



Inspection of  
Youth  
Offending

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Arolygiad ar y Cyd Cyfiawnder Troseddol

# Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in England and Wales

Report on youth offending  
work in:

**Gateshead**

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## Foreword

This Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in Gateshead took place as part of the Inspection of Youth Offending programme. We have examined a representative sample of youth offending cases from the area, and have judged how often the Public Protection and the Safeguarding aspects of the work were done to a sufficiently high level of quality. Our findings will also feed into the wider annual Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

We judged that the Safeguarding aspects of the work were done well enough 51% of the time. With the Public Protection aspects, work to keep to a minimum each individual's *Risk of Harm to others* was done well enough 47% of the time, and the work to make each individual less likely to reoffend was done well enough 52% of the time. A more detailed analysis of our findings is provided in the main body of this report, and summarised in a table in Appendix 1.

These figures can be viewed in the context of our findings from the region inspected so far. To date, the average score for *Safeguarding* work has been 63%, with scores ranging from 38%-82%, the average score for *Risk of Harm* work has been 57%, with scores ranging from 36%-85%, and the average score for *Likelihood of Reoffending* work has been 65%, with scores ranging from 50%-82%.

Overall, we consider this a disappointing set of findings particularly in view of the recommendations around assessment, *Risk of Harm to others* and management oversight made in the last inspection report published in August 2006. Recommendations in this report repeat the emphasis on those areas whilst highlighting the need to address Safeguarding issues promptly. The Management Board was aware of the need to improve performance and plans were already in place.

*Andrew Bridges*  
*HM Chief Inspector of Probation*

*December 2009*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Scoring – and Summary Table

This report provides percentage scores for each of the 'practice criteria' essentially indicating how often each aspect of work met the level of quality we were looking for. In these inspections we focus principally on the *Public Protection* and *Safeguarding* aspects of the work in each case sample.

Accordingly, we are able to provide a score that represents how often the *Public Protection* and *Safeguarding* aspects of the cases we assessed met the level of quality we were looking for, which we summarise here.

We also provide a headline 'Comment' by each score, to indicate whether we consider that this aspect of work now requires either **MINIMUM, MODERATE, SUBSTANTIAL** or **DRASTIC** improvement in the immediate future.

<b>Safeguarding score:</b>	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Safeguarding</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
<b>Score:</b> <b>51%</b>	<b>Comment:</b> <b><i>SUBSTANTIAL improvement required</i></b>

<b>Public Protection – Risk of Harm score:</b>	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Risk of Harm</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
<b>Score:</b> <b>47%</b>	<b>Comment:</b> <b><i>SUBSTANTIAL improvement required</i></b>

<b>Public Protection – Likelihood of Reoffending score:</b>	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Likelihood of Reoffending</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality.	
<b>Score:</b> <b>52%</b>	<b>Comment:</b> <b><i>SUBSTANTIAL improvement required</i></b>

We advise readers of reports not to attempt close comparisons of scores between individual areas. Such comparisons are not necessarily valid as the sizes of samples vary slightly, as does the profile of cases included in each area's sample. We believe the scoring is best seen as a headline summary of what we have found in an individual area, and providing a focus for future improvement work within that area.

## **Recommendations** (primary responsibility is indicated in brackets)

Changes are necessary to ensure that, in a higher proportion of cases:

- (1) a timely and good quality assessment and plan, using Asset, is completed when the case starts (YOT Manager)
- (2) a timely and good quality assessment of the individual's vulnerability and *Risk of Harm to others* is completed at the start, as appropriate to the specific case (YOT Manager)
- (3) children and young people and their parents/carers, where appropriate, are actively and meaningfully engaged in the assessment and planning process (YOT Manager)
- (4) as a consequence of the assessment, the record of the intervention plan is specific about what will now be done in order to safeguard the child or young person's well-being, to make him/her less likely to reoffend and to minimise any identified *Risk of Harm to others* (YOT Manager)
- (5) the plan of work with the case is regularly reviewed and correctly recorded in Asset with a frequency consistent with the national standard (YOT Manager)
- (6) there is evidence in the file of regular quality assurance by management, especially of screening decisions, as appropriate to the specific case (YOT Manager).

Furthermore:

- (7) there is effective joint working with other agencies, in particular children's social care services, to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people (Chair of the Management Board).

## **Next steps**

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations should be submitted to HM Inspectorate of Probation four weeks after the publication of this inspection report. Once finalised, the plan will be forwarded to the Youth Justice Board to monitor its implementation.

## **Service users' perspective**

### **Children and young people**

There was no data was available on the views of children and young people.

### **Victims**

Seventeen questionnaires were completed by victims of offending by children and young people.

- ◇ All respondents felt that their needs were taken into account and that they had the opportunity to talk about their worries.
- ◇ Half had benefited from work carried out by the child or young person who had committed the offence.
- ◇ All those with concerns felt that the YOT paid attention to their safety.
- ◇ The majority (82%) were completely satisfied with the service they received from the YOT.



## Sharing good practice

Below are examples of good practice we found in the YOT.

### Assessment and Sentence Planning

General Criterion:  
1.3b, 1.3c

Peter received an 18 month supervision order. He was assessed as medium *RoH* and was also considered to be vulnerable. Excellent multi-agency work ensured that both the *RoH* and his vulnerability were managed. Additionally the impact of his behaviour on his younger sibling was recognised and agencies devised a basic behaviour agreement to address this.

### Delivery and Review of Interventions

General Criterion:  
2.2a, 2.2d

David was in the custodial period of a four month DTO. He had a history of non-compliance and had received the DTO for breach of previous orders. The YOI was not planning any offending behaviour work. The case manager arranged for offending behaviour work to be carried out by an internal member of staff who was also asked to work on David's motivation to change. Although David struggled with the work, he did engage and the focus on his offending behaviour continued after his release.

### Outcomes

General Criterion:  
3.2

Darren, a 17 year old, was working with the YOT health worker on mental health issues when it was recognised that he would benefit from living independently. A housing worker helped to prepare him for a move to his own tenancy and three months after his order was completed he was successfully living independently. The YOT continued to offer support and Connexions had helped Darren to obtain employment.

## 1. ASSESSMENT AND SENTENCE PLANNING

### 1.1 Risk of Harm to others:

**General Criterion:**

*The assessment of RoH is comprehensive, accurate and timely, takes victims' issues into account and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage RoH.*

**Score:**

**59%**

**Comment:**

***SUBSTANTIAL improvement required***

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) A timely RoSH screening was completed at the start of sentence in 86% of cases and a full RoSH analysis had been completed in all cases where the need for one had been identified. RoSH classification was judged to be correct in 83% of cases.
- (2) Where necessary, all relevant cases had been either referred or notified to MAPPA.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- (1) RoSH screenings were judged to be inaccurate in 57% of cases and the full RoSH analysis was considered to be of insufficient quality in four out of ten cases. This was mainly because the risk to victims had not been fully considered and/or diversity issues had not been taken into account. Half of RoSH assessments did not draw adequately on all appropriate information and previous assessments.
- (2) RMPs had not been completed in 62% of appropriate cases. Quality and timeliness were insufficient in 85% and 77% of cases respectively and full consideration of diversity issues was lacking in a small number of plans. RoSH issues had not been communicated to all relevant staff and agencies in 60% of cases.
- (3) There was no recognition of the need for planning *RoH* work and the management oversight of *RoH* assessment and planning was judged to be ineffective in 79% of cases.

## 1.2 Likelihood of Reoffending:

### **General Criterion:**

*The assessment of the LoR is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to reduce LoR.*

### **Score:**

**54%**

### **Comment:**

***SUBSTANTIAL improvement required***

### **Strengths:**

- (1) There was a timely initial assessment in 89% of cases.
- (2) Intervention plans were in place in 89% of cases and addressed thinking and behaviour, attitude to offending and motivation to change in the majority. ETE needs were included in 83% of plans.
- (3) Sentencing purposes were reflected in most intervention plans (90%) and they were largely focused on achievable change (72%).

### **Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Active engagement of children and young people and their parents/carers in the initial assessment was low at 42% and 39% respectively. A *What do YOU think?* form had not been used in 81% of cases.
- (2) The quality of assessment was judged to be insufficient in 43% of cases with unclear and/or insufficient evidence a significant factor in 13 out of the relevant 16 cases. Failure to identify vulnerability, diversity issues and offending-related factors also featured in a quarter of cases and there was a failure to assess learning style in all but one case.
- (3) Contact with other agencies to inform the initial assessment had not been undertaken in 38% (children's social care services), 43% (ETE providers), and 56% of cases (substance misuse services).
- (4) There was a number of issues with intervention plans. RMPs were not integrated in 64% of cases, half did not take into account Safeguarding needs and the majority did not incorporate the child or young person's learning style. Positive factors were not included in 65% of plans. The majority of intervention plans were not prioritised according to *RoH*, sequenced according to offending-related need or sensitive to diversity issues. Two-thirds of cases did not take into account victims' issues and 43% did not include appropriate Safeguarding work.
- (5) Reviews of assessments and intervention plans were not regularly undertaken at appropriate intervals in a significant number of cases (39% and 48% respectively).

- (6) The engagement of children and young people and their parents/carers in the planning process was insufficient in over two-thirds of cases. Relevant agencies were also insufficiently involved in the process – children’s social care services 57%; ETE providers 48%; emotional/mental health services 30%; and substance misuse services 46%.

<b>1.3 Safeguarding:</b>	
<b>General Criterion:</b> <i>The assessment of Safeguarding needs is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage Safeguarding and reduce vulnerability.</i>	
<b>Score:</b> <b>48%</b>	<b>Comment:</b> <b><i>SUBSTANTIAL improvement required</i></b>

**Strength:**

- (1) A timely vulnerability screening was completed in 86% of cases.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) The quality of vulnerability screenings was judged to be insufficient in 68% of cases and Safeguarding needs were not reviewed as appropriate in 64% of cases.
- (2) In 79% of cases where a VMP was considered necessary, it had not been completed. Of those that were completed the majority were timely, however most were not of sufficient quality and did not clarify roles and responsibilities. In five (out of eight) cases the secure establishment had not been made aware of vulnerability concerns and there was no active liaison around Safeguarding issues.
- (3) Contributions through the CAF and/or other assessments designed to safeguard children and young people had not been made in 60% of relevant cases.
- (4) Management oversight of the assessment of vulnerability was not considered to be effective in most cases (88%).

**OVERALL SCORE for quality of Assessment and Sentence Planning work: 54%**

**COMMENTARY on Assessment and Sentence Planning as a whole:**

There was a degree of confusion amongst staff about the need to assess and plan *RoH* work. The process for the assessment of RoSH was being followed, but there was a lack of assessment and planning in those cases which did not reach that threshold. Similarly there was a lack of understanding of vulnerability in its broadest sense and the need to safeguard children and young people.

## 2. DELIVERY AND REVIEW OF INTERVENTIONS

### 2.1 Protecting the public by minimising Risk of Harm to others:

**General Criterion:**

*All reasonable actions have been taken to protect the public by keeping to a minimum the child or young person's RoH to others.*

**Score:**

**39%**

**Comment:**

***DRASTIC improvement required***

**Strength:**

- (1) Contributions to multi-agency meetings by case managers and other relevant staff were judged to be effective in all cases in custody and in 80% of cases in the community.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) *RoH* was not reviewed thoroughly in line with required timescales in 68% of cases or following a significant change (77%). In the majority of cases, changes in *RoH* factors were not anticipated, identified swiftly or acted on appropriately.
- (2) There were a number of issues with MAPPA cases. In the majority of cases the arrangements were not being used effectively, decisions were not clearly recorded, followed through and acted upon and appropriate reviews were not carried out. Case managers had not contributed effectively to the MAPPA process particularly in custody, but also in the community.
- (3) Purposeful home visits were not carried out in accordance with the level of *RoH* posed (59% of cases) or Safeguarding issues (65% of cases).
- (4) Victim safety had not been assessed or accorded high priority in the majority of cases (79% and 83% respectively).
- (5) The level of resources allocated was not appropriate to the level of assessed *RoH* in over a third of the cases.

## 2.2 Reducing the Likelihood of Reoffending:

**General Criterion:**

*The case manager coordinates and facilitates the structured delivery of all elements of the intervention plan.*

**Score:**

**60%**

**Comment:**

**MODERATE improvement required**

**Strengths:**

- (1) Delivered interventions were implemented in line with the intervention plan in 74% of cases and in 88% were designed to reduce the LoR.
- (2) Appropriate resources were allocated in accordance with the assessed LoR in three-quarters of cases.
- (3) Case managers were actively motivating and supporting children and young people, both in custody and in the community, in the majority of cases (90%). There was active engagement with parents/carers whilst children and young people were in custody in 80% of cases.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Delivered interventions were not appropriate to a child or young person's learning style in 44% of cases, sequenced or reviewed appropriately in 52% and 58% respectively, and did not incorporate diversity issues in two-thirds of cases.
- (2) Engagement with parents/carers in the community was low at 41%.

### 2.3 Safeguarding the child or young person:

**General Criterion:**

*All reasonable actions have been taken to safeguard and reduce the vulnerability of the child or young person.*

**Score:**

**61%**

**Comment:**

**MODERATE improvement required**

**Strengths:**

- (1) In the community, the work with other agencies to promote Safeguarding was judged to be sufficient with ETE providers (76%), emotional/mental health services (79%), substance misuse services (74%) and with the police (80%). In custody, the joint work with children's social care services was sufficient in all relevant cases.
- (2) In all applicable cases, case managers worked with accommodation services during the custodial phase to ensure continuity of accommodation.
- (3) Specific interventions to promote Safeguarding in the community were identified and delivered in 73% of cases.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Immediate action to safeguard the child or young person was not taken in around two-thirds of cases, both in custody and in the community. In five cases out of 16, necessary referrals to ensure Safeguarding were not made to other relevant agencies.
- (2) In the community, working together to promote Safeguarding was insufficient with children's social care services in 54% of cases and in custody work with emotional/mental health services was insufficient in 80% of cases.
- (3) Specific interventions to promote Safeguarding in custody were not identified in 43% of cases and not delivered in 57% of cases. Interventions were not reviewed appropriately in either community or custodial settings in over half of the cases.
- (4) Effective management oversight of Safeguarding was judged to be insufficient in 57% of cases in the custodial phase. This rose to 75% in the community.
- (5) Staff promoted the well-being of children and young people in less than half of the cases whilst in custody. This result was slightly better in the community at 57% of cases.



**OVERALL SCORE for quality of Delivery and Review of Interventions work: 54%**

**COMMENTARY on Delivery and Review of Interventions as a whole:**

Interventions to address LoR were delivered by offending behaviour staff and there was sometimes a delay in commencement due to the volume of work. As case managers did not routinely deliver offending behaviour work this meant that there were periods where children and young people were not engaged in purposeful contact. We were pleased to see a number of cases where case managers did carry out offending behaviour work with children and young people in custody. The lack of interventions in Safeguarding and *RoH* could be traced back to the absence of assessment and planning in those areas.

## 3. OUTCOMES

### 3.1 Achievement of outcomes:

**General Criterion:**

*Outcomes are achieved in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.*

**Score:**

**38%**

**Comment:**

***DRASTIC improvement required***

**Strength:**

- (1) There had been reductions in the offending-related ETE needs of children and young people in all cases where they had been identified.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) *RoH* was effectively managed in only 36% of cases.
- (2) In the majority of cases (83%) children and young people were judged not to have complied sufficiently with the requirements of the sentence and enforcement action was not taken sufficiently well in 41% of cases. There was no reduction in offending-related need in 83% of cases.
- (3) There was no reduction in risk factors linked to Safeguarding in 86% of cases and action to keep the child or young person safe had not been taken in 43% of cases.

### 3.2 Sustaining outcomes:

**General Criterion:**

*Outcomes are sustained in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.*

**Score:**

**42%**

**Comment:**

***DRASTIC improvement required***

**Strength:**

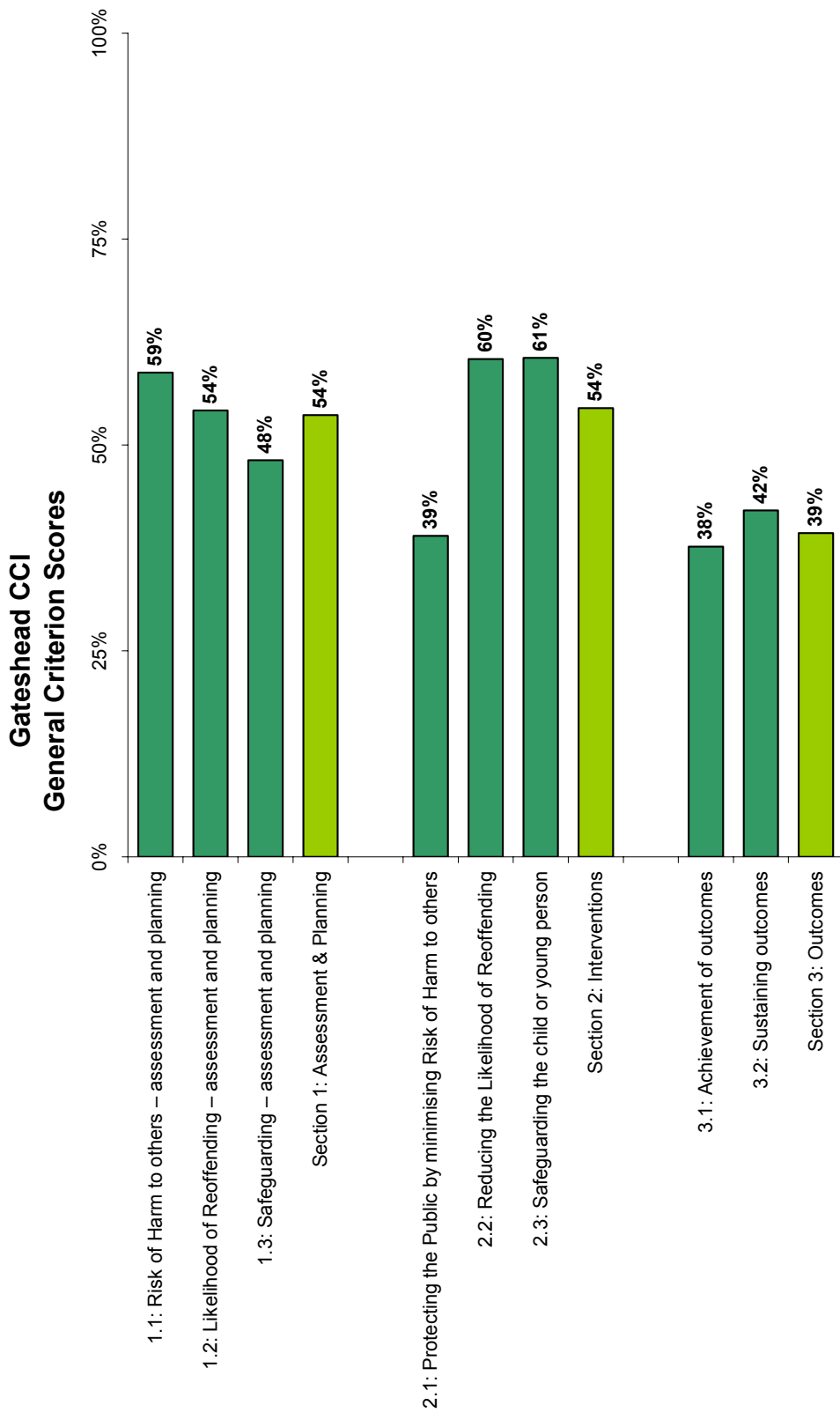
- (1) Full attention was paid to community integration issues during the custodial phase in 78% of cases.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Full attention was not paid to community integration issues in the community in nearly half of the cases.
- (2) Action to ensure that positive outcomes were sustainable was low during the custodial phase at 44% of cases. It dropped further to 23% in the community.

**OVERALL SCORE for quality of Outcomes work: 39%**

## Appendix 1: Summary



## **Appendix 2: Contextual information**

### **Area**

Gateshead YOT was located in the North East region of England.

The area had a population of 191,151 as measured in the Census 2001, 10.2% of which were aged ten to 17 years old. This was slightly lower than the average for England/Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Gateshead was predominantly white British (98.4%). The population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (1.6%) was below the average for England/Wales of 8.7%.

Reported offences for which children and young people aged ten to 17 years old received a pre-court disposal or a court disposal in 2008/2009, at 124 per 1,000, were above the average for England/Wales of 46.

### **YOT**

The YOT boundaries were within those of the Northumbria police and probation areas. The Gateshead PCT covered the area.

The YOT was located within the Children and Families and Young Offenders section of the Gateshead Learning and Children Directorate.

The YOT Management Board was chaired by the Group Director of Learning and Children.

ISSP was provided through a consortium that also covered Sunderland and South Tees.

### **YJB performance data**

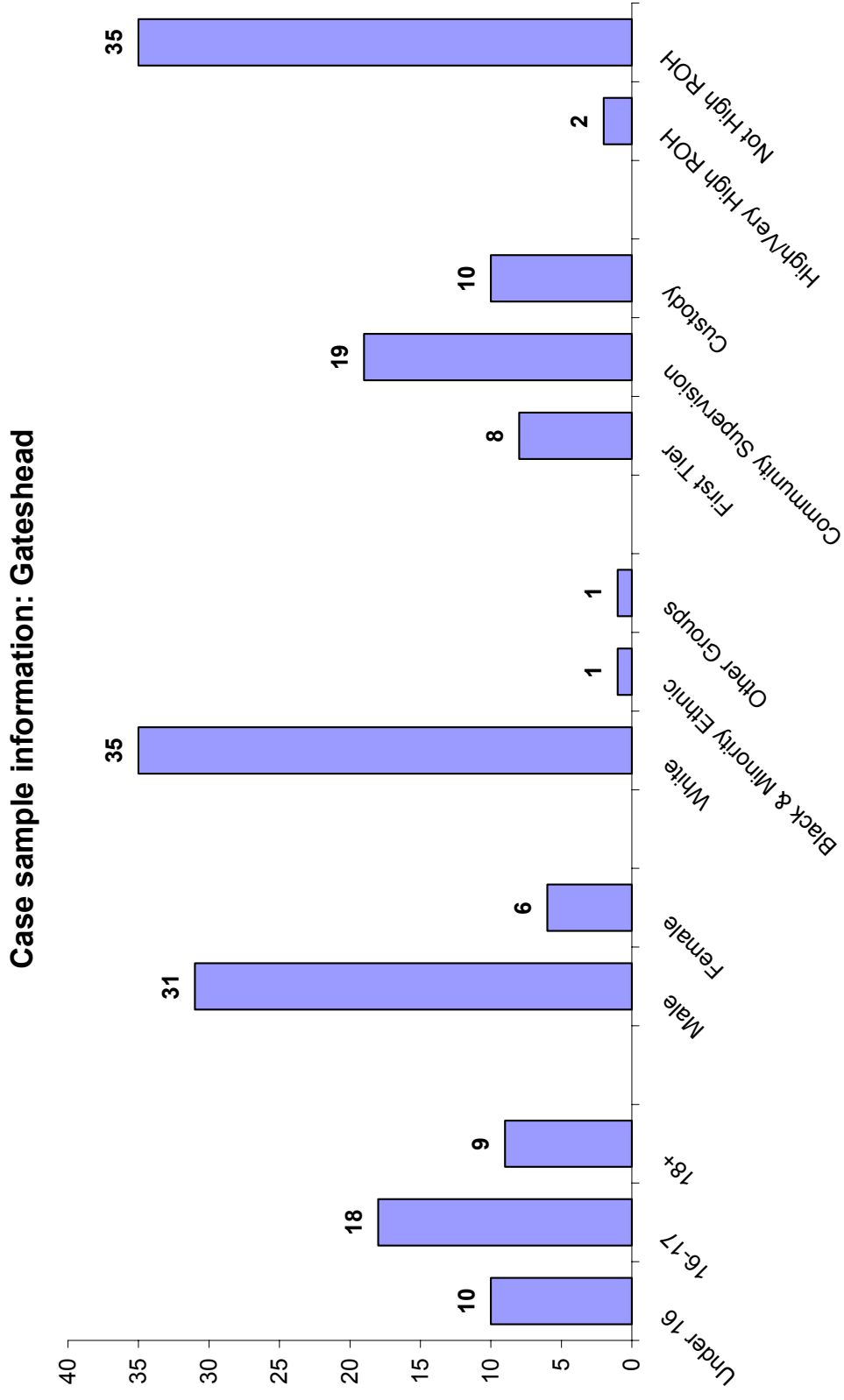
The YJB summary of national indicators available at the time of the inspection was for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Gateshead's performance on ensuring children and young people known to the YOT were in suitable education, training or employment was 82%. This was worse than the previous year, but above the England average of 72%.

Performance on ensuring suitable accommodation by the end of the sentence was 96%. This was worse than the previous year, but better than the England average of 95%.

The "Reoffending rate after 9 months" was 88%, worse than the England average of 85% (See Glossary).

**Appendix 3a: Inspection data chart**



## **Appendix 3b: Inspection data**

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in September 2009.

The inspection consisted of:

- ◊ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative
- ◊ evidence in advance
- ◊ questionnaire responses from children and young people, and victims.

We have also seen YJB performance data and assessments relating to this YOT.

## **Appendix 4: Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice**

Information on the Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

**<http://www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-probation>**

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation  
2nd Floor, Ashley House  
2 Monck Street  
London, SW1P 2BQ*

## Appendix 5: Glossary

ASB/ASBO	Antisocial behaviour/Antisocial Behaviour Order
Asset	A structured assessment tool based on research and developed by the Youth Justice Board looking at the young person's offence, personal circumstances, attitudes and beliefs which have contributed to their offending behaviour
CAF	Common Assessment Framework: a standardised assessment of a child or young person's needs and of how those needs can be met. It is undertaken by the lead professional in a case, with contributions from all others involved with that individual
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: part of the National Health Service, providing specialist mental health and behavioural services to children and young people up to at least 16 years of age
Careworks	One of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also YOIS+
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DTO	Detention and Training Order, a custodial sentence for the young
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, training and education. Work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HM	Her Majesty's
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
Interventions; <i>constructive</i> and <i>restrictive</i> interventions	<p>Work with an individual that is designed to change their offending behaviour and/or to support public protection.</p> <p>A <i>constructive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to reduce Likelihood of Reoffending.</p> <p>A <i>restrictive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>. Example: with a sex offender, a <i>constructive intervention</i> might be to put them through an accredited sex offender programme; a <i>restrictive intervention</i> (to minimise their <i>Risk of Harm</i>) might be to monitor regularly and meticulously their accommodation, their employment and the places they frequent, imposing and enforcing clear restrictions as appropriate to each case. NB. Both types of intervention are important</p>
ISSP	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme – this intervention is attached to the start of some orders and licences and provides initially at least 25 hours programme contact including a substantial proportion of employment, training and education
LoR	Likelihood of Reoffending. See also <i>constructive</i> Interventions
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board – set up in each local authority (as a result of the Children Act 2004) to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the multi-agency work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality.



MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher <i>Risk of Harm to others</i> .
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the Inspectorate for those services in England (not Wales, for which see Estyn)
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	'Prolific and other Priority Offender' – designated offenders, adult or young, who receive extra attention from the Criminal Justice System agencies
Pre-CAF	This is a simple 'Request for Service' in those instances when a Common Assessment Framework may not be required. It can be used for requesting one or two additional services, e.g. health, social care or educational
PSR	Pre-sentence report – for a court
"Reoffending rate after 9 months"	A measure used by the Youth Justice Board. It indicates how many further offences are recorded as having been committed in a 9-month period by individuals under current supervision of the relevant YOT, and it can be either more or less than 100%. "110%" would therefore mean that exactly 110 further offences have been counted as having been committed 'per 100 individuals under supervision' in that period. The quoted national average rate for England in early 2009 was 85%
RMP	Risk management plan. A plan to minimise the individual's <i>Risk of Harm</i>
RoH	<i>Risk of Harm to others</i> . See also <i>restrictive Interventions</i>
'RoH work', or 'Risk of Harm work'	This is the term generally used by HMI Probation to describe work to protect the public, primarily using <i>restrictive interventions</i> , to keep to a minimum the individual's opportunity to behave in a way that is a <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>
RoSH	'Risk of Serious Harm', a term used in Asset. HMI Probation prefers not to use this term as it does not help to clarify the distinction between the <i>probability</i> of an event occurring and the <i>impact/severity</i> of the event. The term <i>Risk of Serious Harm</i> only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using ' <i>Risk of Harm</i> ' enables the necessary attention to be given to those offenders for whom lower <i>impact/severity</i> harmful behaviour is <i>probable</i>
SIFA	Screening Interview for Adolescents (Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for specialist workers)
SQIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents (Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOT workers)
VMP	Vulnerability management plan. A plan to safeguard the well-being of the individual under supervision
YJB	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
YOI	Young Offenders Institution. A Prison Service institution for young people remanded in custody or sentenced to custody
YOIS+	Youth Offending Information System: One of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also Careworks.
YOS/T	Youth Offending Service/Team