

Inspection of Youth Offending Work - Briefing Short Quality Screenings (SQS) Aggregate Report November 2012 – March 2014

Introduction

This report briefly summarises the findings of the 49 SQS inspections we have completed in the first 17 months of the programme. The reason for publishing this is to aid learning and encourage improvement by suggesting that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) benchmark their own performance against these findings.

Key messages for practitioners and YOT Managers

Strengths

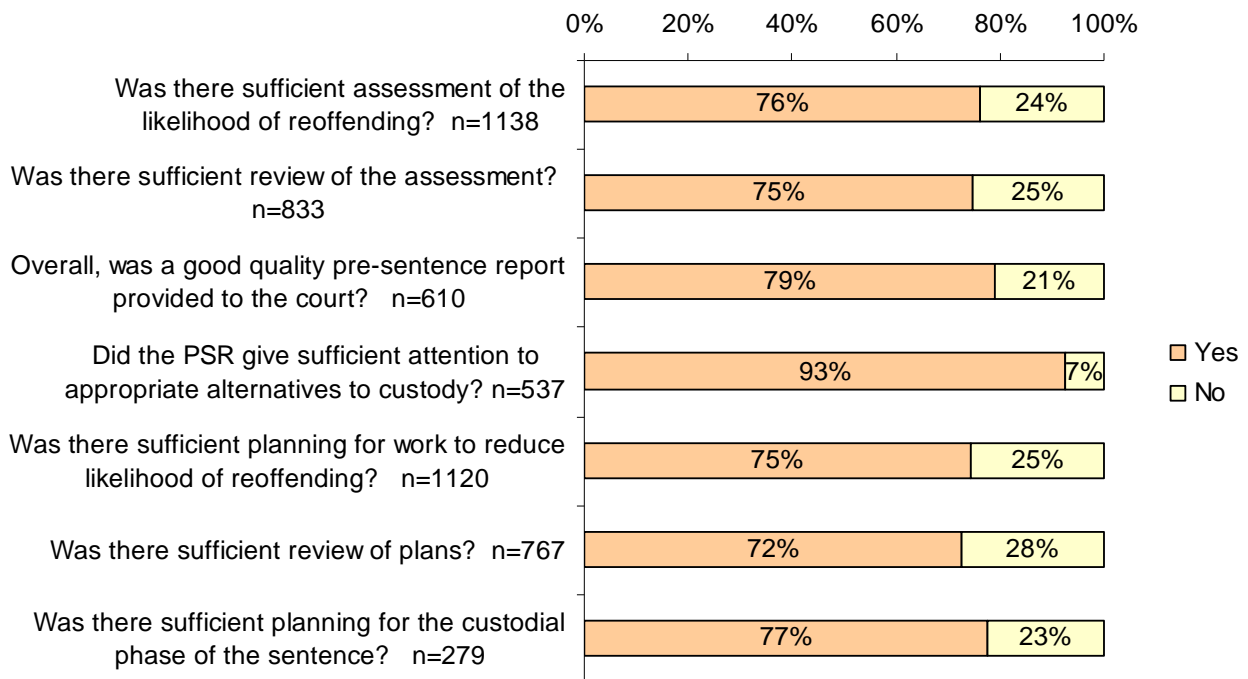
- We found that children and young people and their parents/carers were actively involved and engaged in assessment in around nine out of ten cases, and in planning in four out of five cases.
- Barriers to engagement and diversity factors were assessed in four out of five cases and planning work gave sufficient attention to these factors in three-quarters of cases.
- Where health and well-being factors would be barriers to engagement, we found that nearly nine out of ten cases had paid sufficient attention to these factors.
- Where there was a lack of compliance by a child or young person, YOTs responded well, with over nine out of ten cases, with compliance issues, responding sufficiently.

Areas for Improvement

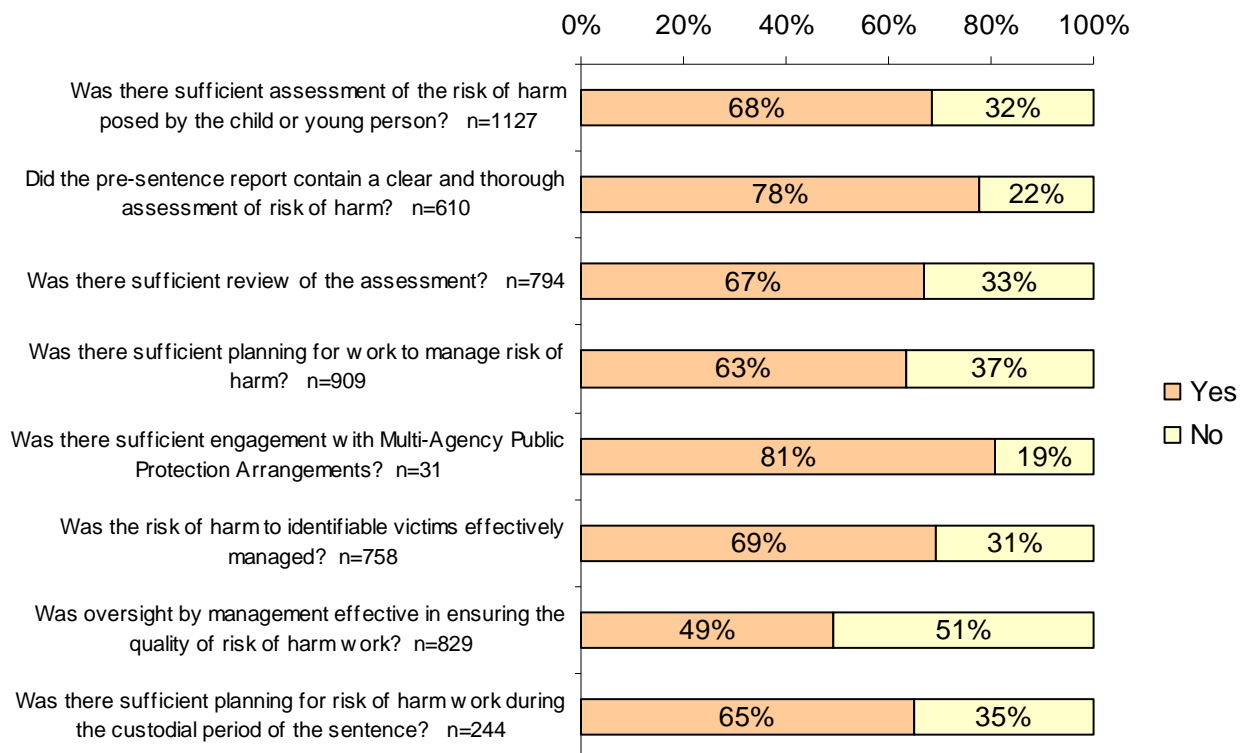
- Poor management oversight was an issue in both safeguarding and risk of harm work. Inspectors reported that in over half of the cases, management oversight was not good enough. There were weaknesses in assessments and planning, and in many cases managers did not ensure that these deficits were remedied.
- Weaknesses in Child Protection were often caused by the work simply not being completed. In one-fifth of relevant cases, vulnerability and safeguarding plans were incomplete. Safeguarding plans had not been reviewed in 20% of relevant cases.
- Public protection work was not reviewed enough; one-fifth of the cases we assessed as insufficient had not been reviewed. Planning for work to manage risk of harm to others was insufficient in four out of ten cases; a large proportion of these cases did not have a plan completed or did not address victims' issues.
- Work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending was generally stronger than public or Child Protection. Nevertheless, assessment of the likelihood of reoffending was insufficient in nearly one-third of cases; the weaknesses were largely in the *quality* of the work done. Not enough evidence and a failure to identify offending-related vulnerability were key areas of concern.

The data from the 49 inspections has been aggregated to create a single data set, which will grow as more inspections are completed.

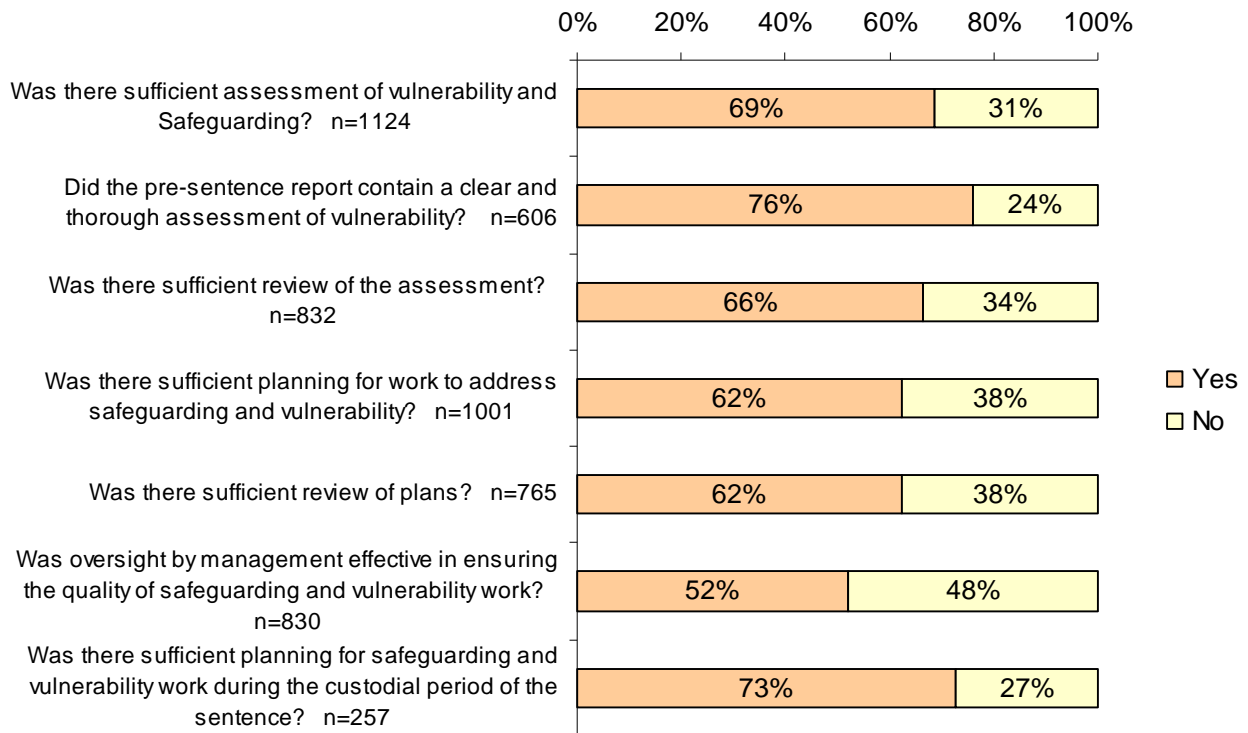
Reducing the Likelihood of Reoffending



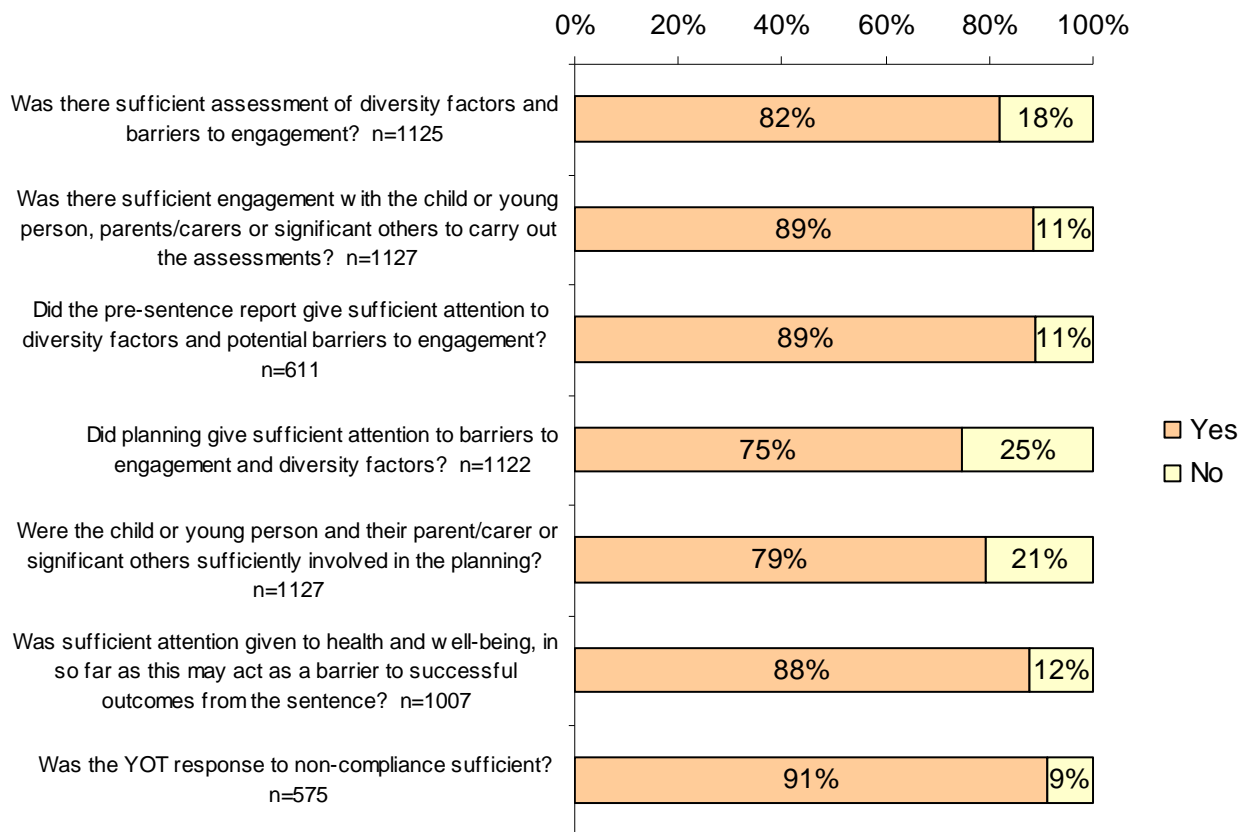
Protecting the Public



Protecting the Child or Young Person



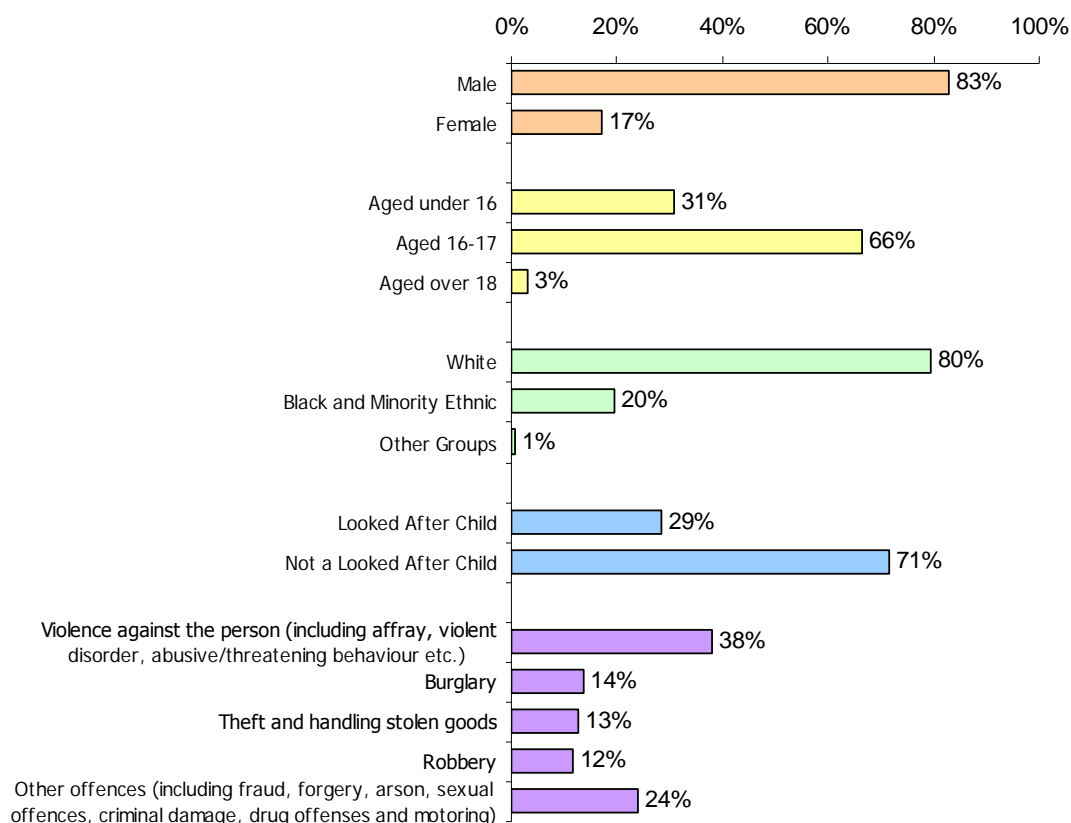
Ensuring the Sentence is Served



Other findings

The dataset consists of 1127 cases. Our selection criteria ensures that we look at a broadly representative sample by specifying the proportion of male and female cases and black or minority ethnicity and white cases. The cases consist of:

SQS Aggregate Case Characteristics



Ethnicity: We looked to see if there were any differences in quality of service by key diversity characteristics. We were pleased to note there were no statistically significant differences by ethnicity characteristics, which is consistent with our previous YOT inspection findings.

Looked After Children: We did find that some of the scores for Looked After Children were slightly lower than the average scores for all cases and this difference was statistically significant. These lower scores were due to weaknesses focused around the assessment of vulnerability and risk of harm to others in both initial assessment and, to a lesser extent, review throughout the sentence. There was not enough attention to barriers to engagement and diversity factors among these cases.

Gender: Comparing the scores of the male and female cases, we found that female cases scored statistically significantly higher on several measures, particularly in reducing the likelihood of reoffending and in protecting the child or young person. There was a broad trend of better scoring across the questions we asked in these areas. This suggests that young women are receiving a better service than young men.

Conclusions

This briefing provides YOTs with a benchmark for initial practice with children and young people. Our view is that these tasks done well can contribute to a reduction in reoffending. We hope this is helpful to YOTs in improving their practice and welcome feedback on the value of this first issue and how we might improve it in the future.