



*'Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes.'*

**Rost 1993<sup>2</sup>**

## Leadership

In our experience high quality leadership is required to drive and maintain improvement. In particular this relates to the Chair of the Management Board – their role in galvanising the partner organisations and the YOT Manager is crucial. But leadership also links back to the local authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO). More recent arrangements can include an elected Mayor. We found that where either the CEO chaired the Management Board or took a considerable interest in the work of the Board, performance tended to be better.

## Board membership and arrangements

The Board is the strategic governance lead in the work of the YOT. It includes a range of partners and is usually constituted as a Board in its own right. However, we have encountered areas where local arrangements have been rationalised to broaden the remit. This has led to a reduction in accountability and support for the work specifically around children and young people and offending – essentially this group have been 'lost' in the more general work on the breadth of children's services. That is not to say this has to be so, but suggests that areas need to guard against losing the specific focus on reducing offending as this is the prime purpose of the YOT.

Critical elements of high quality Boards include:

- All agencies are represented well on the Board at sufficient seniority to make decisions without referring back to their organisation.
- Members attend meetings regularly (monthly or bi-monthly). There are strong productive trusted relationships with members willing to challenge each other.
- There is broad strategic thinking which goes beyond criminal justice objectives – powerful interdependency between other strategic partnerships and a multi-agency, problem solving approach.
- Statutory Board membership is supplemented by the Chair of the Youth Court Bench (not

withstanding any safeguards relating to independence) or other court representative, housing, and elected members (usually with responsibilities for children and crime), who are well informed, committed to work to reduce offending and active in challenging performance. Other members are co-opted on as the need arises, but without the Board becoming too large to function effectively.

- There are thorough induction arrangements for new Board members and the Board takes time out to consider major issues, apart from regular Board meetings.
- Sub-groups do considerable work on joint issues with a clear reporting line back to the Board.
- Self-assessment of Board work takes place on a regular basis, including against recent thematic inspection reports.
- The annual *Youth Justice Business Plan* is clear about how work will contribute to reducing offending and is not just a paper exercise. Reviews provide clear evidence of progress.
- Board members see themselves as ambassadors in relation to this area of work.

*'Effective followers think for themselves and carry out assignments with energy and enthusiasm. They are committed to something outside their own self-interest, and they have the courage to stand up for what they believe. Good followers are not "yes people" who blindly follow a leader. Effective leaders and effective followers may sometimes be the same people, playing different roles at different times. At its best, leadership is shared among leaders and followers, with everyone fully engaged and accepting higher levels of responsibility.'*

**Daft 2002<sup>3</sup>**

## Performance information and data

- The Board demands accurate and robust performance data – both national *and* local, at least quarterly and these are submitted by services that have been commissioned as well. Data is scrutinised.

- Local offending trends are understood by Board members (including offending patterns). Strategies and commissions are developed to address these. There is a holistic view of service provision for those who offend, recognising the research base regarding offending behaviour.
- The Board receives case studies to demonstrate successes and frustrations.
- Proactive attention is given to promoting diversity factors and assessing and addressing their impact, in all aspects including strategic, staffing and service delivery levels.
- Regular surveys of service users (children and young people, parents/carers and victims) take place both to inform and improve service delivery and are reported to the Board.
- The YOT partners with local higher education and other research bodies to independently evaluate its work and learn from the results in order to achieve improvements.
- Scrutiny from other partnerships and the local authority scrutiny committee contribute to improvements in performance.
- High quality work is recognised and celebrated at all levels of the partnership.

*'Influence is the effect a person's actions have on the attitudes, values, beliefs or actions of others.'*

**Daft 2002<sup>4</sup>**

## Partnership and resources

- Agencies all understand the role of the YOT in reducing offending and their contribution to achieving this.
- There are up to date service level agreements and protocols which actively guide partnership working.
- YOTs are sufficiently resourced, including appropriate staffing by partners with links to parent agencies to enhance professional skills.
- The work is well integrated strategically and operationally not only across both the crime and the children's agenda, but also in health, education and employment.
- Alternative sources of funding are sought, for example through new initiatives, pilot offers etc and resources are shared across partners where possible.

- There is good integration with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- There are effective partnership links with local schools and alternative education, training and employment provision.
- Interventions and services beyond the YOT support the wide variety of needs of children and young people in contact with the YOT, for example alternative statutory and further education provision, emotional and mental health, speech and language, well-being and healthy living, family intervention, etc.

## Staff supervision, development and training

- All staff, from all organisations, understand their role, the objectives of the YOT partnership, and their contribution to reducing offending.
- Managers have appropriate skills, knowledge and time to assess and improve the quality of practice, provide oversight and both support and hold staff to account.
- Staff receive a thorough induction, with regular, high quality supervision (where appropriate both clinical and managerial) and annual appraisals linked to priorities set in the *Youth Justice Business Plan*.
- There are comprehensive, clear and up to date policies, procedures and guidance that are communicated well to staff and implemented.
- There is a comprehensive training plan linked to the *Youth Justice Business Plan*, often jointly delivered. This enables a range of opportunities for staff development both internally and for relevant external qualifications and opportunities via their parent agency too.
- There is a learning culture in the organisation – the YOT continuously strives to improve and is aware of the outcomes it seeks and achieves.
- Staff are co-located with other relevant services, teams and personnel.
- The YOT holds a pivotal role between criminal justice and safeguarding with well integrated plans in the care and management of complex children and young people. It is seen as a lead player in safeguarding children.

## And the not so good:

- The Board fails to look at the bigger picture – no vision, ambition, goals or targets.
- There are frequent changes of Board Chair. Board members do not understand their individual role, the role of the Board and the Youth Justice Board.
- Meetings are infrequent. There is a lack of attendance by partners, or frequently changing representatives. Few resources are shared.
- There is no strategic analysis of need to determine a commissioning strategy.
- The lack of evaluation of partner contributions to reduce offending is apparent.
- No higher education partnerships evaluate the work.
- There is poor administration and organisation of Board business.
- The YOT is driven by the YOT Manager not the Board.
- The views of service users are not routinely used to inform and improve services.

## A Fruitful Partnership...

This identified that the following were key ingredients for a successful partnership:

- Clear, shared objectives.
- A realistic plan and timetable for reaching these objectives.
- Commitment from the partners to take the partnership's work into account within their mainstream activities.
- A clear framework of responsibilities and accountabilities.
- A high trust between partners.
- Realistic ways of measuring the partnership's achievement.

*Audit Commission 1998<sup>5</sup>*



## Working better together?

This focused on the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) within the local government network of different agencies: statutory, private and third sectors.

This report identified that LSPs work through three layers:

- **Strategic:** oversight, vision and direction-setting
- **Executive:** resource allocation and performance management.
- **Operational:** service management and delivery.

The report advocated a whole system approach to help develop formal and informal aspects of collaboration and including:

- Effective joint working with active leadership and purposeful relationship management.
- The leadership styles of the Chair, and of the council, affect how others see an LSP – importance of local leadership not domination or control
- Social network analysis to strengthen working relationships.
- Delivery chain analysis to strengthen the links between objectives and action.
- Supporting a culture in which performance is tested and challenged.

*Audit Commission 2009<sup>6</sup>*



**Inspection of**  
Youth Offending Work  
Arolygiad o Waith Troseddu Ieuentid



## Conclusion

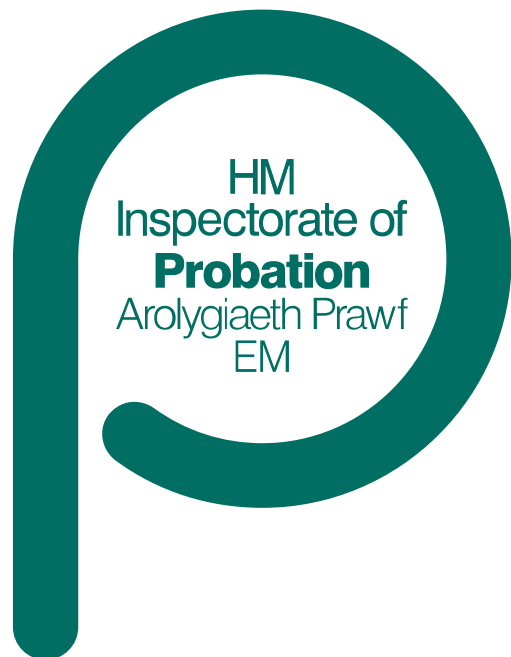
The Youth Justice Board's *Modern Youth Offending Partnerships*<sup>7</sup> published in 2013 provides guidance on effective YOT governance in England. It confirms statutory arrangements, clarifies roles and responsibilities and provides helpful practice examples. New members of YOT Management Boards and those wishing to refresh their knowledge would benefit from reading that publication supplemented by this and our criteria for Full Joint Inspection<sup>8</sup>, which outlines what we expect to find when inspecting governance.

In our experience, governance makes a difference to the quality of YOT practice. We occasionally see reasonable performance, despite a poorly performing Board, but we do not see excellent practice unless we also see high quality governance, leadership and partnership.

The Management Board holds the YOT to account to ensure that it has an impact on offending by young people and achieves the purpose of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; that is to prevent offending by children and young people.

## References

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5. Audit Commission, (November 1998), *A fruitful partnership: effective partnership working*, Audit Commission, London.
6. Audit Commission, (April 2009), *Working better together? Managing local strategic partnerships*, Audit Commission, London.
7. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, (2013), *Modern Youth Offending Partnerships* Ministry of Justice, London. At the point of publication, we understand that an equivalent paper is being produced for Wales.
8. HMI Probation, (2014) *Inspection Criteria for Full Joint Inspection*, HMI Probation, London.



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