

Press Notice

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THE MOVE FROM YOUTH TO ADULT SERVICES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD BE LESS DISRUPTIVE, SAY INSPECTORS

Work to help 18-year-olds in the criminal justice system move from youth services to adult services needed to improve, said independent inspectors, as they published the report of a joint inspection of transition arrangements.

In both custody and the community, there needed to be more effective processes and greater use of professional judgement so that young people were better informed and involved, continuity was maintained and work with young people to reduce reoffending and promote rehabilitation wasn't disrupted. A change of services at 18, with the potential for disruption if not handled well, occurred during the peak period for reoffending.

Today's report, *Transitions: an inspection of the transition arrangements from youth to adult services in the criminal justice system*, reflects the findings of HM Inspectorate of Probation, the lead inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, the Care Quality Commission, Estyn, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and Ofsted, who carried out this inspection in six locations in England and Wales. Inspectors looked at the work that takes place to help young people as they move from working with youth-based to adult-based services to find out what front line practitioners were doing to promote an effective transition between the various services and how it could be improved.

Although inspectors found examples of individual good practice, the report also found that work to promote effective transition did not always receive sufficient attention.

- Not all young people in the community who were eligible for transfer to adult-based services were identified - so transfer, when initiated, was undertaken too late and with insufficient information;
- Young people were not always as informed or involved as they should have been, and some young people reported that in custody, they felt unprepared for the reality of a move to an adult establishment;
- There was a lack of work with those in health and education, employment and training to ensure that services needed by the young person were continued;
- There was insufficient timely sharing of information between the youth-based and adult-based services to enable sentence plans to be delivered without interruption; and
- In custody, insufficient forward planning and communication led to a gap in sentence planning and delivery of interventions after young people had transferred to an over-18 YOI/prison.

During the course of the inspection, the Youth Justice Board took the lead in establishing a forum to bring together all the government departments involved to promote improvements. Inspectors found some signs that transition work was starting to receive greater attention and that national and local protocols were starting to make some difference.

Chief Inspector of Probation, Liz Calderbank, said on behalf of all inspectorates:

“Transitions matter. They are important rites of passage which, if successfully negotiated, can advance a young person’s journey to adulthood. For young people who offend, this period can be problematic and signify changes in key relationships, often at a time of peak reoffending. Effectively handling the many transitions that young people in the criminal justice system have to make is challenging but of paramount importance.”

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For further information, please contact Jane Parsons, HMI Probation press office on 020 7035 2123 or 07880 787452.

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Probation website from 11 October at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-probation/inspection-reports-thematic>.
2. Between September and November 2011, inspectors visited six areas, comprising six YOTs and their corresponding probation offices, including neighbouring YOTs and their corresponding probation offices when necessary. The Probation Trusts visited were: Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, Wales and West Yorkshire. The YOTs visited were Conwy & Denbighshire (with Gwynedd & Ynys Môn), Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Leicester (with Leicestershire), Salford (with Oldham) and Wakefield (with Kirklees and Leeds). Between September and October 2011, inspectors visited four custodial establishments holding over-18s (HMP & YOI Portland, HMP Downview, HMP & YOI Moorland and HMP & YOI Parc).
3. HM Inspectorate of Probation is an independent inspectorate, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, and reporting directly to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with individual adults, children and young people who offend, aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public.
4. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent inspectorate, inspecting places of detention to report on conditions and treatment, and promote positive outcomes for those detained and the public.
5. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. The CQC makes sure that care in hospitals, dental practices, ambulances, care homes, people's own homes and elsewhere meets government standards of quality and safety. The CQC also protects the interests of vulnerable people, including those whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.
6. Ofsted regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.
7. Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is the independent inspectorate and regulator of all healthcare in Wales. HIW's primary focus is on: making a significant contribution to improving the safety and quality of healthcare services in Wales, improving citizens' experience of healthcare in Wales whether as a patient, service user, carer, relative or employee, strengthening the voice of patients and the public in the way health services are reviewed and ensuring that timely, useful, accessible and relevant information about the safety and quality of healthcare in Wales is made available to all.
8. Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. It is independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales.