



Inspection of
Youth
Offending

Archwilio Rhaglen Troseddwyr Ifanc



Arolygiad ar y Cyd Cyfiawnder Troseddol

Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in England and Wales

Report on youth offending
work in:

Stockport

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Foreword

This Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in Stockport 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 we 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 60% 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 53% of the time, and the work to make each individual less likely to reoffend was done well enough 66% 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.

Overall, we consider this an average set of findings. Although there have been some staff vacancies, there is a relatively stable management team and we believe that if an improvement plan to address the recommendations contained in this report is formulated and actioned, there are reasonable prospects for improvement.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

August 2009

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<i>Lead Inspector</i>	<i>Mark Boother</i>
<i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Joy Neary, Les Smith</i>
<i>Support Staff</i>	<i>Andy Doyle</i>
<i>Publications Team</i>	<i>Rachel Dwyer, Alex Pentecost</i>
<i>Editor</i>	<i>Julie Fox</i>
<i>Regional Assessor</i>	<i>Andy Cole, Stefania Dalman</i>

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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.

Safeguarding score:	
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.	
Score: 60%	Comment: MODERATE improvement required

Public Protection – Risk of Harm score:	
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.	
Score: 53%	Comment: SUBSTANTIAL improvement required

Public Protection - Likelihood of Reoffending score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Likelihood of Reoffending</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality.	
Score: 66%	Comment: MODERATE improvement required

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, and is dated when the assessment is done (YOT Manager)
- (2) specifically, 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, where indicated as necessary by the relevant screening (YOT Manager)
- (3) 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* (i.e. to include a risk management plan and a vulnerability management plan in relevant cases, countersigned by a manager for quality assurance purposes) (YOT Manager)
- (4) the original assessment and the plan of work with the case is regularly reviewed and correctly recorded in Asset with a frequency consistent with national standards for youth offending services (YOT Manager).

Furthermore:

- (5) The YOT risk management policy should be rewritten to reflect with the specific Asset Risk of Serious Harm categories, with the expectations of case managers made clear (YOT Manager)
- (6) Training is provided to all staff and managers on the identification of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements cases and the YOT responsibilities in these cases (YOT Manager).

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

Twenty seven children and young people completed a paper based questionnaire for the inspection. This was a high level of return from the children and young people approached.

- ◆ In nearly all cases, children and young people reported that YOT staff had told them why they had to attend the YOT and they fully understood the purpose of their involvement with the YOT.
- ◆ Over 90% of children and young people reported that staff in the YOT were clearly interested in helping them and that they listened to what they had to say. Nearly all reported that they had used the *What do YOU think?* Asset self-assessment tool.
- ◆ Nearly 90% of respondents felt that the YOT had taken appropriate action to meet the needs they identified.
- ◆ Most children and young people felt that the YOT had helped them understand their offending and make better decisions. 92% felt they were less likely to offend as a result of their involvement with the YOT.
- ◆ The questionnaire returns indicate that most children and young people supervised by the YOT viewed the experience positively. This is an encouraging finding.

Victims

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

- ◆ Both victims stated that their needs had been fully taken into account.
- ◆ One victim was completely satisfied with the service provided.

Sharing good practice

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

Assessment and Sentence Planning

General Criterion: 1.2

The YOT enabled the partner agency that provided its substance misuse assessments with access to Asset. This included allowing partner agency staff to not only read assessments, but to contribute to them. This had provided the agency with good background information to assist staff in their work with the child or young person. The agency's contribution to Asset had improved both the assessment of substance misuse linked to offending.

Delivery and Review of Interventions

General Criterion: 2.2

In the case of a young woman on a referral order with ETE needs, the YOT was successful in applying to the Youth Opportunities Fund to enable her to get the equipment necessary for a vocational nail technician course. The intervention was part of a plan to reduce her LoR.

Outcomes

General Criterion: 3.2

A year 11 pupil was attending a specialist school on a much reduced timetable. He was attending a placement at a sports college one day a week, but was not able to attend the school on other days following several violent incidents. He expressed his desire to continue with his GCSEs in maths and science and this was facilitated by a teacher employed by the YOT who saw him regularly and tutored him in his chosen subjects. Special arrangements were made for him to sit his exams at a youth centre. As a result of the YOT intervention the young man will achieve a GCSE grade.

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:

53%

Comment:

SUBSTANTIAL improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) 84% of cases had a RoSH screening.
- (2) Where the YOT had clearly recorded a RoSH classification, this accorded with the view of inspectors in 82% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Only 41% of RoSH screenings were of a sufficient quality.
- (2) The full assessment of *RoH* had been completed on time in 54% of cases and to a sufficient standard in only 36% of cases.
- (3) Where a full assessment of *RoH* was required, this had been undertaken in only 74% of cases.
- (4) Over a quarter of cases had no clear classification of the *RoH* posed by the child or young person.
- (5) The writing of RMPs had only recently been introduced, and as a consequence, there were many cases where no RMP had been produced where there should have been one. Of the five cases in the sample where a RMP had been completed only one was on time and three were of sufficient quality.
- (6) There had been effective management oversight in less than a fifth of *RoH* assessments.
- (7) There was confusion amongst some staff concerning the MAPPA status of children and young people known to the YOT.

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:

62%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) In nearly all cases an initial assessment of the LoR had been undertaken.
- (2) An intervention plan to address the LoR had been completed in 90% of all cases.
- (3) The intervention plan sufficiently addressed the issue of the child or young person's thinking and behaviour in 87% of cases.
- (4) Where appropriate, the plan addressed ETE issues in 82% of cases.
- (5) Where there were issues of perception of self and others, these were sufficiently addressed in 85% of cases.
- (6) The intervention plan required reporting in accordance with national standards in 94% of cases and accurately reflected sentencing purposes in 83% of cases.
- (7) For those sentenced to custody, the secure establishment had been meaningfully engaged in the sentence planning process in 89% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Most children and young people did complete a self-assessment and they were involved in the planning process in 60% of cases. However the self-assessment was used to inform the initial assessment in only 28% of cases.
- (2) The intervention plan was reviewed in accordance with the requirements of national standards in less than half the cases.

1.3 Safeguarding:

General Criterion:

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.

Score:

48%

Comment:

SUBSTANTIAL improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) An Asset vulnerability screening had been completed in 78% of cases.
- (2) Where VMPs had been completed, they were of sufficient quality and completed on time.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Only 63% of Asset vulnerability screenings were completed on time, with 38% being completed to a sufficient standard.
- (2) The assessment of Safeguarding needs was reviewed as appropriate in only 39% of cases.
- (3) VMPs had been produced in only 43% of cases where they were assessed as necessary.
- (4) There had been effective management oversight of the vulnerability assessment in 35% of cases.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Assessment and Sentence Planning work: 58%

COMMENTARY on Assessment and Sentence Planning as a whole:

In nearly a third of cases the initial Asset assessment was not done within three weeks or longer of the sentence, and/ or the dating of the assessments was at best ambiguous. The overall quality was disappointing. Management oversight of assessments was insufficient.

The YOT risk management policy did not provide clear guidance to staff. Although RMPs and VMPs had been recently introduced, these were often not in evidence in the files inspected. Some staff were uncertain of the definitions of MAPPA cases and of their responsibilities under these arrangements.

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:

56%

Comment:

SUBSTANTIAL improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) Specific interventions to manage the *RoH to others* in the community had been identified in 82% of cases.
- (2) Interventions to manage the *RoH to others* during the custodial phase were reviewed every three months as required in 80% of relevant cases.
- (3) Purposeful home visits were carried out in accordance with the *RoH* posed in 72% of cases and Safeguarding issues in 74% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) *RoH to others* was reviewed no later than three months from the start of the sentence in 44% of cases.
- (2) In the 18 cases where there had been a change in *RoH* factors these were identified swiftly in only half of the cases.
- (3) A full and sufficient assessment of the safety of victims was not carried out in any of the relevant cases.
- (4) There was inconsistent marking of the MAPPA status of offenders on the case recording system.

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:

69%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) Interventions delivered in the community were designed to reduce the LoR in 83% of cases. They were delivered in accordance with the intervention plan and assessed as being of good quality in 70% of cases.
- (2) Resources were allocated in accordance with the assessed LoR in 86% of cases.
- (3) The YOT was appropriately involved in the review of interventions in custody in 78% of cases.
- (4) YOT workers actively motivated the child or young person throughout their sentence in the community in 89% of cases, reinforcing positive behaviour in 80% of cases.
- (5) Throughout the sentence, the YOT worker actively engaged parents/ carers in 78% of relevant cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Reviews of interventions were undertaken in a timely manner in only two fifths of cases.

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:

71%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) All necessary immediate action was taken to Safeguard children and young people receiving custodial sentences in 86% of relevant cases.
- (2) Where action was required to Safeguard other affected children and young people, this had been undertaken in over 90% of cases.
- (3) YOT workers and staff from children's services worked together to promote Safeguarding of the child or young person in the community in 76% of relevant cases. There was effective joint working between the YOT and ETE providers in 83% of cases.
- (4) Where children and young people were sentenced to custody, there was effective joint working with the secure establishment in 88% of relevant cases. Where children and young people in custody were assessed as having education or training needs, these were met in all relevant cases. Where substance misuse services were required, these were delivered in 85% of cases.
- (5) All relevant staff supported and promoted the well-being of the child or young person in 84% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Specific interventions to promote Safeguarding in the community were identified in only 61% of relevant cases. These interventions were reviewed after three months in only 36% of cases.
- (2) There was effective management oversight of Safeguarding and vulnerability needs in only 38% of relevant cases in the community.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Delivery and Review of Interventions work: 66%

COMMENTARY on Delivery and Review of Interventions as a whole:

Although there was good practice with regard to the interventions delivered, these were not always consistent with the assessment of need as identified in Asset. Intervention plans were often written without an outcome focus. Opportunities to identify small individual successes by children and young people were sometimes not recorded or recognised.

3. OUTCOMES

3.1 Achievement of outcomes:

General Criterion:

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

Score:

62%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) Children and young people had complied with the requirements of the sentence in 75% of cases.
- (2) There appeared to have been a reduction in the seriousness of offending in 76% of cases.
- (3) All reasonable action had been taken to keep the child or young person safe in 78% of cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) There had been a reduction in the factors that led to offending and a reduction in risk factors linked to Safeguarding in half the cases inspected.

3.2 Sustaining outcomes:

General Criterion:

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

Score:

77%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

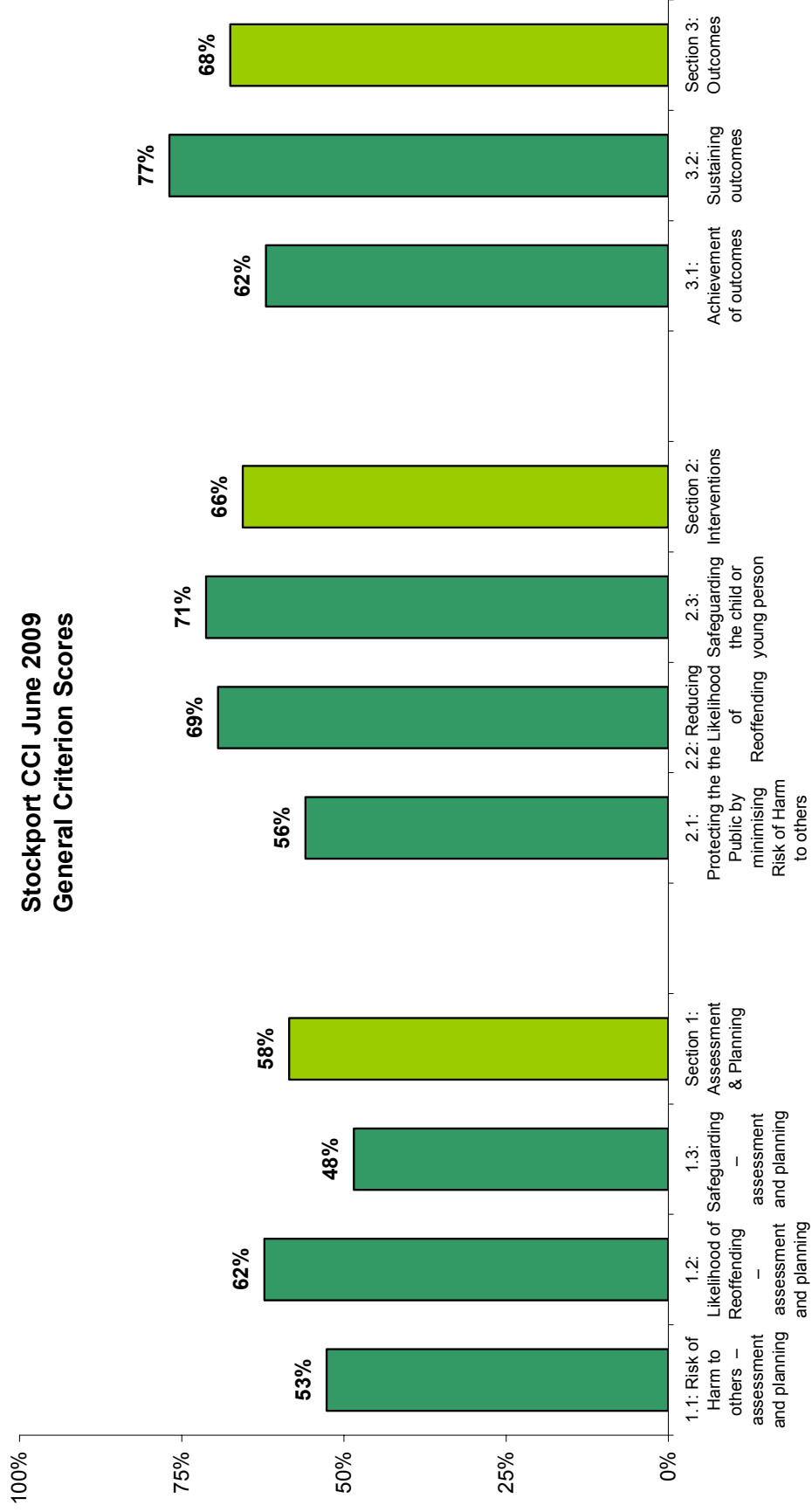
- (1) Full attention was given to ensuring community integration in 80% of community orders and 78% of custodial cases.
- (2) Actions had taken place to ensure that positive outcomes were sustainable in 72% of cases during the custodial phase and 75% of interventions in the community.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Outcomes work: 68%

COMMENTARY on Outcomes as a whole:

The relative lack of specific well-focused objectives and the insufficient number of reviews undertaken, hindered the ability of the YOT to demonstrate successful outcomes.

Appendix 1: Summary



Appendix 2: Contextual information

Area

Stockport YOT was located in the North-West region of England.

The area had a population of 284,528 as measured in the Census 2001, 10.7% of which were aged ten to 17 years old. This was slightly higher than the average for England/ Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Stockport was predominantly white British (95.7%). The population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (4.3%) was below the average for England/ Wales of 8.7%.

Reported offences for which children and young people aged 10 to 17 years old received a pre-court disposal or a court disposal in 2008/ 2009, at 51 per 1,000, were the same as the average for England/ Wales of 46.

YOT

The YOT boundaries were within those of the Greater Manchester police and probation areas. The Stockport PCT covered the area.

The YOT was located within the Inclusive Communities Service within the Children and Young People's Directorate of Stockport. It was managed by a Head of Service.

The YOT Management Board was chaired by the Service Director (Communities) and consisted of appropriate representatives from the statutory agencies.

The YOT was based in Stockport town centre.

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.

Stockport's performance on ensuring children and young people known to the YOT were in suitable education, training or employment was 73.1%. This was an improvement on the previous year, and slightly above the England average of 72.4%.

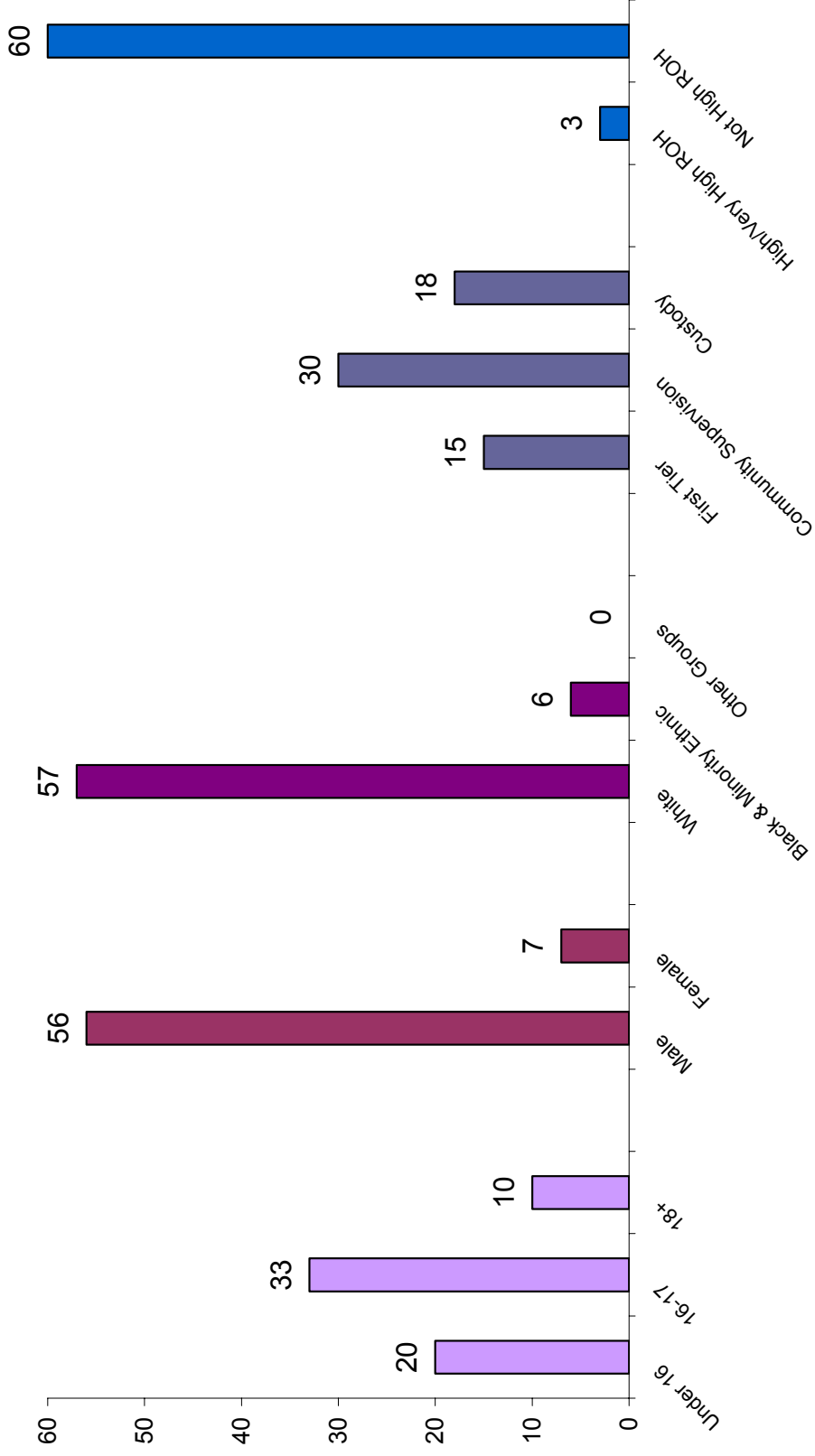
Performance on ensuring suitable accommodation by the end of the sentence was 96.4%. This was worse than the previous year, but better than the England average of 95.3%.

The "Reoffending rate after 9 months" was 107%, worse than the England average of 85% (See Glossary).

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Appendix 3a: Inspection data chart

Case sample information: Stockport



Appendix 3b: Inspection data

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in June 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.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

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>.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>RoH</i>
<i>RoH</i>	<i>Risk of Harm to others</i> . See also <i>restrictive Interventions</i>
' <i>RoH work</i> ', or ' <i>Risk of Harm work</i> '	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