

BLAENAU GWENT & CAERPHILLY



2012-14 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

Incorporating a self-assessment & improvement plan

Michaela Rogers
Acting Service Manager
July 2012

Section 1: Introduction to the Youth Justice Plan incorporating the Self Assessment & Improvement Plan

The Youth Justice Plan is produced and submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), which monitors the operation of Youth Justice Services, a responsibility not devolved to the Welsh Government (WG).

These annual plans are required to be produced by statute (section 40 (4) Crime and Disorder Act 1998). This act places a duty on the local authority to formulate and implement an annual plan in consultation and co-operation with partner agencies. The 2011-12 plan was the first for which the Youth Justice Board had not published planning guidance and templates and once again this is the case. This lack of guidance is congruent with the UK Government's commitment to greater local determination.

Since being inspected in 2010 the Youth Offending Service (YOS) has worked consistently to implement all the recommendations along with priority actions from last year's Youth Justice Plan and the Inspection Improvement Plan. The YOS has addressed the need for robust management oversight across all areas by implementing processes to ensure that monitoring is undertaken and good practice is embedded. Furthermore the YOS has reviewed and revised its risk management processes and procedures, introduced learning style assessments and prioritised the completion of What Do You Think? self assessments by young people. In addition the YOS has provided assessment, planning, intervention and supervision (APIS) training to all staff; SMART planning training has also been delivered and review processes have been revised.

During the past 10 months, in consultation with BSC Services Ltd, the YOS has developed and implemented a performance framework, which allows the YOS to capture performance, collate participation feedback and identify areas for improvement on a quarterly basis. The YOS has also participated in the Youth Justice Board's Re-offending Analysis Project and its Prevention Cohort Study. Once the findings are shared the YOS will implement any recommendations.

Individual partnership plans have been developed over the past 12 months and practice has been reviewed to ensure that the YOS meets the recommendations in the following HMIP core and thematic inspections:

Message in a Bottle – a joint inspection of Youth Alcohol Misuse and Offending (led by the Care Quality Commission) 2010

A Joint Inspection of Youth Crime Prevention (led by HMI Constabulary) 2010

Not making enough difference – a joint inspection of youth court work and reports 2011

To get the best results – a joint inspection of Offending Behaviour, Health and Education, Training and Employment interventions in England and Wales 2011

Who's looking out for the children? A joint inspection of Appropriate Adults provision and children in detention after charge (led by HMI Constabulary)
2011

Some of the work completed will be included within the main body of this plan and any outstanding actions identified and included in the objectives set. The YOS also implemented the recommendations from the Joint Review Of Youth Offending Services to ensure work with Social Services and other partner agencies is effective and compliments the work they undertake.

Over the past 12 months achievements to date include:

- A steady reduction in the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system
- Continuing to address re-offending rates by young people
- Reducing the number of custodial sentences for young people
- Maintaining good performance regarding young people having suitable accommodation
- Providing timely substance misuse assessment and intervention
- Increasing education, training and employment provision for young people
- Bringing our Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) in house.

A peer review has been undertaken to measure progress against the inspection recommendations and the recommendation informed our work programme for service improvement. A robust quality assurance system across all areas of service delivery has been implemented in addition to a timely and effective auditing process. During February – July 2012 the YOS increased quality assurance practices to allow 6 months of data to be collected on a monthly basis to inform self assessments across a number of areas of APIS.

The YOS aims to use self assessment as a valuable learning process and endeavours to be open and honest with regard to reflecting and evaluating current practice. Statements made have been based on evidence that is available externally for scrutiny. Information has been drawn from a range of sources to inform self assessment including:

- YJB National Indicators and Welsh National Indicators
- A safeguarding audit undertaken in 2012 on a number of cases from across all areas of service delivery
- Case audits undertaken in 2012 from across all areas of service delivery
- Analysis of feedback during 2011 & 2012 from young people using Viewpoint and other evaluation methods; victims of youth crime, sentencers, volunteers, and parents/carers

- Robust quality assurance processes
- Peer review

A number of sections form the plan and summarises the findings from the 2011-12 YOS self assessment process.

Section 2 looks at the current Youth Justice Performance Indicators

Section 3 looks at how the YOS is performing using the major factors impacting on YOS practice and self assessment, as well as including performance against the indicators from Section 2. The report examines the effective management of Safeguarding & Serious Harm, as well as other key areas of practice (e.g. victim work). This section analyses the strengths of YOS work, as well as the areas in which it is assessed that the YOS needs to improve.

Section 4 brings together all these factors into a comprehensive action plan for the year 2012-14, which is designed to deliver continuous improvement.

This plan has been agreed by members of the Local Management Board and in Section 5 has been signed off by the Chair of the Management Board. The YOS will begin implementing the action plan from September 2012 onwards.

Resources and Value For Money

The following table summarises the total budget for 2012/13 and source of funding:

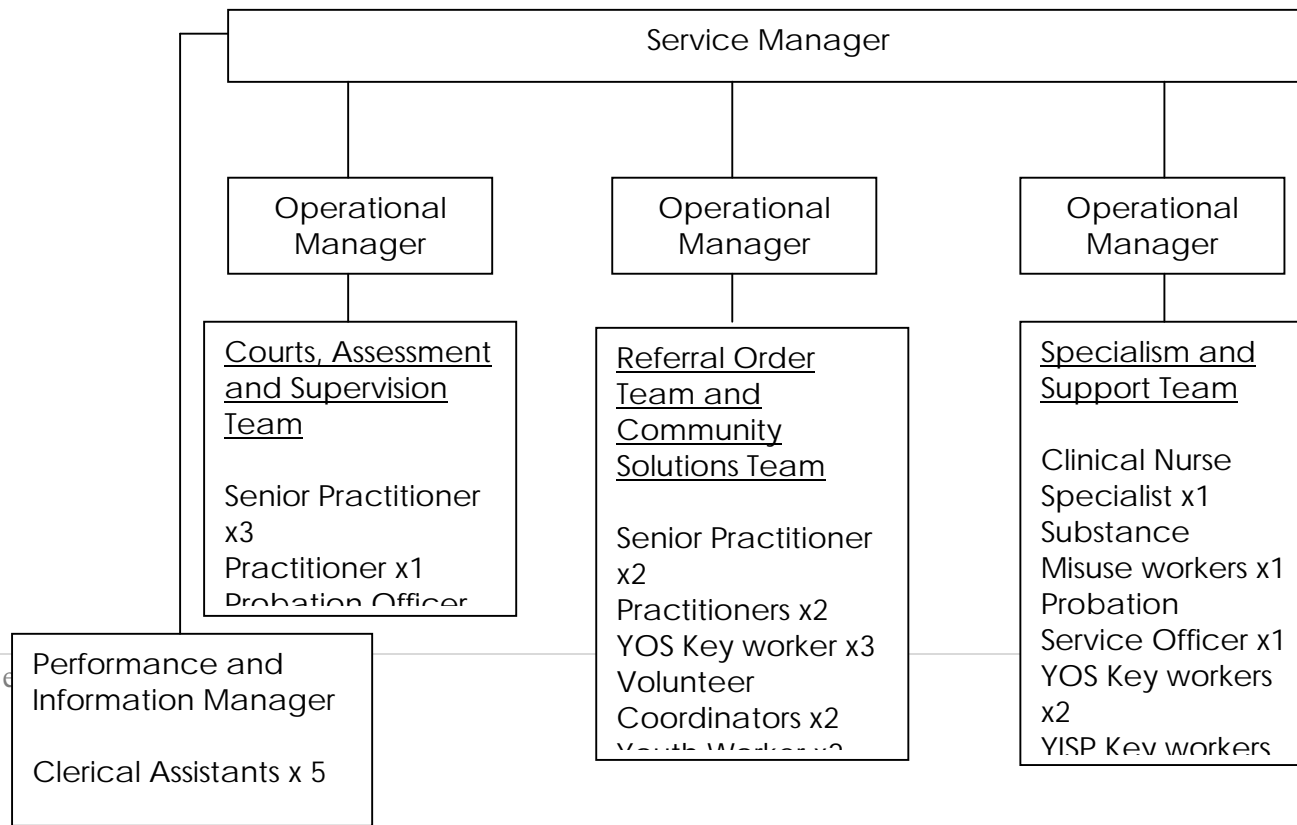
Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in Kind	Other Delegated Funds	Total
Police	122,591		15,452	138,043
Probation	98,958		12,473	111,432
Health	46,113		5,812	51,925
Local Authority's	576,248		72,634	648,883

Wales Assembly Governme nt YJB	-		-	-
Other	572,891		72,211	645,103
Total	1,576,472	-	198,710	1,775,182

WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

	2008	2009	2010	2011
OVERALL YOS NUMBERS				
Number of court based interventions starting	278	243	231	222
Numbers of young people commencing court based interventions	211	190	190	181
AGE PROFILE				
Number of young people aged 10 to 14 starting court interventions	43	25	36	38
Number of young people aged 15 to 16 starting court interventions	94	98	81	90
Number of young people aged 17 to 18 starting court interventions	74	67	73	53
RISK PROFILE – INTERVENTION LEVEL				
Number of Intensive Level Interventions starting				55
Number of Enhanced Level Interventions starting				129
Number of Standard Level Interventions starting				38
Number of Interventions starting with no identified level				0

YOS Service Structure



Section 2: National Indicator Performance Commentary

This section summarises current National Indicator performance - please note that the tables below have been populated with the most recent data available at the time of publication, which was for the period April 2011 – March 2012. The data summarises current YOS performance both in terms of distance travelled and comparison with other YOS's in Gwent and nationally across Wales.

Table 1: First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (WYJI1)-England & Wales Measure

These are young people who are coming into the criminal justice system for the first-time whether this be receiving a reprimand, a final warning or appearing in court, it therefore does not include the "Non Criminal Disposals".

	BG & Caerphilly	Gwent	Wales
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2005-Sept 2006	2413	2382	1856
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2006-Sept 2007	2172	2396	1890
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2007-Sept 2008	1974	2225	1793
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2008-Sept 2009	1656	1882	1581
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2009-Sept 2010	1503	1427	1106
PNC FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: Oct 2010-Sept 2011	1271	1046	806
% change Oct 2010 – Sept 2011 versus Oct 2009 – Sept 2010	-17.9%	-28.6%	-28.8

The YJB measures First Time Entrants (FTEs) per 100,000 of the local 10 to 17 year old population. Between October 2005 – September 2011, preventative work has resulted in a steady decline in the number of young people coming into the youth justice system for the first time (FTEs) and receiving either a reprimand, final warning or a disposal from court. Whilst a reduction of 17.9% is positive, there is still work to be done with our police colleagues to realise further improvements in this area of work. Based on the introduction of Restorative Justice Disposals (RJDs) in January 2011, a greater reduction in FTEs was anticipated. However, the low numbers received in 2011 had little impact on the percentage reduction. A proactive response on the part of the YOS resulted in the development of a partnership plan with Gwent Police in January 2012 and this has consolidated our work to reduce FTEs. The plan is focussed on the following areas:

- a. Process and problem solving – in particular Police Electronic Notification to YOS (PENY) forms and RJDs
- b. Referrals for preventative services namely Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and consideration of RJD
- c. Joint training/awareness raising – RJD, ABC and YISP
- d. Support/information sharing at monthly panels – YISP, ABC, Problem Solving Group

e. Joint working on initiatives – Kiddo’s Choice, Car Crime Awareness

The decline in the number of young people coming into the youth justice system is most positive. In response to this steady trend, we took steps towards the reshape of our service at the end of 2011 by increasing the skill set of our support workers. Not only has this training enriched the development of the staff group it has ensured that the YOS is well placed to meet the demands of the preventative agenda. The number of prevention interventions commencing is increasing; these have risen from 43 interventions between January and March 2012 to 54 interventions between April and June 2012. This evidences that the partnership working is being effective and it is anticipated that the trend will continue to show a reduction in FTEs. It is envisaged that prevention interventions will continue to increase with the implementation of the 2012 ‘Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Of Offenders’ (LASPO) Act in early 2013; this will mean that the quality and effectiveness of prevention interventions will become paramount in preventing future offending. The YOS needs to continue to invest in the quality of prevention services.

Table 2: Re-offending – Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders (WYJ12)- England & Wales Measure

This measure relates to young people whose offences lead to a substantive outcome in any given year. The group are then tracked for a year, with the proportion of young people re-offending and the average number of offences per offender being reported annually via Police National Computer (PNC) data. This includes young people receiving low level outcomes and those who have been or are being supervised by the YOS.

	BG &Caerphilly	Gwent	Wales
Jan 2007 to Dec 2007 Offending Cohort			
Number of Offenders in Cohort	930	2294	9168
Proportion of Offenders who Reoffend	36.1% (336)	34.7% (796)	33.3% (3057)
Average Number of Offences per Offender	0.90	0.88	0.92
Apr 2008 to Mar 2009 Offending Cohort			
Number of Offenders in Cohort	786	2092	8623
Proportion of Offenders who Reoffend	30.3% (238)	29.7% (621)	33.2% (2863)
Average Number of Offences per Offender	0.69	0.72	0.91
Apr 2009 to Mar 2010 Offending Cohort			
Number of Offenders in Cohort	676	1668	7129
Proportion of Offenders who Reoffend	31.8%(215)	30.8% (514)	33.1% (2360)
Average Number of Offences per Offender	0.85	0.90	0.96

The proportion of young people who reoffended in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly reduced from 36.1% in 2007 to 30.3% in 2008 and then increased slightly to 31.8% in 2009. Over a similar period the number of follow on offences committed per offender dropped from 0.90 offences in 2007 to 0.69 offences in 2008 before rising again to 0.85 offences in 2009. In the 2009/10 data, the last year for which Home Office data is available, the proportion of offenders who reoffended (31.8%) is lower than the Welsh average of 33.1%. Similarly, the average number of offences (0.85) is below the Welsh average of 0.96. The proportion of young people re-offending in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly increased between April 09 to March 10 compared to the previous year (this is the latest national data available). This trend replicated a similar pattern across Gwent for the same period – the proportion of

young people re-offending in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly remains below the Wales average of 33.1%. In 2012 the service took part in a YJB & Welsh Government re-offending analysis project; we are currently awaiting feedback from this initiative. The YOS held a staff consultation event in June 2012 to gain responses from all members of the YOS team in relation to how we can further improve our re-offending rates. The YOS recognises that to reduce crime and re-offending rates, a joint approach needs to be adopted, in line with the 'Wales Reducing Re-offending Strategy' 2012-2015.

Table 3: Custody – Young people within the youth justice system receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody (WYJI3)-England & Wales Measure

This measure monitors the number of custodial disposals and the rate of custodial sentences per 1000 young people aged 10 to 17.

	BG and Caerphilly	Gwent	Wales
Custodial Sentences April to December 2009			
Number of Custodial Disposals	10	44	233
Rate of Custodial Sentences per 1000 Young People 10 to 17	0.40	0.74	0.79
Custodial Sentences April to December 2010			
Number of Custodial Disposals	20	44	194
Rate of Custodial Sentences per 1000 Young People 10 to 17	0.82	0.76	0.67
Custodial Sentences April to December 2011			
Number of Custodial Disposals	6	29	155
Rate of Custodial Sentences per 1000 Young People 10 to 17	0.25	0.50	0.53

As evidenced in the above table, the trend is showing a reduction in the number of young people receiving a custodial sentence during the 2011 period in contrast to 2010. An obvious reason for this could be that the number of young people entering the youth justice system and being dealt with via the court arena is generally falling in England and Wales. This may be attributed, in some part, to the success of early preventative work in diverting young people from offending. However, the decline in numbers of young people receiving custodial sentences has not been a consistent trend over a 3 year period within the area of Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly. As the above table shows, in 2010 the number of young people receiving custodial sentences in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly actually rose by double the number as recorded the previous year, whilst the combined overall trend for custodial sentences within Gwent remained the same over a 2 year period. It is of note that within the period, 2 young people each received 2 separate custodial sentences during 2010. These were for offences, which were not able to proceed at the time when their initial custodial sentence was imposed. One young person received 3 short custodial sentences during the period of 1 year: the first period of custody was for offences committed the previous year and one short period of custody was for breach of the licence conditions. Therefore, this equates to 7 custodial disposals being imposed upon 3 young people during that period and 3 custody disposals were for matters committed prior to November 2009 when Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YRO) were introduced.

Table 4: ETE – Young offenders’ engagement in education, training and employment (WYJI4)- Wales Only Measure

This measure looks at all young people ending an intervention with the YOS during the year, showing the number of hours that a young person receives in Education, Training or Employment (ETE). This compares the last full week before the period of supervision commences, with the number of hours received in the last full week of that intervention. This return is split between those above and below statutory school age.

	BG & C Apr-Dec 09	Gwent Apr- Dec 09	Wales Apr- Dec 09	BG & C Apr-Dec 10	Gwent Apr- Dec 10	Wales Apr- Dec 10	BG & C Apr-Dec 11	Gwent Apr- Dec 11	Wales Apr-Dec 11
Number of YP of statutory school age	38	232	723	30	74	533	27	88	492
Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	15.9	12.9	18.4	16.2	16.4	19.2	18.7	18.0	19.8
Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	17.3	14.6	20.0	16.8	17.7	20.2	18.4	18.9	21
Percentage change in ETE hours	8.4%	13.0%	8.8%	4.1%	7.9%	5.0%	-1.6%	4.6%	6%
Number of YP above statutory school age	105	244	1136	102	259	1154	97	264	1038
Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	10.0	9.3	13.1	10.5	11.0	13.0	12.4	10.7	12.1
Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	10.6	10.6	14.7	12.7	12.7	15.1	10.6	10.3	13.4
Percentage change in ETE hours	6.1%	14.1%	11.9%	20.7%	16.2%	16.1%	-14.3%	-3.7%	10.9%

STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE:

Since 2009, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS has shown a small increase in the average number of hours in education per young person. As the table above highlights, this figure was above the average for Gwent in 2009 with both figures on par by December 2011. However, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly performance is behind that of Wales throughout the monitoring period. It is important to note that numbers of young people in this category are relatively low as the general age range of the client group is rising and this means that the status of an individual can have a disproportionate impact on the overall figures.

The YOS works closely with partners in both education authorities to endeavour that each child receives a statutory entitlement of 25+ hours education per week and in 2012 a partnership plan was developed to focus on areas for improvement. Progress to date includes:

- Development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all young people on statutory orders.
- Weekly updates to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Improvements in communication with mainstream education and alternative provision.
- Improvements in transition work to increase motivation and engagement at comprehensive school level.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the education authorities are renewed annually.

An operational manager sits on the bi-monthly, alternative provision placement panels for both authorities; she also attends pastoral leaders forum, by invitation. An area of weakness is the link with junior schools; this needs to be reinforced to aid transition work, as many young people become disengaged at this point. There is no dedicated resource for this area of work.

ABOVE STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE:

Post 16 performance in Blaenau Gwent is also in line with that of Gwent and whilst there was a small increase in the number of ETE hours per young person in 2010 this was not sustained in 2011. However, it should be noted that as young people in this category may move between school, engagement and training providers there will be variance in the number of hours achieved. Also, the major area for concern is the starting point for young people entering the YOS rather than the work that the YOS itself undertakes. The YOS will continue to raise these issues with partnerships and managers.

Undoubtedly, work completed with the YOS improves ETE destinations during the YOS intervention. The European Social Fund (ESF) "Reach the Heights" project has enabled us to employ a member of staff to work with the hard to reach NEETs (Not in education, employment or training) group to promote engagement, increase skills levels and improve long term outcomes for these young people. To date the benefits realised are as follows:

- 80 young people have engaged with the programme; their outcomes include improved social skills/soft skills/basic skills, training placement, college placement or employment.
- The ETE network has increased and young people have seen the benefits, as a result of the ESF worker attending NEETs, Raising Aspirations, Keeping in Touch and work based learning groups.
- Excellent communication with ETE and Careers Wales staff within the secure estate has improved access to training opportunities for young people when they are released.

During the course of the ESF project we have received 2 visits from the Welsh Government. Feedback from both visits was excellent, the focus being on the achievements of the young people, the exceptional work completed by the member of staff and her dedication to the role. The ESF post is funded until March 2013.

Table 5: Accommodation – Young offenders' access to suitable accommodation (WYJI5)- Wales Only Measure

This indicator looks at whether a young person has suitable accommodation, comparing the assessment at the beginning of an intervention with that at the end. For those receiving a custodial sentence, the comparison is before the period of custody and upon their release from custody to the end of the community intervention.

	BG & C Apr-Dec 09	Gwent Apr- Dec 09	Wales Apr- Dec 09	BG & C Apr- Dec 10	Gwent Apr- Dec 10	Wales Apr- Dec 10	BG & C Apr- Dec 11	Gwent Apr- Dec 11	Wales Apr- Dec 11
Number of YP with closed disposals	156	409	1980	160	389	1919	141	386	1678
Suitable accommodation before the start	151	378	1866	153	357	1792	135	365	1561
Suitable accommodation at the end	153	388	1893	150	357	1798	138	365	1568
% point change all sentences: start versus end	1.3%	2.4%	1.4%	-1.9%	0.0%	0.3%	2.1%	0.0%	0.4%
Number of YP with closed custodial sentence	18	42	207	11	29	167	7	26	148
Suitable accommodation before the start	15	28	146	8	15	122	4	16	106
Suitable accommodation at end of the licence	17	38	187	9	25	148	6	19	126
% point change all sentences: start versus end	11.1%	23.8%	19.8%	9.1%	34.5%	15.6%	28.6%	11.5%	13.5%

The above table indicates service level agreements and practice has positively impacted on accommodation provision for young people along with the YOSs close collaboration with children's services it has resulted in young people accessing safe and suitable accommodation.

The YOS ensures strong partnership links with children's services, supporting people, housing and voluntary sector providers through regular liaison and attendance at a number of accommodation forums. During the past 12 months, there has been significant development in the availability of accommodation provision in the Caerphilly area by the commissioning of a 17-bed unit managed by the voluntary sector. There has also been development Gwent wide regarding the provision of an 8-bed specialist unit in the Newport area, which is accessible for all vulnerable Gwent young people.

The Lambeth and Southwark judgement has resulted in young people leaving the secure estate with suitable accommodation in place. This reflects excellent partnership working across both boroughs.

Table 6: Substance Misuse (WYJI6)- Wales Only Measure

This measure considers all those who are referred to the YOS Substance Misuse Worker following the Case Manager's generic Asset assessment as requiring a specialist assessment. This specialist assessment is required to commence within 5 days. The measure also considers whether those requiring treatment commence this within an appropriate time frame.

	BG & C Apr- Dec 09	Gwent Apr- Dec 09	Wales Apr- Dec 09	BG & C Apr- Dec 10	Gwent Apr- Dec 10	Wales Apr- Dec 10	BG & C Apr- Dec 11	Gwent Apr- Dec 11	Wales Apr- Dec 11
Number of YP requiring assessment	51	134	895	57	104	671	41	77	573
Number commencing within 5 days	50	133	750	57	104	573	41	77	509
% commencing within 5 days	98.0%	99.3%	83.8%	100%	100%	85.4%	100%	100%	88.8%
Number of YP requiring treatment	37	109	703	22	65	546	35	60	482
Number commencing within 10 days	37	109	671	21	64	513	35	60	458
% commencing within 10 days	100%	100%	95.4%	95.4%	98.5%	94.0%	100%	100%	95%

The above table demonstrates that all substance misuse assessments over the past 2 years have been commenced within the 5 day target, which exceeds the Wales average. In relation to treatment targets, the YOS have performed very well with only 1 young person in 3 years not accessing the treatment within 10 days. This was due to the young persons treatment being assessed as requiring a higher level of service, which was provided by an external agency therefore delays occurred. The YOS substance misuse worker provides assessment and treatment for Tier 1 and Tier 2 services only.

The YOS substance misuse worker is also an integral member of the Drug and Alcohol Youth Service (DAYS) panel, which is the single referral route for young people to access substance misuse services across the boroughs. During 2012, Level 2 substance misuse awareness training was delivered to all YOS staff to enhance their direct work with young people. A member of the management team sits on the local Substance Misuse Action Team (SMAT), which is a multi agency partnership strategic group that commissions, monitors and evaluates substance misuse services.

Section 3: Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly YOS Self Assessment

This section presents the findings from the self assessment process described in Section 1. It is structured into 7 sections:

- 3.1 Important factors impacting on YOS practice and self assessment findings
- 3.2 YOS practice associated with reducing First Time Entrants
- 3.3 YOS practice associated with reducing Re-offending
- 3.4 YOS practice associated with reducing the use of Custody
- 3.5 YOS practice associated with effective management of Safeguarding
- 3.6 YOS practice associated with effective management of Serious Harm
- 3.7 YOS practice associated with Restorative Justice, including victim work

It includes findings from a range of information sources identified in Section 1 – this has been structured to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. The priority actions included in the 2012-14 Improvement Plan (Section 4) are drawn directly from the identified areas for improvement.

3.1 Factors impacting on YOS practice and self assessment findings

There are a number of factors arising from the analysis that, whilst not a direct comment on practice, will have a significant impact on the self assessment findings (e.g. workload trends, risk distribution). These are presented below and should be taken into consideration when reviewing the findings.

FACTORS IMPACTING ON PRACTICE – SUMMARY

The below table indicates that the number of court based interventions commencing has reduced along with the number of young people commencing a statutory intervention. This is a very positive trend.

When undertaking self assessments whether via case audits or data collection the YOS had to include data from two separate databases which did not draw a parallel with each other. In recognition of this and other considerations the YOS has now moved from using two databases to one. This will allow for, amongst many things, more robust recording and data collection.

When collating and reviewing participation feedback it became evident that improvement could be made in how the YOS gathered feedback in a systematic manner to further support the ability to compare trends with previous quarters, years etc. The YOS has now included participation mechanisms and feedback into its performance framework to inform analysis and comparison.

It is also important to note that the self assessment mechanisms only measures and evidences some aspects of the work completed by YOS staff.

RISK PROFILE – PUBLIC PROTECTION – SERIOUS HARM

	2008	2009	2010	2011
% of start assessments with YP of med/high risk serious harm	25 High (9%) 66 Med (24%)	2 V High (0.8%) 29 High (12%) 67 Med (28%)	28 High (13%) 43 Med (19%)	15 High (7%) 52 Med (24%)

SERIOUS HARM

The above table demonstrates a small reduction in the percentage of young people being assessed as medium or high risk of serious harm at the start of an intervention or Order.

Although court workloads are reducing, this is not reflected in the number of young people who are presenting as being a medium to high risk of serious harm at the start of an assessment. It is acknowledged that a proportion of young people involved with the YOS on statutory interventions are presenting with more complex issues in terms of their potential risk of serious harm to others and their vulnerability.

It is of note that the percentage of cases deemed to be high risk of serious harm in 2011 has reduced from previous years, and in particular there has been a marked fall of 6% in comparison with 2010. During 2010 a larger number of cases received custodial sentences in Crown Court for serious crimes, compared with 2011 when there were fewer numbers. Consequently, there has been a 5% increase from year 2010 to 2011 for cases initially assessed as medium risk of serious harm.

Good multi-agency working relationships with information sharing protocols are in place to effectively manage assessed risk of serious harm.

RISK PROFILE – SAFEGUARDING - VULNERABILITY

	2008	2009	2010	2011
% of start assessments with YP of med/high risk vulnerability	3 V High (1%) 24 High (9%) 82 Med (30%)	34 High (14.1%) 68 Med (28%)	2 V High (1%) 24 High (11%) 48 Med (22%)	15 High (7%) 50 Med (23%)

Safeguarding (Vulnerability)

The above table demonstrates that the number of cases deemed to have very high safeguarding needs are very few in number during 2008-2011, with no cases at this level in 2011. During 2010/11 the number of cases deemed to have high safeguarding needs also reduced in number. Medium cases have remained static across 2008 - 11, which evidences robust assessments and greater consideration of the management of safeguarding. The YOS has strengthened its safeguarding practices by ensuring all relevant staff are trained and assessments and plans reflect safeguarding needs. Safeguarding is now an integral component of the performance framework. Collaboration between YOS and Children Services is now in place along with other partners to ensure resources are utilised effectively and needs met.

The YOS Inspection in 2010 found that significant improvement was required in respect of management oversight for cases assessed as medium and high risk of serious harm and vulnerability, as well as associated management plans being completed in a timely manner. Since that time, processes have been put in place for managers to have oversight of Risk Of Serious Harm (ROSHs), Risk Management Plans (RMPs) and Vulnerability Management Plans (VMPs), which require managers' countersignatory. There has been a significant reduction in the number of ROSHs, RMPs and VMPs, which do not have management oversight. There is now a system in place whereby regular checks are made to ensure that any unsigned ROSHs, RMPs and VMPs are brought to the attention of the Operational Manager. Very high and high risk cases go before a monthly risk panel for discussion and oversight of the RMP and VMP; the risk panel is chaired by an Operational Manager.

3.2 Reducing First Time Entrants

STRENGTHS

- YISP is the main prevention service; it has been in place since January 2007 and receives referrals from key partners. In 2009, Blaenau Gwent County Borough modelled its Team Around the Child (TAC) pilot on YISP. The success of the pilot resulted in a merger of the two panels in 2010; this practice continues and arrangements are further developing. Caerphilly County Borough launched its Team Around the Family (TAF) model in January 2012 and whilst our service gives full and equitable support to TAF, YISP panel members are fully committed to the continuation of YISP as a separate function whilst TAF services are embedded. To date, the YISP service has worked with 390 young people on bespoke, 6 month programmes of work. 30 of these have been issued with Final Warnings; 17 of the 30 were 16 and 17 year olds on programmes between January 2007 and March 2008. The upper limit of the criterion for age was reduced to 15 yrs in March 2008 and this has seen improved levels of engagement and a reduction in the number of young people who go on to commit offences. Of the 13 who offended following programmes from March 2008, the offences were committed

more than 9 months after the YISP programme ended. Qualitative feedback on the service is requested at the end of the intervention. Between January and June 2012, 18 cases have closed, all were 6 month programmes. In 16 of these cases, the young people told us that their workers were supportive throughout the intervention, 2 stated that their workers were quite supportive; their parents scored the service between 1 – 5 with 16 awarding maximum scores of 5 and 2 scoring the service as 4.

- The Restorative Justice Disposal (RJD) was introduced in January 2011, following consultation with Gwent Police. On the lead up to the launch of the RJD, the YOS developed marketing materials and training presentations; the police service advised that it would take forward the training of its staff group. It was anticipated that RJD referrals would exceed the numbers of final warnings and also have a positive impact on FTE figures. However, 2011 realised low referral rates for RJDs; a total of 31, with only 4 of these from Blaenau Gwent. With the agreement and co-operation of Gwent police, the YOS based police officers attended all shift briefings to raise awareness of RJDs. To date, referral rates for 2012 have increased by more than 100% (January – May 2011 realised 12 referrals, the same period this year realised 25 referrals). At the end of this intervention, information on service provision is requested plus comments from young people regarding future offending. Between January and June 2012, only 1 young person told us that he did not know if he would consider further offending, all others stated that they would not; 3 young people commented that the service had been “quite helpful” the majority classed it as “really helpful.” Support workers have the option to refer cases to YISP if there is a need for further support; to date this has happened in two cases.
- There has been a steady reduction in the number of ABC referrals from both local authority areas. In 2011 there was a total of 29 ABCs. The first 6 months of 2012 has seen a further reduction with only 9 referrals received. This has had an impact on the Promise Project, a volunteer led, mentor scheme which is available to young people who are at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour. The Volunteer Co-ordinators who supervise the scheme have introduced a Strike 2, pre ABC diversion programme. The main referral conduit is via the police at present but there are plans to involve other services; between January and June 2012, there were 5 referrals. With an excess of 90 volunteers trained to fulfil the Promise Project role, there is a need to revisit our training provision short term, so as to engage this voluntary work force in alternative areas of YOS business.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Ongoing awareness raising and training with Gwent Police colleagues to ensure appropriate referrals are made for YISP and Promise Project interventions, ABCs and RJDs. Cyclical reviews of the FTE Reduction Plan will highlight the need for this work to be completed.
- Use of the Promise Project needs to be maximised by promoting and increasing referral routes via Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), Youth Workers (outreach), Community Wardens, Social Workers and TAF.
- Further development of all pre ABC programmes
- The approach to anti-social behaviour across both boroughs is inconsistent; work needs to be done to improve the approach and referral rates.

3.3 Reducing Re-offending

STRENGTHS

- The service is a well resourced YOS with a range of interventions available to support the plan in place for the young person. Work is currently ongoing to catalogue these resources into a ' library'. Our resources are available for use by partner agencies and other social service directorates if needed.
- Strong multi agency partnership links allow the service to provide crime prevention programmes in local communities, such as Kiddo's Choice, Phoenix Project and the Vehicle Crime Awareness Day. The vast range of interventions available means we can best reflect the preferred learning style of the young person.
- All staff have been trained in Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Supervision (APIS). These skills ensure that risk factors are identified through assessment and an individualised intervention plan is formulated to target interventions where they are most needed.
- In order to meet the assessed needs of the young people, we have dedicated specialist workers who can work directly with a young person on specific issues. This can relate to lack of constructive use of leisure time, therefore a referral will be made to a youth worker. Likewise, substance misuse and emotional or mental health issues can be assessed via our in-house substance misuse worker or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). If a young person is not engaged in any form of education or training, we have a dedicated worker who can offer support and increase motivation to engage in training/employment. It is recognised that an holistic approach needs to be adopted to best support a young person, therefore family support services are offered when needed via the YOS family worker.
- The increased focus on the prevention and early intervention services, such as RJDs, means that young people are being diverted away from antisocial or criminal behaviour before they officially enter the criminal justice system.
- Young people who receive a final warning from the police are also given the opportunity to work on assessed areas of need on a time limited programme. This programme is designed to reduce risk factors associated with the likelihood of further offending behaviour.
- Increased focus on RJ and adopting motivational interviewing techniques increases the chance of positive outcomes for young people.
- Over recent years there has been more emphasis placed upon developing meaningful and effective exit strategies. This allows the young person to continue with the positive changes made after YOS intervention has ended, but they continue to feel supported in the community. It is imperative that the exit strategies are sustainable within the community.
- The service has strong partnership links with children's services and the police. The YOS is represented at regular Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Priority Prolific Offender (PPO) meetings. Additionally, the service is represented within the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) meetings. All of these connections ensure robust oversight of young people who are most at risk of re-offending.
- When a young person's intervention is due to come to an end, their views are sought via ViewPoint, an electronic database. Part of this survey relates to the young person reflecting on their perceived likelihood of re-offending and what elements of their lives have changed to ensure they do not offend again.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Outcomes from the Re-offending Analysis Project that Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly are taking part in via a YJB & Welsh Government project looking at mapping the most prolific offenders (25 offences or more) across Wales need to be implemented.
- To move forward with the resource library. When the cataloguing has been completed, a staff development day will be arranged to ensure all staff members are aware of the available YOS resources and how they correlate to learning styles.
- Communication/Planning meeting at start of intervention with all workers involved will ensure interventions are targeted and sequenced appropriately in accordance with assessed need and priority.
- To provide training on how diversity issues can impact on the likelihood of re-offending. Diversity can then be incorporated into assessment, planning and interventions.
- Exit strategies in some areas are difficult due to lack of resources/geographical limitations in local communities. The YOS will continue to build on sustainable exit strategies for young people. This will be achieved by close partnership working with statutory, voluntary and third sector providers to develop community networks. An element of the difficulty in this area is related to the short term funding of projects in a tough financial climate.

3.4 Reducing the use of Custody

STRENGTHS

- The YOS continues to have a strong and productive working relationship with Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Services (HMCTS) and particularly with the Magistracy. This has been achieved through regular attendance by YOS at Court User Group meetings and also at Magistrates' Youth Panel Training events. Such meetings enable discussions and joint learning to take place, which creates a more effective understanding of each others' roles with regard to the sentencing outcomes of young people. Consequently, effective communication between agencies results in the Magistracy having confidence and an understanding of the sentence proposals within pre-sentence reports.
- Magistrates are asked to complete "sentencer feedback forms" in respect of YOS representation in Court and particularly with regard to the quality of the Pre-Sentence Reports, which were completed to aid sentencing. This allows Magistrates to identify any areas for improvement in practice, make comments on the quality of reports, and explain why the Magistrates may have elected not to go along with the recommendation within a report.
- During the period April 2010 to March 2012, the forms completed and returned only represented approximately one third of the cases in court. From those forms returned, it was evident that the majority of Magistrates found the quality of Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) "Good", with approximately one third of reports thought of as excellent, and a high percentage of cases have resulted in the PSR author's recommendations being imposed.
- When the Youth Court has completed business at the end of the day, there is a feedback session held between the Magistrates, the legal advisor and the YOS officer, and this allows for both positive feedback to be shared as well as an opportunity to discuss any particular issues arising from the day. If there are any notable areas of good practice or an issue

that needs to be shared, this is normally raised in a timely fashion by the Principal Legal Advisor with the Operational Manager (or vice versa). This arrangement assists with learning and development and ensuring good practice is maintained between agencies for best possible outcomes for young people in the youth justice system.

- There is a consistent core of YOS officers who attend court on a regular basis, and this has benefited working relationships between the Magistracy and YOS officers because it has strengthened communication, especially with regard to feedback sessions at the end of the working day in Youth Court.
- Following the introduction of the Criminal Justice & Immigration Act 2008, HMCTS delivered joint training to Magistrates and Youth Offending Services in respect of the new change and the introduction of the YRO, which commenced in November 2009. A major factor in the new Order was the availability of specific requirements to address the risks of re-offending, and the focus was upon enabling the young people to comply with the Court Order. Therefore a YOS officer could return to court to vary the requirements of the order to assist with compliance and, as far as possible, assist in preventing the imposition of custodial sentences for non-compliance. The 2008 Act placed emphasis on persistent and wilful non-compliance with regard to custodial sentences being imposed for breach of an Order. It was recognised that in the majority of cases, short term custodial sentences were not successful in preventing re-offending, and these were usually imposed for young people who were before the court for breach of the orders. This revised partnership emphasis on persistent and wilful non-compliance, along with custody being a last resort for offending behaviour, has resulted in Magistrates and YOS officers striving together to deliver alternative, yet effective community based sentences for young people. With all stakeholders working together with a common purpose of reducing the use of custody, there have been fewer numbers of young people serving a sentence in the secure estate since the introduction of the new Act.
- Consequently, this means that report writers have needed to improve their assessment skills in identifying risks of re-offending, along with the risks of serious harm and how best to manage those identified risks in the community. Within the YOS, APIS training has been delivered to all staff during 2010 in an effort to ensure that the quality of such work is improved, and maintained. The benefit of such training has resulted in Magistrates having confidence in the YOS's assessments and ability to manage risks in the community, and reduce re-offending through a range of intervention programmes.
- There is a recently revised Gwent Service Level Agreement in place, which has been agreed by all 3 Gwent YOSs, HMCTS, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Emergency Duty Team (EDT), with regard to joint agency working arrangements and the provision of services. It is notable that this also includes not only agreements with regard to the provision of court reports, but also with regard to the timely matter of dealing with young people in the court room cells, especially in adult and remand courts, and recognising that they are children in an adult environment. Having an agreement in place is helpful for both the Magistracy and YOS officers with regard to clarifying good practice; for example no young person should be sentenced to custody without a pre-sentence report which provides an offence analysis, assessment of the young person, risks to the community and self, and a sentence proposal based on the assessment.
- All pre-sentence reports are quality assured by peers within the Court and Supervision Team, and if custody has been indicated as inevitable by a court (whether in Magistrates or Crown Court) or the report writer is indicating custody due to no community sentence being viable as a result of risk factors and the seriousness of the offences, then the report is quality assured by an Operational Manager.

- In evaluating the data for the period April to December 2011, there were 6 young people sentenced to custody, and 4 cases were within the Crown Court arena as a result of the serious nature of the offences, and custody was deemed inevitable in 3 cases, with 2 young people being remanded to custody prior to sentencing. The YOSs congruence rate for that same period is 84%, with recommendations being followed in 51 cases from a total of 61 pre-sentence reports submitted to the court.
- The YOS has a consistent and robust approach to non-compliance, returning the young person to court for any instances of breach.
- During 2012, the YOS has continued to develop the restorative justice practices and principles and an example of this was in April 2010² when a young person received a custodial sentence for a violent offence. The YOS recommended a restorative conference, as both victim and young person were willing to meet, and the young person wished to take up the opportunity of being able to apologise in person to the victim, for the harm he had inflicted. Consequently, the sentencing court was eager for this process to proceed, and the YOS facilitated a restorative conference between the victim and the young person within the custodial establishment. Furthermore, the young person's willingness to take part in this programme of work resulted in a lesser sentence being imposed.
- Since October 2011, the YOS has had an in-house Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Team (ISS) as opposed to a Gwent wide resource. This has served to aid communication between report writers/case managers and ISS officers, in identifying and producing a tailor made ISS requirement as an effective alternative to custody.
- The YOS has good working links with the Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly's Leaving Care Teams and Children's Services Teams, and works in partnership to source appropriate accommodation for young people who are no longer living with parents or carers, possibly as a result of their offending behaviour.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although all YOS officers have received APIS training, there is a need to continually monitor and evaluate this core work, to ensure quality is maintained. The YOS's Quality Assurance process is integral to identifying areas for improvement, training and development, either for an individual or for a team and Service.
- Consequently, through the Quality Assurance Process, it has been identified that there is room for improvement with regard to assessment and planning at the report writing stage. Report writers would benefit from including all YOS workers involved in delivering an intervention programme, eg substance misuse, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Youth Workers, Support Workers at this initial stage. Discussions with all identified workers at the assessment stages would assist greatly in producing recommendations to the court which are tailor made to address the young person's needs, and thus identifying at what stages each component/requirement will commence in the community. It is believed that this will strengthen both public and the courts' confidence in the work that is undertaken by the YOS to prevent re-offending and robustly manage risk of serious harm in the community.
- Following on from the report writing stage, once a community sentence is imposed, then the case manager needs to galvanise on the planning which took place prior to sentencing, and ensure that all those involved in delivering the components are aware of who does what, when and why, and not forgetting to include the young person and parent in

this process.

- To continue to increase the use of restorative justice as an effective intervention to prevent re-offending. The YOS has convened a number of positive and productive restorative conferences in 2012, one of which was in the secure estate, and we will strive to engage the confidence and willingness of victims and young people in this meaningful process.
- To continue to work in partnership with Children's Services, Supporting People and other agencies to source, and fund appropriate accommodation for young people who are at risk of being remanded to custody due to the absence of a suitable bail address.
- Furthermore, the YOS will continually strive to offer bail support packages, where appropriate, in order to prevent young people from being remanded to custody. The YOS will shortly be utilising the Youth Justice Board's Remand Toolkit, and will also be undertaking a review of our Bail and Remand process and service for young people.
- The YOS will soon be introducing "compliance panels", whereby a meeting is convened with the young person and parent(s), and is chaired by an Operational Manager to discuss the concerns around compliance, and together identify ways of enabling the young person to abide by the conditions of their order. This will take place after the second instance of non-compliance, and we plan for this to be introduced in September 2012.
- The YOS will continue to work to strengthen resettlement plans for young people leaving the secure estate.

3.5 Managing Safeguarding

STRENGTHS

- The Service Manager of the YOS is supervised jointly by Heads of Children's Services in both Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent local authorities. Furthermore, the YOS is an integral part of the Children's Services staff group. As such YOS staff attend children services staff briefings, managers' meetings and joint training events. This enables a better understanding of roles and responsibilities between the two services.
- The YOS Service Manager attends the following across both boroughs': Children and Young People Partnership Boards, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Gwent MAPPA Strategic Management Board, Community Safety Strategic Management Groups, Gwent Regional Safeguarding Training sub group and Priority Outcome One sub group linked to Caerphilly's Children & Young Peoples Partnership. The Service Manager also sits on the Gwent Criminal Justice System (CJS) Strategy group.
- The YOS Service Manager also attends the Blaenau Gwent Local Safeguarding Children Boards Business Operations sub group. This group has produced safeguarding cards and manuals and guidance regarding self harm and suicide. It has also produced a DVD called "Operation Thistle", which addresses sexual exploitation.
- There is a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place between YOS and both boroughs Children's Services.
- A YOS Senior Practitioner sits on the Caerphilly County Borough Councils Local Safeguarding Children Board Practitioners Forum sub group. Over the past 6 months the YOS has facilitated an event in both boroughs called "Youth offending service and its links to safeguarding children and young people", which raised awareness about how the YOS works in partnership regarding children who place themselves at risk of harm. These events will be repeated during 2013.

- The YOS has a senior practitioner sitting on the Local Safeguarding Children Boards audit and quality assurance sub groups in Caerphilly.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Boards have audit processes in place across both boroughs, which involve YOS cases and staff.
- YOS staff attend safeguarding meetings across both boroughs and provide reports for those meetings.
- There have been no Serious Case Reviews or Y J B Serious Incident Reports involving young people involved with the YOS during the past 12 months in respect of vulnerability.
- The YOS undertakes an annual audit of compliance with the Children Act 2004 (Section 28 audit). The YOS reports on and analyses the effectiveness of its internal safeguarding arrangements and how they work in a multi agency way when safeguarding concerns are present.
- All YOS staff and volunteers have enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and are subject to robust recruitment processes. CRBs are renewed every 3 years.
- All YOS staff have initial, refresher and ongoing safeguarding training provided on a Gwent multiagency basis.
- YOS has access to both Children's Services databases. Gwent Police Officers seconded to the YOS also have access to a Police National Computer (PNC) based in the YOS.
- The YOS is involved in local prevention provision across both local authorities such as TAF, YISP, and ASB where emerging needs are identified, which include safeguarding concerns.
- The YOS has recently undertaken a safeguarding audit on a number of cases to aid ongoing learning and development.
- The YOS quality assurance (QA) processes include safeguarding.
- In response to 'Who's Looking Out For The Children' thematic inspection, the YOS has developed a partnership plan which included the creation of a Gwent wide Appropriate Adult (AA) protocol, evaluation forms for young people receiving an AA service from the YOS and a need for the YOS to review and amend the AA training programme. These actions have been completed.
- The YOS ensures safeguarding practices are robust when supporting young people entering the secure estate and throughout their sentence. The YOS has strong partnership working with the secure estate.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The YOS needs to develop and undertake victim safety assessments.
- All assessments and VMPs need to be reviewed in a timely manner and be fit for purpose.
- The YOS assessments need to evidence more robustly how vulnerability impacts on offending
- To recognise diversity and how the associated issues can impact on safeguarding.
- Staff need to attend all mandatory cyclical safeguard training to ensure continued professional development.
- The evidencing and recording of safeguarding interventions undertaken by the YOS needs to be more robust.

3.6 Managing Risk of Serious Harm

STRENGTHS

- Risk management panels are held monthly to discuss and review management plans. The panel consists of an operational manager, a senior practitioner, and case manager.
- All YOS staff who are involved in the case are also invited to attend the risk panel. This allows for all parties to participate in the RMP to effectively manage and reduce the identified risk factors.
- Representatives from external agencies who are also working with the young person are invited to attend the panel and contribute to the plan. There have been no serious incident reports or reviews in respect of young people presenting a risk of serious harm to others during 2011/12.
- High and very high risk panels are held monthly for all assessed cases.
- Support from administrative staff at risk panels, with minutes or pertinent issues and actions being recorded.
- During the last quarter of 2012 the YOS conducted 6 Case Audits. The audit highlighted that in 5 out of those 6 cases there was evidence of management oversight regarding ROSH completion to a sufficient standard, and the production of a RMP in a timely fashion.
- The YOS management team has resolved to conduct 20 full case audits every year, in its endeavours to produce quality assessments and identify areas for practice improvement; and these findings are then shared with teams across the YOS.
- YOS has strong partnership links with Multi agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- The YOS has a Risk Management Strategy

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Following a workshop with all YOS staff, it was acknowledged that there is a variance between teams and sometimes workers with regard to assessing risk of serious harm, even after following the Youth Justice Board's criteria. Therefore, it was agreed that refresher training would be useful.
- To develop the current monthly Risk Panel process, to encourage more active participation and attendance from our partner agencies in managing risk of serious harm in the community.
- RMPs need to be improved in respect of identifying who will do certain aspects of work, and build in review dates to assess progress. There needs to be evidence that work is being done to manage and, as far as possible, reduce the identified risks.
- To develop a consistent recording process for evidencing management discussions and actions in respect of risk of serious harm cases.
- The case audits also highlighted one case where the ROSH was not countersigned and a RMP was not completed at the initial PSR stage. Therefore the YOS needs to continue to develop a more robust process for identifying ROSHs and RMPs that have not been countersigned by managers.
- To review YOS Risk Management Strategy.

3.7 Restorative Justice

STRENGTHS

A dedicated Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) is integral to the success of restorative justice (RJ) development and practice. The VLO is a police officer seconded to the YOS from Gwent Police. In 2011, 329 victims were identified within our service area, of these 144 (43.8%) elected to participate in the RJ process. A questionnaire was completed by 91 of the 144 victims, with 75% stating that they were satisfied with the service received and the outcome. A further 23% stated that they were very satisfied.

During the period April to June 2012, 74 victims were identified and every effort was made to contact them, either by phone or letter. Thirty-two victims (43.2%) chose to participate in some element of the restorative process, which far exceeds the target set at 25%. Eighteen of the 32 victims completed a satisfaction questionnaire with 11.2% stating that they were satisfied and a further 88.8% stating that they were very satisfied, again exceeding the target set of 75%.

- In cases where a victim cannot be contacted or chooses to have no involvement with our service, we endeavour to ensure that the young person still completes work on victim awareness and the impact of their actions on others.
- 6 staff members are trained to facilitate RJ principles. A further 5 staff members have attended RJ training; this will be rolled out to the remainder of the staff group. As a consequence of this training, we aim to introduce RJ principles across all areas of the service. We anticipate that this will impact on the workload of the VLO.
- All new referral order panel members will receive RJ training as part of the 'panel matters' programme. Additionally, all existing panel members will receive RJ training. This approach will enhance the focus placed upon victims, ensuring better outcomes and satisfaction levels for all involved. One of the first moves towards a more restorative panel process has involved making changes to the referral order panel contract; this now includes a section dedicated to the views and requests of the victim.
- Following intensive RJ training, staff across Gwent continue to meet as a focus and development group for shared practice and resources.
- In 2008, the service developed a DVD resource to compliment the RJ work already being carried out. We continue to use this resource which has recently been incorporated into the website and training packages of the approved training provided by the RJ Council.
- In 2012, the YOS played an integral part in the development of the first Gwent wide RJ conference. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of how RJ principles can increase public confidence and community cohesion through victim involvement.
- Stringent quality assurance processes ensure that the quality of all intervention plans is monitored, thus giving oversight in respect of RJ and ensuring the voice of the victim is addressed.
- The YOS maintains an excellent working relationship with local victim support services.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- To introduce victim risk assessments. The VLO is currently considering the format and content taking guidance from the RJ

council and the Gwent RJ Forum. This will ensure common application throughout Gwent.

- To introduce victim case audits as part of the self-assessment process.
- Ensuring that work is completed at the pace of the victim, or when the victim is ready. A robust reviewing process will give victims the opportunity to engage with the RJ process at any stage during the young person's order; currently this option is made available at the start of the intervention only.
- To review literature provided to victims so as to ensure the information reflects RJ and provides the details needed.
- To increase the number of victims represented at panel.
- Encourage and promote "good news" stories within both local authorities to emphasise the importance of RJ and the positive impact it can have for the victim and young person.
- To ensure all staff and panel members are trained in RJ principles.

Section 4: The Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly YOS 2012-14 Improvement Plan

REDUCING FIRST TIME ENTRANTS		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Consolidate and improve work with Gwent Police and partners to increase the number of referrals for preventative services. An FTE Reduction Plan is in place and all actions are reviewed cyclically.	Operational Manager Specialist And Support (SAS) Team	31.03.2013
Promote the Promise Project to target groups PCSOs, Youth Workers (outreach), Community Wardens, Social Workers and TAF via partnership events across both boroughs.	Volunteer Co-ordinators	31.03.2013
Further develop all pre Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)	Operational Manager Referral Order And Community Solution Team (ROACST)	30.06.2013
REDUCING RE-OFFENDING		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
To move forward with a reference resource library of interventions available to target identified needs. Following on from this resource library, a staff development event to promote and utilise all available resources.	Operational Manager Court And	31.03.2013

	Supervision Team (CAST)	
Consolidate and strengthen community networks to further develop effective, sustainable exit strategies for young people.	All YOS Staff	31.03.2013
To further develop communication and planning meetings at the start of interventions with young people. This will form part of the training agenda to be delivered to all staff in December 2012.	Operational Managers	31.12.2012
To provide training on diversity	Operational Managers	30.04.2013
REDUCING THE USE OF CUSTODY		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
To consider and include appropriate restorative justice disposals in all pre-sentence reports for cases where a victim has been identified.	Operational Managers	01.10.2012
Commence Compliance Panels as deemed appropriate in order to prevent breach action.	Operational Managers	01.10.2012
Training with regard to YOS officers joint planning and sequencing of interventions will take place later this year.	Operational Managers	31.12.2012
To undertake a review of the Bail and Remand process in the YOS, through the use of the YJB Toolkit.	Operational Managers	01.03.2013
Strengthen resettlement plans for young people leaving the secure estate.	Operational Managers	01.03.2013
EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Ensure the findings from current and future safeguarding audits are actioned.	YOS Management Team	01.09.2012 and ongoing
Review and revise the current working protocol between the YOS and Children's Services.	YOS Management Team	31.10.2012
Develop and implement victim safety assessments.	Operational Manager SAS and VLO	28.02.2013
Provide training for all staff on completing effective VMPs and evidencing safeguarding work.	Operational Managers	31.12.2012
Ensure all YOS staff and volunteers attend all necessary safeguarding training including the Local	Operational	01.09.2012

Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) training.	Managers	and ongoing
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SERIOUS HARM		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Deliver Risk Training to all YOS Officers during 2012, to assist assessing officers in determining what is serious harm and the level of seriousness.	Operational Manager CAST	31.12.2012
To ensure RMPs are fit for purpose, and they are routinely shared with partner agencies. To ensure RMP objectives are rigorously reviewed and appropriate work is being carried out to manage identified risk.	All Operational Managers	31.12.2012
Review YOS Risk Management Strategy	YOS Management Team	31.10.2012
VICTIM SERVICES		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Ensure all staff and panel members are trained in RJ principles. Staff training event booked for October 2012, panel member training booked for November 2012.	Operational Manager, ROACST	30.11.2012
To increase the number of 'good news' stories in relation to RJ. Each manager will be responsible for promoting a story via corporate communications on a monthly basis.	Operational Managers	31.10.2012 and ongoing.
Research and develop a victim risk assessment for participation in direct RJ work.	Operational Manager, SAS and VLO	28.02.2013
Review the victim questionnaire with the aim of increasing the number of forms returned.	Operational Manager, SAS and VLO	28.02.2013

Section 5: YOS Partnership and Local Management Board Self Assessment sign-off

Local Management Board Chair		
Name	Signature	Date
Mr Albert Heaney		19 th September 2012