. The YOTs with the best reoffending performance, unsurprisingly, have smaller proportions of cohort members going on to become prolific.
- Looked-after children and those leaving care are particularly prone to offend and reoffend. They make up a small proportion of the total cohort, but reoffend at over twice the rate of those who have never been looked after. YOTs need to work with colleagues in children's social care and through the local corporate parenting strategy to ensure that they are not unnecessarily criminalised.
- Almost a third of those entering the cohort received disposals not requiring YOT intervention (Police Cautions, Fines, and Conditional Discharges). This group cannot be ignored because it accounts for 27% of all further offending, and is therefore having significant impact on reoffending rates in many YOT areas. It is also worth noting that many young people come to the end of any YOT intervention long before they exit the cohort (e.g. those on short Referral Orders or Conditional cautions), and some of these young people remain likely to reoffend and are in need of planned exit strategies involving partner agencies.
- Of the 5,002 young people who reoffended, there was a total of 802 young people who went on to commit 5 or more further offences. However, half of them were initially on only standard intervention or no intervention at all. Only 12.8% were initially assessed for intensive intervention. This illustrates the need for effective quality assurance processes in YOTs to ensure assessments accurately reflect likelihood of reoffending as circumstances change and bring about appropriate levels and types of intervention which can address that likelihood.
- Amongst those who reoffended, 19% did so within the first month of entering the cohort, and 43% within 3 months of entering the cohort. This underlines the importance of YOTs being able to effectively engage young people as soon as the disposal is made and before any further offending occurs.

4. Toolkit work to address reoffending issues

YOT engagement

- 4.1 Following the pilot in year one which worked on a voluntary basis with 27 YOTs, the programme aimed to mainstream the work by a) engaging YOTs who would benefit from support to improve their reoffending performance and b) making the toolkit available to all YOTs.
- 4.2 A further 41 YOTs joined the programme in Year 2 and 7 YOTs in Year 3, bringing the total number of YOTs involved to 75 (48% of YOTs).
- 4.3 Feedback on the work has been very positive with local services using the tools in a range of innovative and imaginative ways (see chapter 5, p10).

Involvement in the programme requires YOTs to use the YJB Reducing Reoffending Toolkit. They are given YJB support to analyse their local data and gain a clear view of the issues needing to be addressed locally to reduce reoffending rates. Recommended actions are then agreed with the YOT management board and the YJB monitors and supports the YOT in implementing these actions.
- 4.4 Findings from work with individual YOTs has also been collated and now contributes to a range of analysis and research which is deepening our understanding of the nature of reoffending and how best to address it.

Developing the Toolkit

- 4.5 Work to develop the toolkit in response to feedback from YOTs is set out below.

The Reducing Reoffending Toolkit was made available to all YOTs [via the YJB website](#) in May 2015. It has now been expanded to include:

- the Assess and Improve Document (AID), which provides a number of 'lines of enquiry' to help focus analysis.
- the Police National Computer (PNC) reoffending data tool
- the Local pre-populated tool
- guidance on how to access the local pre-populated tool
- the Live tracking tool
- AssetPlus live tracking tool
- the Summary Disproportionality tool

Live Tracking

- 4.6 In response to requests from YOTs for a tool that could look at current, rather than retrospective data, the YJB developed a Live Tracking tool. This was released in April 2014 and updated in July 2015. The vast majority of those in the programme are already using it.
- 4.7 It has been particularly encouraging to find that YOTs are developing innovative ways to use the Live Tracking tool. We have identified three:
- As a **case management tool** to ensure that a) individual young people are given the appropriate level and type of intervention as their circumstances change and b) that managers have an overview of all the young people in the cohort, not just those on the YOT caseload (Court order or pre Court disposal).
 - As a **strategic tool** to help shape the range of YOT interventions available and to commission services in response to the most up-to-date information. The tool enables the YOT to see trends in types of offences and demographics and to identify other issues as they emerge.
 - As **a means of gathering more recent performance** trend data than is available from the official PNC data published by the MoJ: YOTs have been inputting data for one particular quarter, and tracking their reoffending performance over 12 months. This provides management boards with a useful early indicator of performance trends.
- 4.8 The YJB has also developed a Live tracking tool which is compatible with Asset plus. [Click here](#) to access this tool.

Understanding Disproportionality

- 4.9 A key learning point from year one was the importance of YOTs understanding the demographic make-up of their reoffending cohorts in order that they can develop specific and appropriate interventions for particular age, gender or ethnic groups as required. In response to this we have added a Summary Disproportionality Tool to the overall toolkit. This allows YOTs to see “at a glance” whether there is any over-representation of any particular ethnic groups in their local youth justice system. However YOTs also need to know whether particular age groups or a particular gender have higher-than-expected reoffending rates.
- 4.10 Building on the Summary Disproportionality Tool work, we have also developed a case-level tool which is currently being piloted with a number of YOTs. Data gained from this tool will enable YOTs to gain a broader understanding of when, where, how and why ethnicity-based disproportionality arises in their local youth justice system.

Making it easier to use 17+ data

- 4.11 The populated tools often understate the actual level of reoffending by those who were 17 on entering the cohort, as most YOTs no longer track and report the reoffending of young people once they turn 18. Where this is the case YOTs need to ask the local police to check PNC and provide the additional reoffending data. Resource constraints have often meant

that accessing data on further offending for those who turn 18 during the cohort period has been a challenge for some YOTs and the YJB has been trying to find a solution to this issue. We know that, while the completeness of the 17+ reoffending data in Youth Justice Management Information System (YJMIS) varies, many YOTs have sufficient information on their system to analyse this information with a degree of confidence. We have, therefore, loaded the 17+ YJMIS data in to the populated tools for the first time, and compared it with PNC summary data. This has enabled us to RAG-rate the YOT 17+ reoffending data so that YOTs can see straight away whether it is sufficiently close to the official PNC data for analysis to be undertaken without additional 17+ reoffending data.

Action Planning: Driving change to reduce reoffending

- 4.12 The ultimate measure of any work on reducing reoffending will be performance against relevant indicator/s, which take 18 months to process. This is because the last young people entering the cohort did so 12 months after the first ones did, and they all need to be tracked for 12 months. In addition there is a 6-month catch-up period to allow the notification of further offences committed during the 12 months but not proven until after the 12 month period ended. In the interim the best proxy measures we have for the impact of the work is whether change is happening, the extent of that change and whether it's the right kind of change.
- 4.13 YOTs joining the Reoffending Programme agreed to develop and implement action plans to address issues identified through the toolkit analysis. In June 2015 the YJB undertook a review of the extent to which this was happening and the degree to which relevant issues were being addressed. It found that:
- Having an action plan in place is a good indicator that work to address issues is happening on the ground i.e. where a plan was in place YOTs were generally making good progress in taking actions forward.
 - Where an action plan is in place it is also likely to be addressing the issues identified by the analysis and in the majority of programme YOTs it is likely to be on track to implementation.
- 4.14 We also found that this process was taking more time than originally anticipated:
- 44 (64%) programme YOTs have a plan in place, leaving 25 YOTs yet to take actions. 23 of these are from year two and two from year one.
 - It took, on average, 12 months for the programme to receive action plans from YOTs.
 - On average, actions plans reviewed as part of this work contain implementation periods of between 12 – 18 months.
- 4.15 The YJB are implementing the following proposals which are designed to address the barriers in order to maximise the impact of the work:

- Extending the programme in to a fourth year (2016/17) in order to enable the work to be fully embedded.
 - Publishing good practice examples to support YOTs in driving change to reduce reoffending (chapter 5, p10).
 - Offering programme YOTs with no action plan assistance in developing them.
 - Encouraging YOTs to use the latest available pre-populated historical tool rather than the live track on its own and in turn consider the most effective actions to drive change prior to commencing live tracking.
- 4.16 The programme will be undertaking a further piece of work exploring quality and the extent to which the actions YOTs take are likely to have the intended impact later this year.

5. Understanding practice

Developing YOT practice

- 5.1 YOTs have invested a considerable amount of energy and ingenuity in using the Reducing Reoffending toolkit. We have been encouraged and impressed at the range of creative and innovative developments which reflect the strength of the sector.
- 5.2 The examples provided below provide a taste of the different uses and applications that have come to our attention in our engagement with YOTs. These are by no means exhaustive and the Reducing Reoffending programme would be very interested to learn of further examples. Please email us at reducingreoffending@yjb.gsi.gov.uk
- 5.3 The examples are set out on a thematic basis below and we would like to thank all the YOTs that have kindly contributed to this growing area of knowledge.

Governance

- 5.4 YJB Live tracking tool analysis, including development of a live tracking audit tool, has been used in *Stoke on Trent* to influence commissioning and service provision for universal and specialist services as well as the delivery of targeted training and development for practitioners.
- 5.5 A Police and Crime Commissioner led project using the YJB Reducing Reoffending toolkit with 6 *Northumbria* YOTs which aims to better understand characteristics of the reoffending cohort and develop strategies to prevent further reoffending.
- 5.6 *Sheffield Youth Justice Service* developed a shared responsibility for reducing reoffending across the whole partnership by integrating the Reoffending Toolkit findings via discussion and presentation with the YOT Management Board.

Resources

- 5.7 *Wakefield YOT* partnership has prioritised reducing reoffending and have made a resource commitment to this work on both a strategic and operational levels. Live tracking analysis has a dedicated analyst and manager's time and is an integral part of the YOT working practice.
- 5.8 *Southend* YOT acted to address toolkit analysis which identified high rates of reoffending by young people leaving custody. The YOT subsequently restructured its resources to establish a specialist group of staff to directly target the risks of those leaving custody and engage young people in structured activities.

Work force development

- 5.9 *Lancashire YOT* established a mixed grade staff focus group to lead on an inclusive service wide collective approach to driving forward work on reducing reoffending. The focus group explores themes identified by the

toolkit and undertakes case samples / further analysis in order to address the issue and take action.

- 5.10 Toolkit analysis in *Southend YOT* indicated that young people appearing in court for the first time may have been subject to Triage or other prevention interventions. The YOT subsequently reviewed its approach to support and training for Referral Order panel members to ensure that they were able to provide more robust interventions that effectively addressed the risk presented by the young person.

Quality Systems

- 5.11 *Tri-borough Youth Offending Service* developed a case management report (CareWorks) which displays all reoffending information for any given cohort which can be inserted into the YJB Live tracker tool which has made the task of populating this somewhat quicker. As such the managers can readily view who has reoffended and the nature of these offences, which has helped to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and keep track of reoffending rates.
- 5.12 Toolkit analysis in *Croydon Youth Offending Service* has been used to look at data trends as the service has a high population of younger children and children placed by other authorities. It has also proved useful to have access to current data as the nationally reported reoffending figures are nearly 2 years old. This information has been used to consider what maybe impacting on the data and to look at what resources are in place to meet the needs of this identified group.
- 5.13 Live tracking tool analysis in *Tri-borough Youth Offending Service* has been used to identify the most prolific young people at risk of custody and those in need of resettlement support and as a result bespoke mentor services have been offered to these young people. This has included training mentors in order that mentoring relationships can motivate and engage young people to develop a range of skills.
- 5.14 *Croydon Youth Offending Service* established monthly review meetings to explore the data from the YJB Live tracking tool and review the circumstances for the young people who are identified as repeat offending. This will include exploration and reflection about the circumstances for individual young person and to check that all assessments and interventions plans are robust and meeting all key areas.
- 5.15 YJB Live tracking tool is used by *Luton Youth Offending Service* as a data analysis tool to look at 'live cohorts' of cases and not just retrospective cohorts; which provides an early analysis of current groups as opposed to young people who were in the cohort 2-3 years ago.
- 5.16 *Durham Youth Offending Service* use an edited extract of the YJB Live tracker tool to manage a cohort of prolific young people who have offended 6 or more times in the previous 12 months. The cohort is refreshed every 6 months and is managed using an enhanced programme of interventions and multi-agency resources. Initial results are encouraging, the programme having been running for 6 months to-date. 18% have re-offended in the 6 months since being included on the

reoffending cohort which compares favourably to the previous outcome of 80% of the cohort reoffending in the 6 months prior to inclusion.

- 5.17 *Coventry Youth Offending Service* extended the YJB Live tracking tool to allow more than one piece of geographical information per young person to be recorded, and to provide basic live “heat maps” of whereabouts in the city the cohort members are from, as well as a live breakdown of the reoffending binary rate by ward.
- 5.18 *Ealing Youth Offending Service* used data from toolkit analysis to form a pool of interventions at an operational level which link together and inform a strategic body. This has not happened in quite such a way previously, and it does work well.

Partnership working

- 5.19 YJB Reducing Reoffending toolkit affirmed very quickly for *Portsmouth YOT* that the reoffending rate was significantly higher for looked-after children. The toolkit was used to drill down into the detail and identify the young people within the cohort and a number of common risk factors. This information was then used in the development of a local action plan to reduce offending by looked-after children. Data from the Live tracking is also used in reviewing young people’s intervention plan at multi agency meetings, in particular live time feedback on the difference between looked-after children and Non-looked-after children reoffending.
- 5.20 *Ealing YOT* facilitated a multi-agency workshop to explore toolkit analysis which aimed to identify the areas that the partnership could influence and agree actions individually and collectively with the aim of reducing the likelihood of young people offending or reoffending.
- 5.21 Reoffending analysis undertaken by *Stockton-on-Tees Youth Offending Service* identified a high relationship between reoffending and Special Educational Needs. A piece of work was commissioned by the specialist education provision to introduce restorative approaches within schools. All non-teaching staff were trained by an outside provider and behavioural management approaches rewritten. This had a dramatic impact of reducing police callouts to schools and the criminalisation of young people with Special Educational Needs.

Analysis and Research

5.22 In addition to the national and local statistical analysis set out in section 4 the YJB has undertaken a range of analysis and research to better understanding of the nature of reoffending and the drivers behind it.

Management Board Guidance

5.23 Findings from year one data from the local reoffending tool were used to inform the YJB [Guidance to YOT Management Boards](#) (April 2014). Subsequent analysis has confirmed the relevance of this document which identified six lines of enquiry to guide the analysis of local reoffending data:

- Binary and frequency reoffending rates - indicators of where to target resources
- Demographic data to identify groups of young people requiring specific interventions and support
- Assessments - do they lead to the right level of intervention to reduce reoffending
- Addressing the impact of persistent offending
- Reoffending early or late on in the cohort period, and responses required; and
- Addressing seriousness of further offending

5.24 The impact of young people in the YOT cohort but not subject to YOT intervention has been identified in year two as a new line of enquiry which should be used to guide the analysis of local reoffending data.

Prolific and Serious reoffending

5.25 The YJB is currently engaged with London YOT partnerships who are undertaking deep dive case file analysis related to increasing the understanding of prolific and serious reoffending by young people in London.

Which factors drive good reoffending performance?

5.26 In November 2014, the Reducing Reoffending programme conducted a preliminary study of 12 YOTs with good and poorer reoffending performance to help gain an understanding of which drivers help to achieve and sustain high levels of performance. [Annex B](#) contains more information about this study.

5.27 Early findings suggest that good reoffending performance appears to be associated with the YOTs that:

- have a highly-motivated and engaged staff group committed to reducing local reoffending rates
- are able to enlist the support of the wider partnership to work with young people who are likely to reoffend
- have sufficient resources available to meet minimum national standards.

5.28 Further research in this area is being considered as part of the YJBs future research programme.

Innovation in Wales: Developing a new case management approach to understand and address the complex needs of young people with prolific offending histories

5.29 A project to test an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach is being undertaken in partnership with the Welsh Government in response to a profiling exercise which was undertaken by YJB Cymru in 2012. This investigated case histories of the 303 young people in Wales with the most prolific offending. They were characterised by high levels of unmet need related to abnormal child development such as poor attachment, trauma and difficulty with coming to terms with past and current circumstances.

5.30 The new approach is specifically designed to address the complex and multiple needs prevalent in the young people with prolific offending behaviour. It is based on the Trauma Recovery Model, which was developed as a result of work with high need young people in Hillside Secure Children's Home. The ECM places emphasis on providing practitioners with the knowledge and enhanced skills required to understand the needs and behaviour of this group and adapt practice to take account of them.

5.31 The test phase of the approach began in four youth offending teams across Wales in June 2014 and comes to an end on 31 October 2016. To date 21 young people have been referred to the project. Using the skills of a clinical psychologist, existing youth justice and other assessments are enhanced using a multi-agency case formulation approach with ongoing clinical supervision available to YOT staff during the young person's community sentence. The central tenets of the approach are:

- thorough assessment
- Psychologist-led case formulation
- relational working
- sequencing of interventions in line with developmental need.

5.32 An independent evaluation is being conducted by Cordis Bright to assess how the approach is implemented in each YOT and also the difference the approach has on practice and outcomes for young people. Part of the evaluation methodology is to use the output from the YBJ Reoffending Toolkit. Information on the project's progress, is also routinely reported in the project newsletter. This includes early case studies of young people who are benefiting from the approach with increased engagement and decreased offending. These materials can be obtained on request from YJBCymru@yjb.gsi.gov.uk

What the current reoffending literature tells us

- 5.33 The current reoffending literature shows that research into preventing reoffending has tended to focus on the impact of specific programmes. For example, there is high quality evidence that approaches including Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) can reduce reoffending. Growing bodies of evidence also suggest diversion and restorative justice schemes can be effective.
- 5.34 A common theme among effective programmes is that they provide a therapeutic approach addressing a range of risks or needs. The evidence also suggests that the quality of the delivery can also be very important, even for well-designed programmes. This means that even where an approach is evidence-based having the right structures, skills, and relationships in place can be key to tackling reoffending effectively.
- 5.35 The Ministry of Justice have commissioned a rapid evidence assessment which focuses specifically on reviewing the evidence for what works in managing children and young people who offend. The YJB are planning to publish a summary, aimed at practitioners, of the current evidence on what can reduce reoffending in young people, in addition to some examples of practice from the YJB's Effective Practice library.

Future Research

- 5.36 The YJB recognises that there is a lack of robust British evidence about how YOTs as organisations can be effective in preventing reoffending, before and beyond use of the established offending behaviour programmes. This is particularly important in the current context as YOT caseloads become increasingly concentrated with young people who have longer, more entrenched, criminal histories. The YJB are exploring options for further research in this area.

Annex A - analysis of local reoffending data

Purpose

1. This report summarises the case-level findings from the aggregated data from the 37 youth offending teams (YOTs) involved in the Reducing Reoffending Programme and returning their completed populated tools to the YJB in 2015/16. (Other YOTs returned tools in 2014/15 for an earlier cohort). All data relates to the April 2011 - March 2012 cohort, as this is the most recent cohort for which the programme YOTs and the YJB have jointly analysed the case-level data.
2. The report looks at issues arising from case-level analysis which are not reported in the official national data. The report does not purport to be representative of all YOTs, however it covers 13,071 young people, which accounts for almost a quarter of the national cohort.
3. The official national data refers to those in the reoffending cohort as “offenders”, those who reoffend as “reoffenders” and their offences as “re-offences”. However, as this report is primarily for youth offending teams (YOTs), the terminology used is in line with that used in YOTs and refers to “young people”, “young people who reoffend” and “further offences”.
4. Reoffending is measured by identifying a cohort of young people who received a substantive disposal (pre-court or court-ordered) or were released from custody during a 12-month period. The cohort is then tracked for 12 months to determine the proportion of young people who reoffended during the period (the binary rate) and the average number of further offences / reoffences per young person / offender (the frequency rate).

Summary of analysis

5. Figure 1 below looks at the frequency reoffending rates of currently and previously looked-after children compared to those never looked after. This was a voluntary field and not all YOTs provided the required data. The looked-after status was recorded in 46% of cases in the sample.

Reoffending frequency rate and looked-after child status

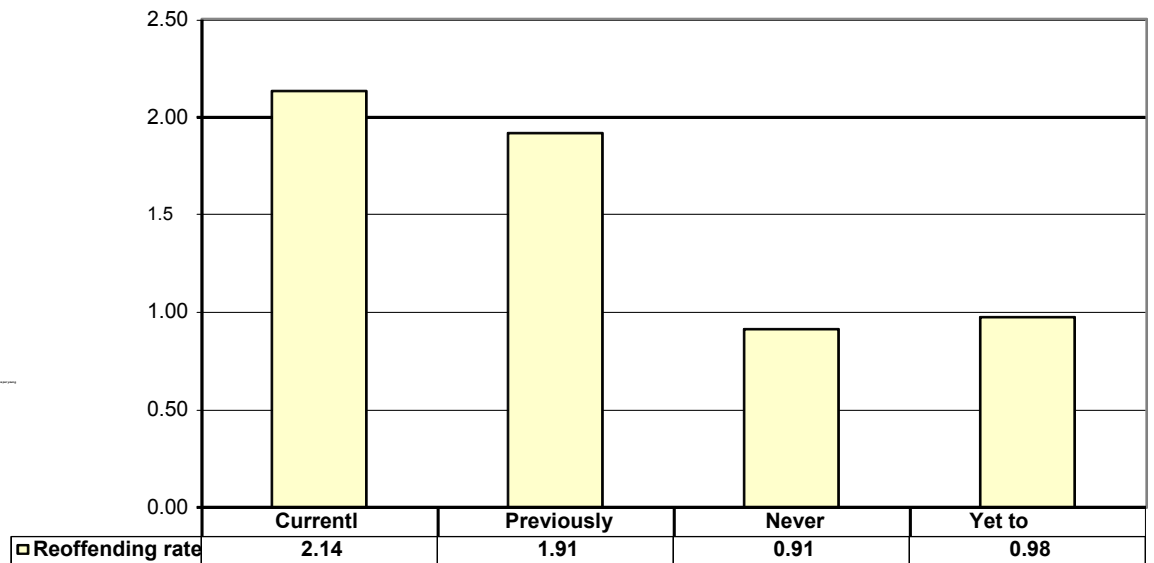


Figure 1

6. The frequency rates for currently and previously looked-after children are over twice those for non-looked-after children. However, it should be noted that young people who offend and young people looked after often have very similar histories and share many of the same needs, therefore it is not surprising that the reoffending rate for looked-after children is so high. That is not to say, however, that more cannot be done to reduce the reoffending of looked-after children, and tackling this will involve close working with colleagues in children's social care and leaving care services, as well as working through corporate parenting strategies to address looked-after children offending and ensure that looked-after children are not unnecessarily criminalised.
7. Figure 2 below looks at the breakdown of the sample of young people by tiers of intervention (i.e. the type of disposal bringing the young person into the cohort):

Sample / cohort members by tier

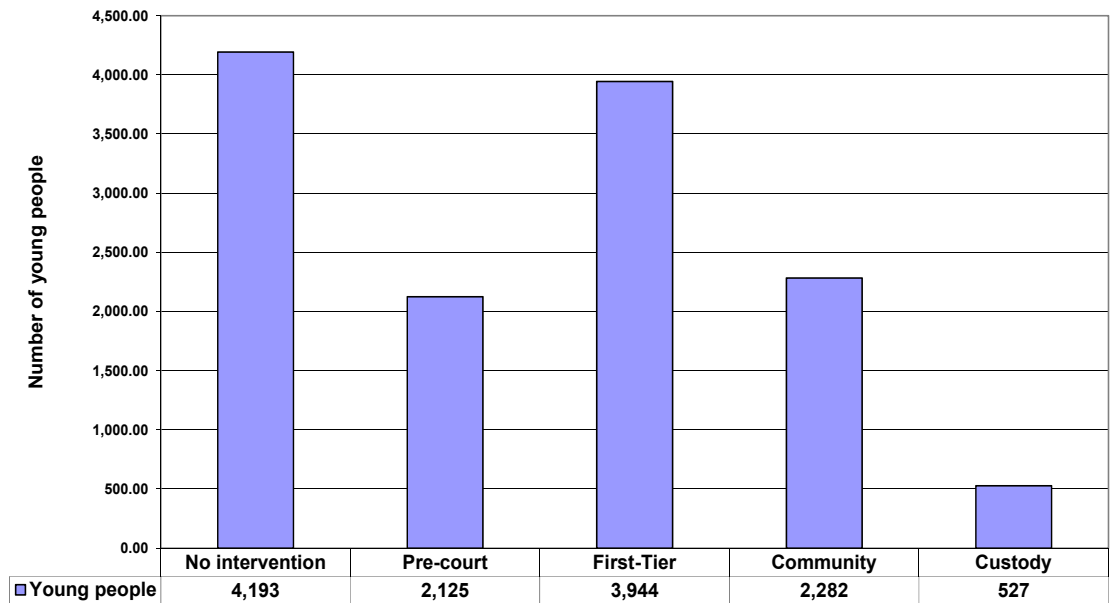


Figure 2

8. The largest single group, accounting for over a third of cohort members, is those entering the reoffending cohort with disposals ***not*** involving YOT intervention. These are those young people given Police Reprimands (now youth cautions), Conditional Discharges and Fines, etc. A sizeable proportion of these young people will have already been subject to YOT intervention prior to entering the cohort on this occasion, or will have subsequently become subject to YOT intervention via a further disposal given during the cohort period. However, others will not have been subject to YOT intervention at all during the 12 months of the cohort. These cases limit YOTs' scope for improvement as there is no direct contact with the young people. The proportion of "No intervention" cases varies considerably from YOT to YOT, and if the proportion of cases is high and their reoffending rate is also high, this can have a very severe impact on YOT performance. Where this is the case YOTs need to raise the issue with the YOT management board to ascertain whether wider partnership support may be available to support young people who are in the cohort but not currently worked with by the YOT.
9. Figure 3 below adds the further offending to the young people shown in Figure 2.

Reoffending at each tier of intervention

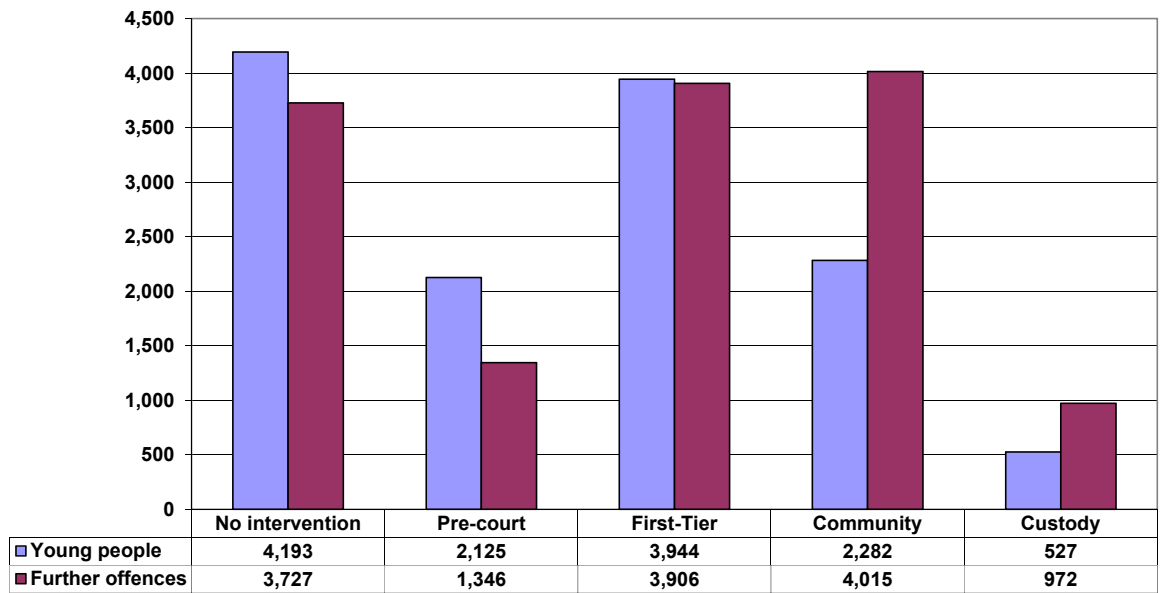


Figure 3

10. Those entering the cohort on no YOT intervention and going on to reoffend committed almost as many further offences as those in the 1st tier and community tier, and accounts for 27% of the total. It does therefore appear that this group's reoffending had a profound negative effect on overall performance of this sample. Where this occurs in individual YOTs it is recommended that further research is undertaken to ascertain the proportion of further offending attributable to young people who never had any contact with the YOT throughout the cohort period. Where this is a significant proportion, YOTs should consider a more proactive stance in court and at the triage stage to ensure those in need of YOT intervention to reduce the likelihood of reoffending are in fact referred to the YOT.
11. Figure. 4 below shows that in terms of reoffending frequency the "No intervention" group had a higher rate than the pre-court and almost as high as the 1st tier.

Reoffending frequency rate by tier of intervention

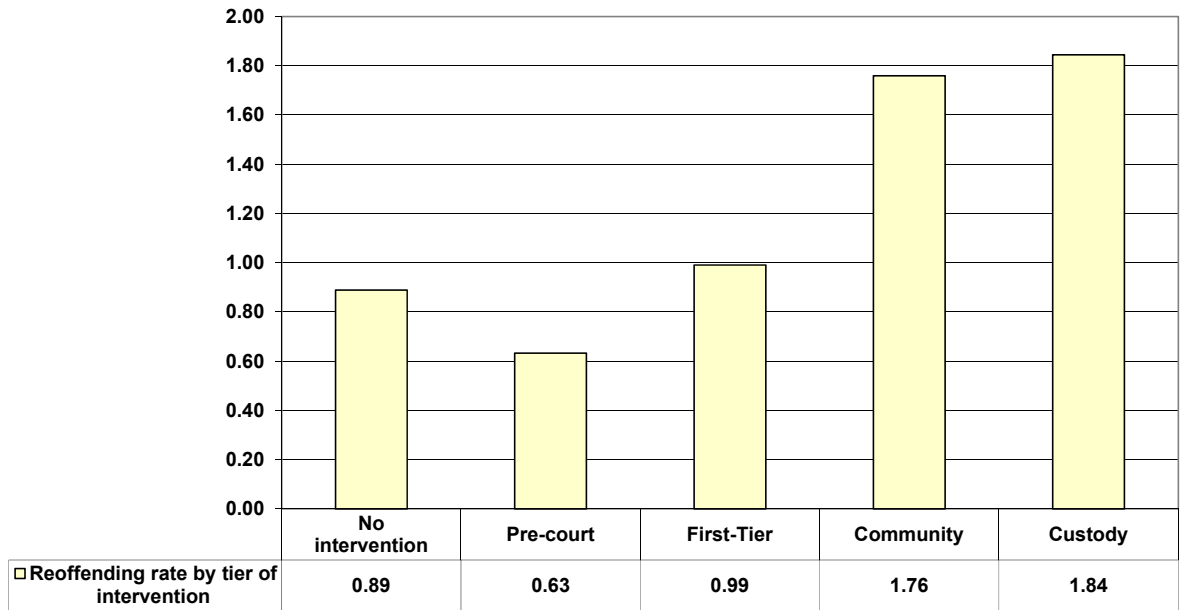


Figure 4

12. Figure 5 below shows the cohort broken down by Asset score and the number of further offences committed by each group. In general terms, unless managers decide otherwise, then those young people in the 1-14 Asset band would receive standard intervention, those in the 15-25 band would receive enhanced intervention and those in the 26-48 band would receive intensive intervention.

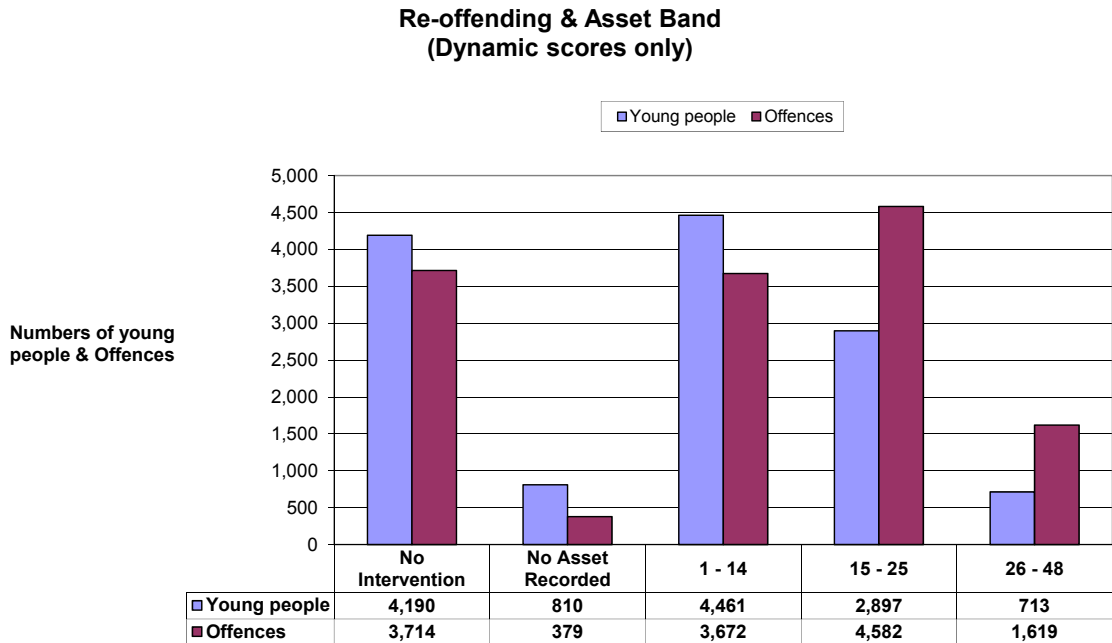


Figure 5

13. This shows that there were slightly fewer young people on no intervention than there were initially assessed for standard intervention,

but those on no intervention actually committed marginally more further offences than the standard intervention group. Only 5% of the cohort was initially assessed for intensive intervention but this group committed 12% of the further offending.

14. Figure 6 below shows how this translates into frequency reoffending rate for each assessment band:

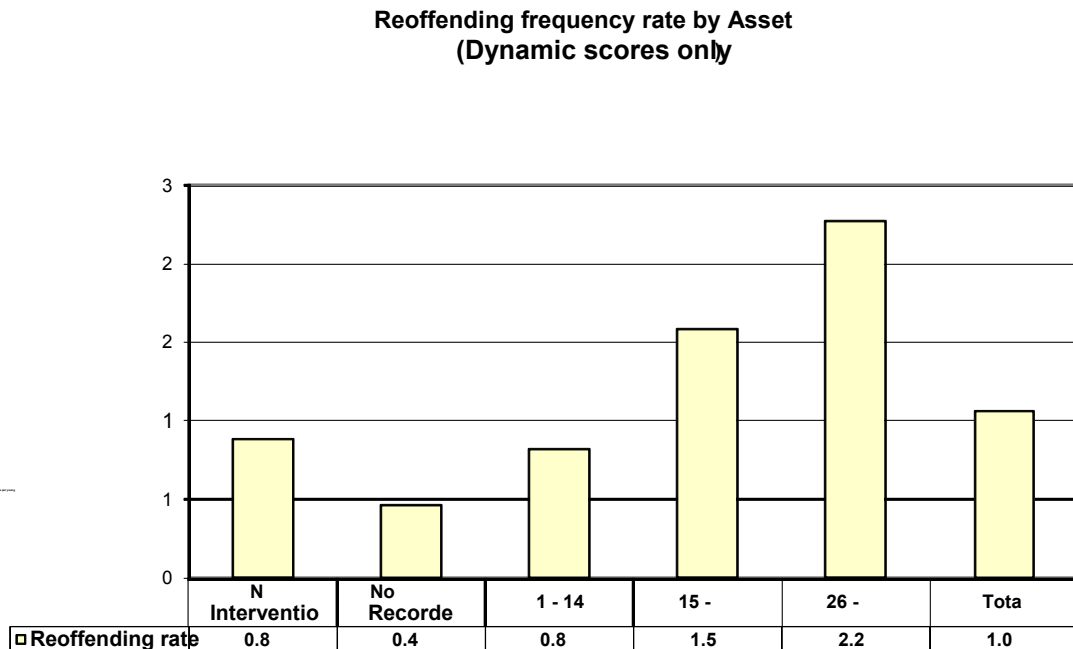


Figure 6

15. The rate for the “No intervention” group is higher than for the low Asset band / standard intervention group. Where this is the case in individual YOTs then it may be advisable to look at the “No intervention” group to see if there were young people in there who really needed intervention but did not receive any at all. If there are substantial numbers of such young people then (a) the YOT may need to take a more pro-active stance in triage and court proceedings to ensure young people likely to reoffend receive the support required to prevent them from doing so and (b) where there is no statutory intervention required, to put this in place via voluntary support through the wider partnership.

16. Figure 7 below looks at initial intervention levels against the frequency of further offending.

**Re-offending frequency by level of intervention
(Dynamic factor scores only)**

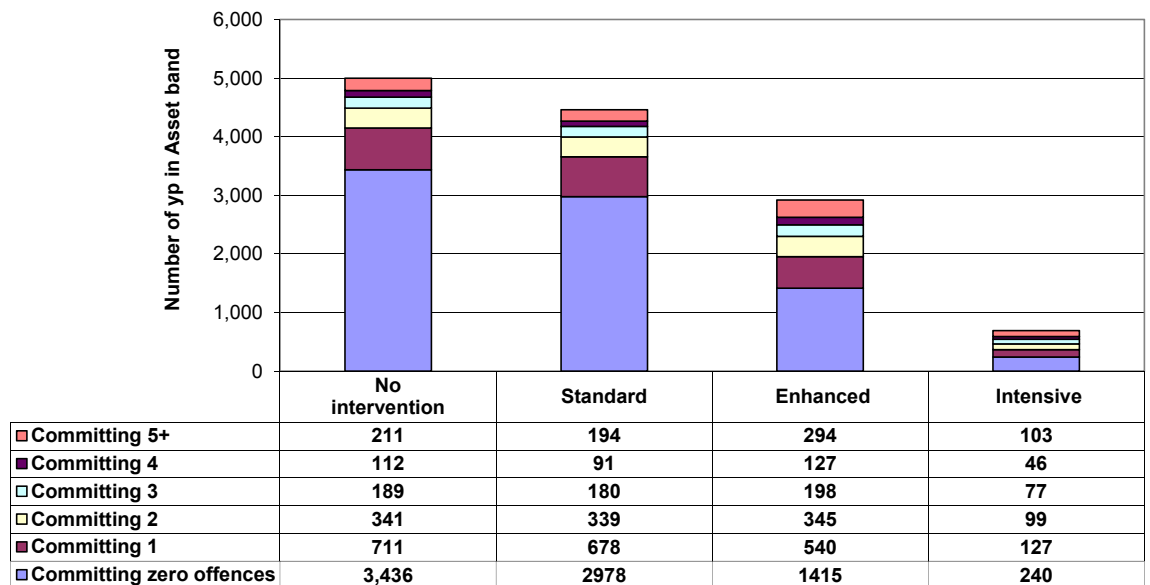


Figure 7

17. There was a total of 802 young people who went on to commit 5 or more further offences (the “prolifics”). However, half of them were initially on only standard intervention or no intervention at all. Only 13% were initially assessed for intensive intervention. Where a similar pattern arises in individual YOTs it may be advisable for managers to look back to see if those who became prolific but were initially on no intervention or only standard intervention were moved onto enhanced or intensive intervention once their reoffending emerged. If high proportions of the “prolifics” remained on no intervention or standard intervention throughout the cohort period then the YOTs may wish to re-examine their review and quality assurance practices to ensure that in future such young people are quickly moved onto higher intervention levels once they begin to reoffend. The YJB has developed the “Live tracking” reoffending tool to assist in this process.

18. Figure 8 below shows how quickly cohort members begin to reoffend, if at all.

Time to 1st further offence

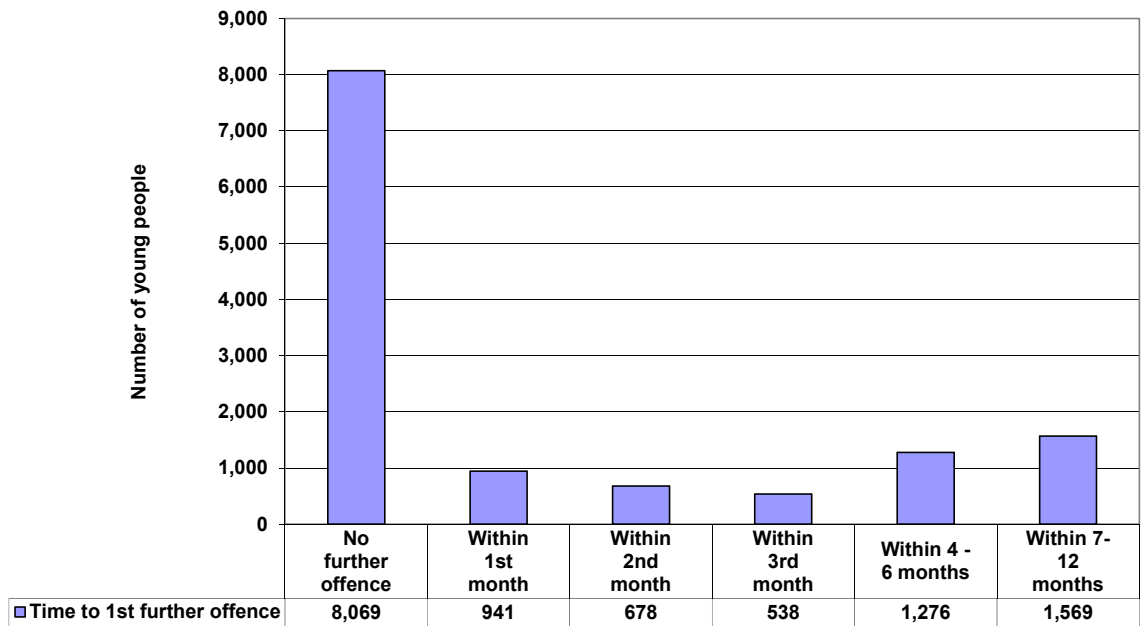


Figure 8

19. Of those who did reoffend, 19% did so within the first month of entering the cohort, (i.e. receiving a disposal or leaving custody) and 43% within 3 months of entering. This underlines the importance of YOTs being able to effectively engage young people as soon as the disposal is made / young person is released and before any further offending occurs.
20. Figure 9 below shows the total further offending broken down by the point at which young people began to reoffend.

Point at which 1st further offence occurs and eventual total further offending

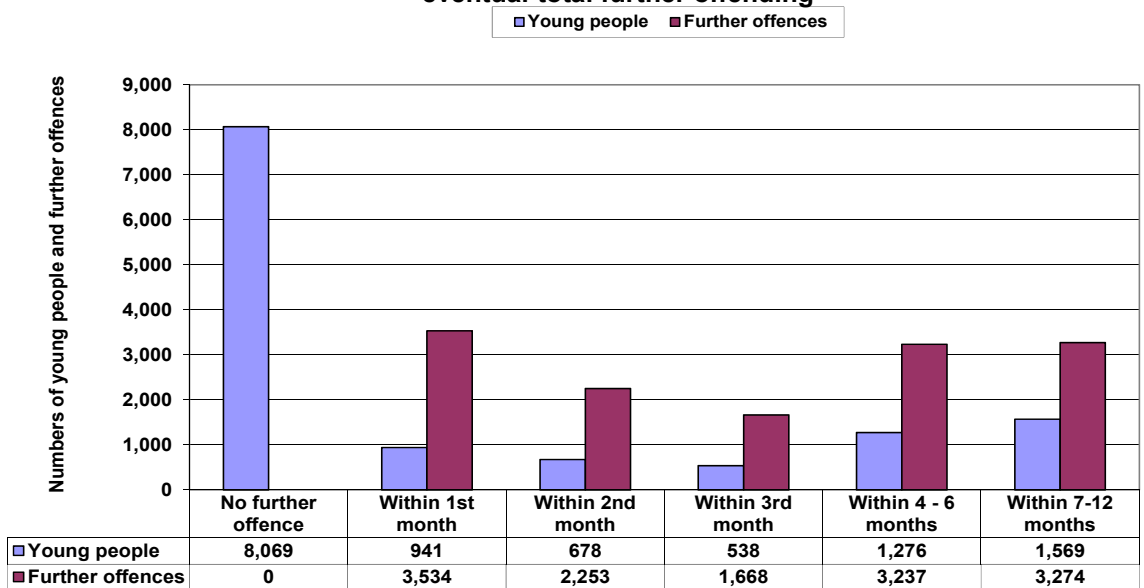


Figure 9

- 21. Over a quarter of all further offences were committed by those who first reoffended within a month, and those reoffending within the first 3 months went on to commit well over half (53%) of all further offences committed during the 12 month period. So those who reoffend early tend also to be those who reoffend most frequently. This further underlines the importance of effective early engagement and of reviewing interventions once the likelihood of reoffending increases or actual reoffending occurs.
- 22. However, it should also be borne in mind that almost a third (31%) of those who reoffended did not do so until the second half of the 12-month cohort period. YOTs may wish to look at this group within their own cohorts to see what proportion of them had ceased to be on YOT intervention when they reoffended. Again, those coming to the end of YOT intervention but still in the cohort and still likely to reoffend may need to be supported via the wider partnership or through the voluntary sector, e.g. mentoring schemes or other step-down arrangements.
- 23. Figure 10 below looks at the cohort broken down by frequency of reoffending.

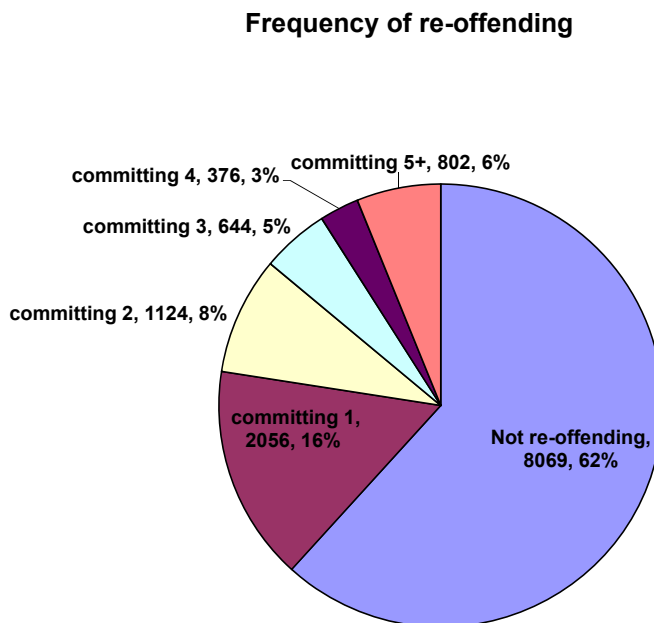


Figure 10

- 24. Many YOT cohorts will look like this. It shows 62% of the cohort not reoffending at all, but a further 16% only reoffending once. YOTs binary rates will improve by providing the type of support to enable more young people not to reoffend at all.
- 25. In the chart above, 6% of the cohort members went on to become prolific. To reduce their frequency rate YOTs need to be able to identify which young people are most likely to be in this group and to ensure they get the right type and intensity of intervention right from the start, or at

least to provide such intervention as soon as the reoffending becomes apparent. The YOTs with the best reoffending performance, unsurprisingly, have smaller proportions of cohort members going on to become prolific. This may be due to Effective Practice carried out in the high performing areas which reduces the likelihood of young people becoming prolific offenders, or it might be due to the make-up of the cohort even before any work has been carried out with its members (or both). Further analysis is required to gain a better understanding of these issues.

26. Figure 11 below shows the volume of further offending committed by each of the groups referred to above.

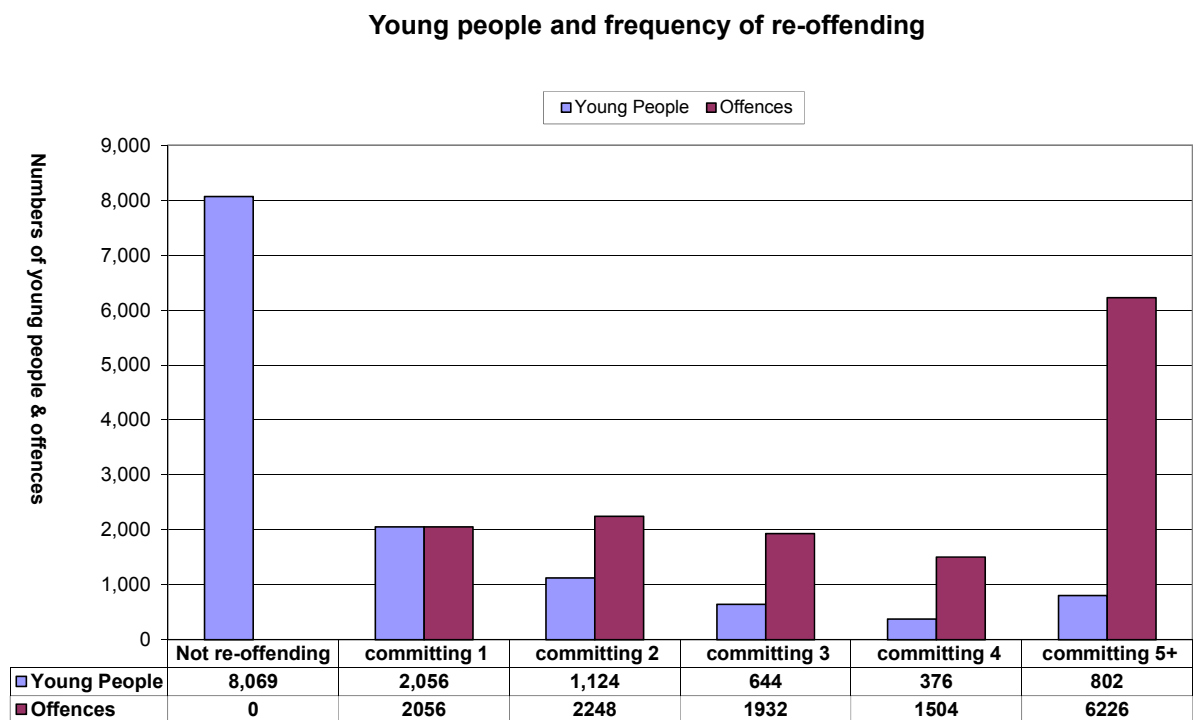


Figure 11

27. This shows how much of the reoffending is committed by the small group of prolific offenders. 802 young people (6% of the cohort) became prolific and they accounted for 6,226 further offences (45% of the total). Nearly all YOTs have a pattern like his, and it illustrates the importance of early identification of the young people who are likely to become prolific in order that measures can be put in place to reduce their reoffending.

Annex B - YJB Reoffending Good Practice Study findings

Purpose

This study conducted from November 2014 to January 2015, explored the practices, processes and programmes employed within a small selection of YOTs in order to understand and disseminate information about the factors which YOTs report to be important in reoffending performance. Although the study is not representative of all YOTs, it does give some indicative findings.

Methodology

Selection of YOTs

12 YOTs were selected for the study, drawn from 4 groups as follows:

High performing YOTs

- High performers in deprived areas³ : 4 YOTs
- High performers in more affluent areas: 4 YOTs

Non-high performing group

- Non-high performers in deprived areas: 2 YOTs
- Non-high performers in more affluent areas: 2 YOTs

Both affluent and deprived areas in the high performing group and the non-high performing group were selected in order to take account of any performance effect which may be due to socio-economic factors.

Interviews

13 lines of enquiry were explored with each YOT via a structured interview to ensure consistency. A number of questions were drawn up in order to explore each line of enquiry and the extent to which it applied in each YOT. Two members of the YJB's Reoffending Programme Team visited half of the selected YOTs each to conduct the interviews.

It is important to note that the questions were used merely to guide the discussion and to draw out relevant issues, not to illicit "Yes / No" answers, and where necessary, supplementary questions were asked to gain further clarity.

Caveats

This paper outlines the practices found in high performing versus non-high performing YOTs, based on discussions/perceptions of those working in these

³ based on income and employment domains of the Index of Multiple Deprivation

areas. The content should therefore be seen as indicative and may guide further investigation. The study was aimed at helping YOTs and their management boards assess their efforts and focus their energy upon setting a context in which reoffending performance might improve.

The Findings

The following aspects were commonly found within the high performing YOTs and less so with the non-high performing YOTs.

Motivation of the staff group

In the high performing YOTs, there tended to be a shared interest in reoffending performance amongst the YOT staff, with staff being aware of the latest performance data. There was a general acceptance amongst the staff groups that prevention of offending and reoffending is the key business of the YOT and that this can be achieved by effective engagement with young people and by the deployment of high quality assessment, planning and intervention practices.

It was generally considered that the quality of the relationship between case manager and young person was crucial. Care was taken to ensure that programmes of intervention were individualised and culturally / demographically sensitive, rather than that particular “off-the-peg” programmes should be rigorously followed.

Resources

There was an acknowledgement in most of the high performing YOTs that resources were not a particular problem, as caseloads had reduced substantially in recent years, and at a faster rate than the reduction in funding.

The high performing YOTs also tended to have sophisticated information systems such that managers were aware of trends in the local youth justice system and this was used to ensure resources were deployed to best effect. These YOTs had very good access to resources from partner agencies, available through both the seconded staff and through service level agreements.

Structure and location of the YOT

There had been a general move towards greater integration with children’s services, and in particular with youth support services, but in the high performing YOTs there was a view that this was enabling the YOT to ensure that “step-down” support was available to those young people who had come to the end of formal YOT supervision but remained likely to reoffend.

Greater integration had also helped the high performing YOTs to tap into wider partnership resources such as parenting support, rather than maintaining YOT stand-alone services which would lack the required variety of approaches based on assessed need. The YOT management boards took a close interest in YOT performance in general and in reoffending performance in particular.

Conclusions

From this initial study, it would appear that the following factors might be worthy of YOT partnerships' attention:

- Developing a highly-motivated staff group committed to reducing local reoffending rates
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to meet minimum National Standards
- Ensuring the YOT's structure and location enable it to fully engage with and enlist the support of the wider local partnership to work with young people who are likely to reoffend
- Analysis of offending and reoffending is embedded in all youth justice activity from case management through to partnership planning, rather than a trend used to retrospectively reflect upon service delivery.