

# **Misspent YOTs?**

**An Examination of the Policy Intentions of the  
*Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and Outcomes for  
Joined Up Youth Justice.**

**Ph.D Thesis**

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**November 2005**

## Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful daughters Julie, Katie and Emily, who are the wind beneath my wings, and to the memories of my Dad, John Tonge, who taught me to fly, and Lauren who gave me a reason.

Many people must be credited for their contribution to this work. I am grateful to each and every member of the Youth Offending Teams who offered me their time and were willing to share their experiences with me. Special thanks are due to my supervisor Peter Marsh, Professor of Child and Family Welfare, University of Sheffield for his endless patience, support and wisdom – I can now think in pictures; Clive 'it's only a draft' Norris, Professor of Sociology, University of Sheffield for stepping in on the last leg of the journey to offer his valuable additional perspective and Katie Barratt for tenacious proof reading.

I am also grateful to Research in Practice for offering me a safe haven to become a student again. Research in Practice is a creative network of more than 100 participating agencies and local consortia that aims to increase the ability of services in education, health and social care to use research to improve outcomes for children and families. It is a department of the Dartington Hall Trust and is run in collaboration with the Association of Directors of Social Services and the University of Sheffield.

## **Misspent YOTs? An Examination of the Policy Intentions of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and Outcomes for Joined Up Youth Justice**

### **Abstract**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 launched a new joined up youth justice system for England and Wales, which epitomised the policy themes and aspirations of a New Labour government. This thesis examines the YOT model to assess how successfully the policy intentions of the 1998 Act have been enacted.

YOTs were intended as an exemplar of joined up team practice, integrating professional skills and knowledge towards a common service user focused goal, and promoting interdependency through partnership. New Labour's policy themes often conflict however and implementation has not been easy. The problem of youth offending and solutions to it are capable of being interpreted in many different ways by power holders. The YOT model appears to have been built upon flawed assumptions about what teams are, and what they are capable of achieving in the absence of fundamental changes to how the public sector is organised and managed. YOTs do not have the authority to sustain the high level of interdependency required of them and they lack many of the characteristics of effective teams. There is uncertainty about what interprofessional practice is and how it can be facilitated.

Youth justice professionals have demonstrated that dynamic interprofessional team practice is possible, and has the potential to deliver joined up youth offending services. It will be argued however that the changes introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 lacked a clear philosophical foundation. The weaknesses of the YOT model, and the muddled language of the joined up imperative, demonstrate the difficulty of attempting to launch multiple changes in a conceptual vacuum. The new youth justice system may disadvantage growing numbers of children and young people, while failing to achieve its main aim of reducing youth crime. The continued support of youth justice practitioners is not guaranteed.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction and Outline of the Thesis

#### Introduction

This thesis considers the outcomes for joined up youth justice that have resulted from the policy intentions of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* through an examination of the multi-agency team model of Youth Offending Teams. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) became fully operational in April 2000, at the forefront of a restructured and refocused new youth justice system for England and Wales, launched by the 1998 Act.

Two key policy intentions of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* were to reduce many of the barriers that may have impeded cooperative responses to youth offending in the past and to refocus collective effort on preventing youth crime, rather than simply responding to it. The Act provided comprehensive guidance to organisations, teams and practitioners about their functions and responsibilities in the new organisational structure. Although the concept of multi-agency partnership is not new, a crucial aspect of the legislation was that it placed numerous professional organisations under a statutory obligation to join together. While it is not unusual for teams in the public sector to sometimes include one or two members from different professional backgrounds, YOTs were required to include a highly diverse spectrum of professions in their membership. Unusually the teams were formed to be the responsibility of local youth offending partnerships rather than any one public sector organisation. There are aspects of a YOT's structure and organisation that are unique.

#### Background

The researcher's interest in youth offending stems from experience early in her career teaching young people excluded from school, and adolescent boys in secure accommodation. She went on to accumulate many years of experience as an adult and youth court magistrate and as the manager of a multi-professional team providing regional community services for deafblind children, adults and their

families. A recurring theme throughout her career has been the frequency with which a range of organisational, professional, personal and political barriers prevent the development of joined up solutions to the joined up life problems of people who do not readily fit into what is offered by mainstream services. The consequences for service users with the most complex of needs of the apparent inability of professionals and professional organisations to cross boundaries can sometimes be tragic. The launch of YOTs offered a valuable opportunity to explore the potential and the limits of multi-agency practice in a new youth justice system that had been comprehensively remodelled to facilitate joining up.

While individual experience can rarely be generalised and is necessarily rooted in personal values and bias, the background of an author can contribute to pre-understanding. Gummesson (2000) proposed that pre-understanding accrues from previous exposure to the phenomenon being researched, and can help to determine how to approach the topic. It was Gummesson's view that over reliance on academic theory as a starting point for a research inquiry might lead the inquiry in a direction that is irrelevant for practitioners. The researcher held a high level of enthusiasm for both multi-agency teamwork and the policy aims of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. Many years of frontline practice experience did however suggest that there were often inconsistencies between policy aims and practice outcomes. New initiatives were rarely simple to operationalise and there often appeared to be considerable differences between the aspirations of teamwork and the experience of working in a team, particularly in the public sector.

Social policy over the past decade has subjected the public services to increasing demands for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness while organisations appear to be constantly reorganised in the search for optimum performance. New and apparently innovative methods of service delivery tend to come, and go, as national priorities change and focus shifts. Youth justice policy in England and Wales has been infused with competing demands, conflicting aspirations and confusing perspectives since its inception in the nineteenth century. Noticeably absent from debates concerning the future of youth offending services in England and Wales and how it should be structured was the voice of youth justice practitioners.

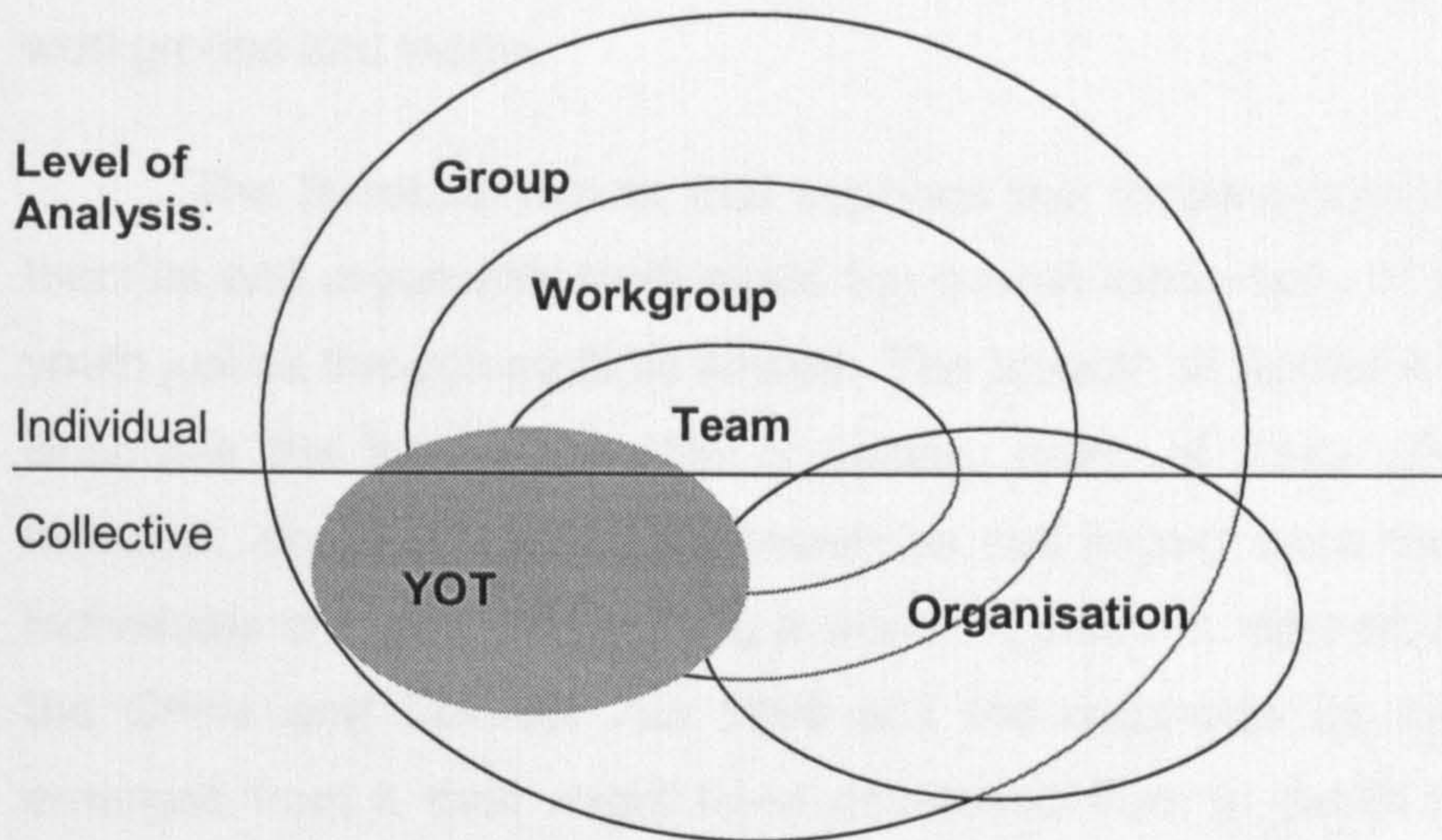
Two underpinning approaches to the thesis topic appeared to be highly important. The first was to deconstruct multi-agency youth offending teams to their constituent parts and to consider each aspect objectively on the basis of existing literature, particularly important where myth-like assumptions can accumulate around topics such as the potential of teamwork in the beleaguered public sector. The second was to seek an understanding of YOTs from the perspective of the practitioners and managers who work in them.

### **Locating literature**

YOTs had not been fully launched nationally when preparatory work for the thesis began late in 1999. There was little published work that directly concerned the model or the new youth justice system. An early decision was taken to attempt a fresh look at a new model of organising work in the public sector that was, as far as possible, unconstrained by acceptance of many contributory factors that may not be challenged often enough. A strategy of comparing a practice frontline view of YOTs with an extensive review of relevant literature offered the opportunity to ground theory in practice and identify gaps in knowledge. As a result a stronger emphasis is placed on a literature review in this thesis than might be expected from a thesis with an empirical study at its core.

The literature search strategy was to review work covering a wide range of disciplines to offer a comprehensive overview of the many factors that might influence the working environment of one team in the public sector. The search was approached on the basis that YOTs are teams, teams are workgroups and workgroups are human groups. Literature was included that focused on factors relevant to the individual experience and the collective experience of working in a YOT. It is possible that YOTs might also be characterised as small organisations and literature concerning organisations, and the management of teamwork by organisations was therefore also searched (see *Figure 1* below).

Figure 1 - The location of YOTs in literature



Literature was sought to inform four main areas of interest (see Figure 2 below) and it had been intended to approach each of these areas separately. It soon became apparent however that the quantity of material available was potentially overwhelming. Literature was dispersed across many academic disciplines and emerging themes overlapped from one area to another.

Figure 2 - Framework for the literature search

Area of relevance	Focus of literature search
The context and purpose of the work of YOTs	The structure of the new youth justice system, Political, historical and philosophical factors
The environment in which the YOTs work	Organisational and professional cultures, Organisational relations and management, Public service organisation and structures
The YOT working model	Factors affecting groups and workgroups, Teams as a specific form of workgroup, Multi-agency teams as complex workgroups or small organisations
YOT membership	Factors concerning individuals in groups and in groups at work, Professions, professionalism and working with other professionals

Literature sought to trace the organisational environment in which YOTs operated could be found in publications concerning the political, historical and philosophical drivers of the youth justice system as well as writing about the cultures of the professional organisations involved. Factors that might impact upon individual

team members could be located in the disciplines of behavioural and occupational psychology and in literature about professional and organisational culture, workgroups and teams.

The literature review that supports this thesis encompassed many intricate theories and arguments to illustrate the overall topography of joined up teamwork in youth justice through multiple lenses. The breadth of literature included in the review illustrates the interrelationship of issues, many of them with deeply entrenched historical, social and political dimensions that impact upon the YOT model and the individuals charged with making it work. A different view of the policy intentions of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and the outcomes for joined up youth justice emerged from it than might have developed from in depth research that focused simply on one aspect of the work of YOTs.

Literature reviews are rarely definitive but it is hoped that the effort and time given by more than 100 YOT managers and practitioners to describing the YOT model from their experience offers a further dimension to what remains, as yet, an undeveloped body of knowledge. Further information about the literature search is included in Appendix 1.

## **Organisation and outline of the thesis**

The central argument of this thesis is that many of the policy aims of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* have failed to achieve the outcomes intended. Some policy aims have had unintended consequences for stakeholders, other aims have been abandoned. The promise of interprofessional team practice may be one of the casualties of the over ambitious policy agenda of a political party that took 13 years, and a fundamental reinvention, to regain power in the United Kingdom. Few of the arguments that supported a radical reformation of the youth justice system in England and Wales in 1998 are unambiguous.

Chapters Two to Six of the thesis explore the principal factors that influence joined up youth justice and the YOT model. The following three chapters concern the fieldwork conducted to develop a frontline practice view of YOTs, culminating in a discussion of the findings in the light of the literature reviewed. The final thesis chapter reflects upon what outcomes have resulted from the policy intentions of the

*Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and what the implications of these might be for joined up youth justice and the future of YOTs.

Chapter Two of the thesis considers how the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* redefined the structure and organisation of youth justice in England and Wales, and the place, and function, of YOTs at the heart of the new system. The Government's assessment of the prevalence and seriousness of youth crime was pivotal to the surge of new legislation introduced by the 1998 Act aimed at consolidating a tough response to children who offend or who risk becoming involved in offending. An accurate or objective assessment of the problem of youth crime can however be elusive. Assessments of seriousness have largely responded to perceptions of risk held by the electorate, which bear little relationship to levels of detected crime or self-reported crime by children and young people. It will be argued that although the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was skilfully presented as a response to rising youth crime levels, it was primarily a response to changes in social organisation and a heightened fear of the risk of crime. Through the 1998 Act the nation's children, and youth justice practitioners, were drawn into a sweeping project of radical social reform that has not always had the consequences intended.

New Labour's vision for the United Kingdom developed slowly over almost two decades in opposition but was swiftly enacted on taking power. The pace of change since May 1997 has been relentless. The Government's key policy goals are discussed in Chapter Three. The influence of New Labour's *third way* and its commitment to joined up government and a highly developed form of managerialism reaches across the public sector. Their reform agenda however was epitomised in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and it is in the youth justice arena that fledgling ideology and policy ideals still in development have collided. YOTs are pursuing aims and pioneering new practices that, while appearing to have their roots in common sense, are weakly grounded. A central problem may be a false sense of security offered by new public managerialism, with its strong emphasis on the concept of evidence-based practice. It will be argued that managerialist strategies that present performance data as a value-free and definitive guide to practice disguise the vulnerability of evidence to manipulation by power holders. New Labour vigorously manages the presentation of policy, and the evidence that purports to support it.

The pragmatic realism of the *third way* is as susceptible to abuse as the political ideology of the left or right that it was intended to replace.

Chapter Four moves on to consider the perplexity of language used to describe the process and aims of interprofessional and interorganisational practice, the foundations of joined up youth justice. A wide range of terms is applied to the joined up imperative. It can be difficult to clarify from policy documents and literature exactly what is required of YOTs, their staff and the organisations involved with the new youth justice system. It may be that it is far from certain what is wanted or what is possible. Analysis of the language of joining up suggests that the policy intention for YOTs was for the development of interprofessional teams, with an aim to integrate the skills and resources of different professions and professional organisations towards a common goal. There may however be an underlying intention to transform professions and the public sector into bodies that are more willing, or more able to respond to the mechanisms of central control.

The blame for past failures to join up tends to focus on professionals and professional organisations. However, while integrating different views and perspectives can be generally and genuinely difficult, it is not impossible. An examination of initiatives to join up in the field of youth justice and in other parts of the public sector suggests that partnerships are situated by context; they are highly complicated, seldom static and influenced by many factors. Individual attitudes to joined up work and allegiances to professional cultures are only one of many complex interrelated individual, institutional, political and historical factors that can shape an interprofessional team. It will be argued that an over-emphasis on the failings of professionals tends to deflect attention away from the need to dismantle structural and administrative barriers to joining up, and undervalues professional skills and knowledge.

Multiple strategies are required to facilitate dynamic interprofessional teamwork. The infinite variation of human positions and philosophies however, particularly in group situations, may create limits what might be possible in the engineering of work structures. There may be reluctance to recognise that basic human processes resist manipulation. Chapter Five tackles the myth of teams and high performance teamwork. This chapter proposes that a long tradition of empirical

research into the human dynamics of groups and workgroups has been largely overlooked as organisations turned to teamwork as a solution to the challenges of modern organisational life. The literature reviewed identifies a wide range of factors that have the potential to negatively affect the dynamics of YOTs and their potential for success. There is little from existing research however that is capable of encompassing the full magnitude of change brought to bear by policies that promote increasingly fluid and weakened group boundaries. The claims made for the potential of teamwork in the public sector are largely speculative and rarely achieved, and the expectations placed upon YOTs may be too high.

Chapter Six considers the conditions YOTs require if they are to fulfil their potential. It will be suggested that the relatively new concept of a teambased organisation might offer YOTs the best opportunity for success and the learning organisation perspective the most relevant to understanding teambased approaches. From this perspective individuals must be enabled to adapt and learn to build effective teams and organisations, and organisations must adapt and learn to support and facilitate teamwork. It will be argued however that public sector organisations are the most resistant to adaptation and learning, and the least capable of supporting teamwork. It appears highly unlikely that multiple organisations in concord are capable of supporting effective teamwork in YOTs when single organisations, with more autonomy than is enjoyed in the public sector, often fail. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the concept of effectiveness, which is capable of different definitions from different stakeholder perspectives. A model of effectiveness for YOTs is proposed that draws together the key factors of influence discussed in this and preceding chapters. The model provided a framework to guide the development of a research strategy capable of inquiring into the YOT model from a frontline practice perspective.

Chapter Seven describes the design of a multi-method case study, with Youth Offending Services as the boundary of the case study and YOTs at its core. The Delphi consensus development technique was adopted to survey the views of YOT managers and this methodology, perhaps a little unusual for research in the field of social science, is discussed. The second part of the fieldwork consisted of a questionnaire for practitioners largely based on the survey findings. Chapter Eight outlines how the fieldwork was organised and administered and describes the



essential role played by a project-monitoring group in advising the researcher and developing the open questions for the first round of the survey for YOT managers. The process of piloting and administering the survey and postal questionnaire are described. Demographic information about the study sample is illustrated in Chapter Eight and the research design and strategy is critiqued.

In Chapter Nine a rich picture of YOTs is developed from the fieldwork findings. The YOTs in the study sample had welcomed the challenges of a new youth justice system that they considered was a considerable improvement on its predecessors. The contrasting, and sometimes contradictory, views of managers and practitioners, and between different groups of practitioners, that emerged from the findings however suggested that they work in an extremely difficult environment. Many multi-faceted and interrelated issues surround YOTs generating competing pressures that coalesce around professional practitioners and managers. Paradoxically the majority of respondents were enthusiastic and optimistic about the new youth justice system and the YOT model, and had embraced the concept of interprofessional teamwork with little difficulty.

Chapter Ten proposes that YOTs present an interesting conundrum, largely succeeding in meeting many of the high expectations placed upon them when the weight of existing literature suggested success was unlikely. It is strongly argued in this thesis that the key to YOT success during its early years of development has been the strength of practitioner commitment to joined up youth justice and its potential to benefit service users. Providing practitioners with strong evidence that their collective effort is effectively preventing youth crime may be critical to maintaining their motivation. Such evidence can however be difficult to locate. Policies intended to improve the health and welfare of all children and young people in the United Kingdom appear to have drawn more children and young people into the criminal justice system for lesser transgressions. More young people, at a younger age, appear to be receiving the harsher punishments intended for the most recidivist youth.

The final thesis chapter takes the view that the considerable potential of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* to take a bold and imaginative joined up approach to youth offending risks being squandered. Although interprofessional practice is the

cornerstone of the YOT model there appears to be little commitment from policy makers for supporting it and a preference developing for the recruitment of a generic youth justice workforce. The effort and enthusiasm committed by the diverse professional membership of YOTs, and the considerable investment of public funds devoted to joined up youth justice, risks being misspent.

It will be proposed that YOTs might be in a stronger position to address the uncertainties that surround their practice, purpose and organisation if they were enabled to occupy a more autonomous and prominent place in the public service arena. The thesis concludes with an illustration of how youth offending services might be enabled to thrive as small organisations within a public sector shaped by tangible and interconnected joined up government, policy and practice.

## Chapter Two

### Relocating Youth Offending and the Trouble with Children

#### Introduction

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for the delivery of youth offending services in England and Wales. They are located at the centre of a new youth justice system, which was refocused and reconstructed by the New Labour Government and launched by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

Chapter Two outlines how the new youth justice system is constructed and what the primary functions of YOTs are. The geography of YOTs is outlined in comparison to their predecessors the Youth Justice Teams and the organisational structure of the new youth justice system is mapped. New Labour's overarching policy goal to join up government, policy and practice, is introduced in the context of youth justice. The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* played a pivotal role in setting out a vision for joined up youth justice, introducing new tiers of administration to ensure that the system could be tightly controlled and directed from the centre. Key elements of the legislation that shape and direct YOTs are discussed. A heightened level of public anxiety about the behaviour of children and young people has contributed to, but is not the only reason for, the magnitude of the changes brought to bear on the youth justice system in England and Wales. The chapter concludes with consideration of how perceptions about the prevalence and seriousness of youth crime impact upon youth justice practice.

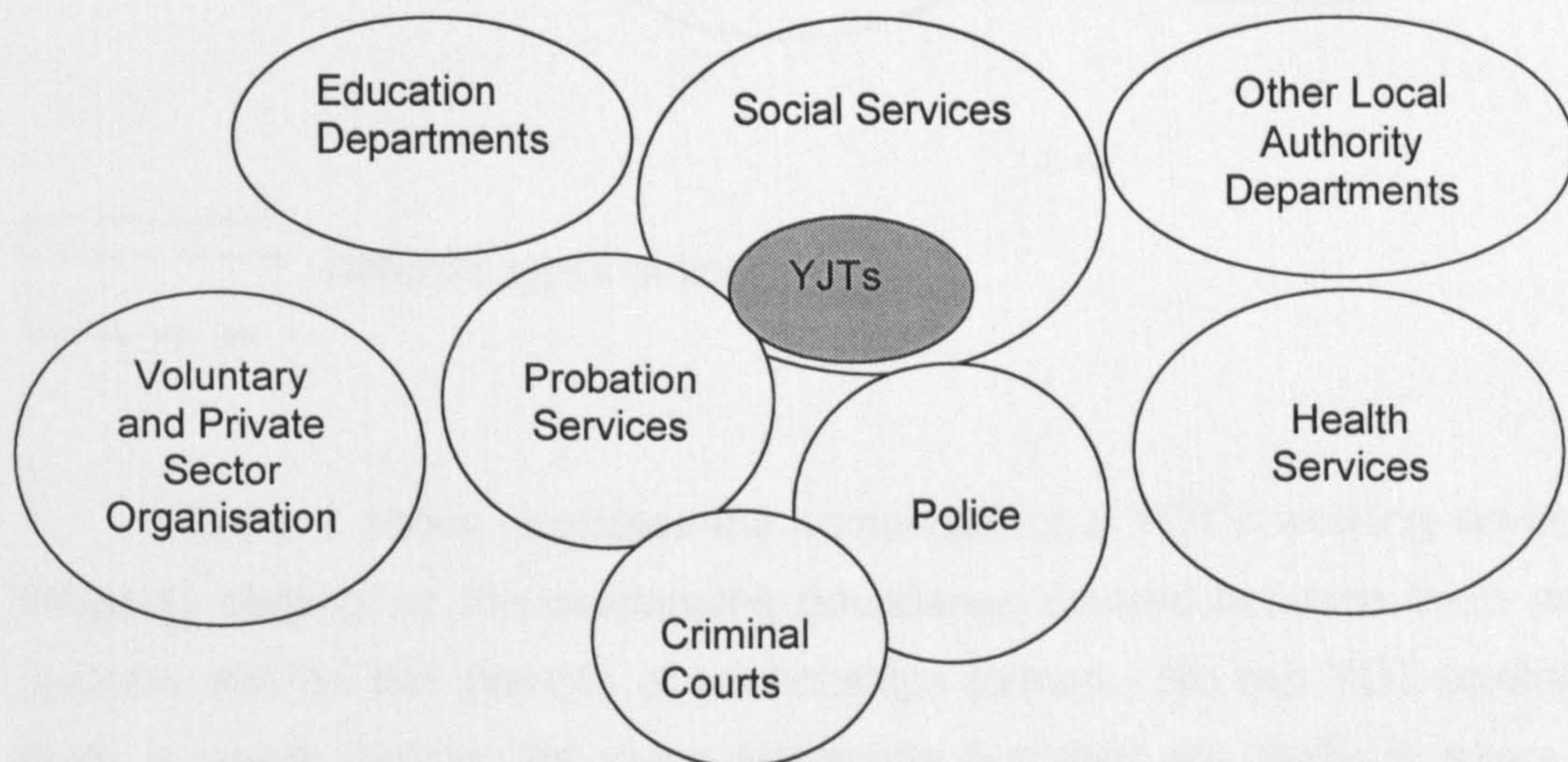
#### Reforming and relocating youth offending

Effort to join up government, policy and practice to maximise effort and resources, reduce duplication and minimise conflict permeates the ethos of the current United Kingdom New Labour Government. The aspiration to join up youth justice is not however a new innovation. The new youth justice agenda has been heavily influenced by a long history of joined up thinking and practice in this field. Multi-agency juvenile liaison bureaux were established as early as the 1950s and

formed the kernel of a systems management approach to youth crime that developed throughout the 1980s: the decade of court diversion initiatives.

Joining up in the context of national public services is not easy and it requires forging meaningful connections between the disparate components of formidable and complex organisational systems. Multi-agency initiatives in crime prevention have been criticised for an over-reliance on key senior managers to drive them, the strength of the relationships developed tended to vary considerably across different geographic locations leading to inconsistent levels of success (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). One of the main difficulties with the model of youth offending services prior to 1998 was that youth justice work tended to be isolated within the social services departments of local authorities. The model did not require other agencies to share the responsibility for preventing youth crime, or work together to address its causes. *Figure 3* below illustrates the territory occupied by Youth Justice Teams (YJTs) in the public sector prior to the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

*Figure 3 - The location of Youth Justice Teams in the public sector*



The challenge facing policy makers was to develop a new structural model that was capable of enabling all relevant organisations to share responsibility and become active partners in reducing offending. The model constructed for the local delivery of new youth offending services, illustrated below in *Figure 4*, aimed to reduce the isolation of YJTs and to promote a proactive, and crucially sustainable, joined up approach across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Figure 4 - The new public sector territory inhabited by a YOT

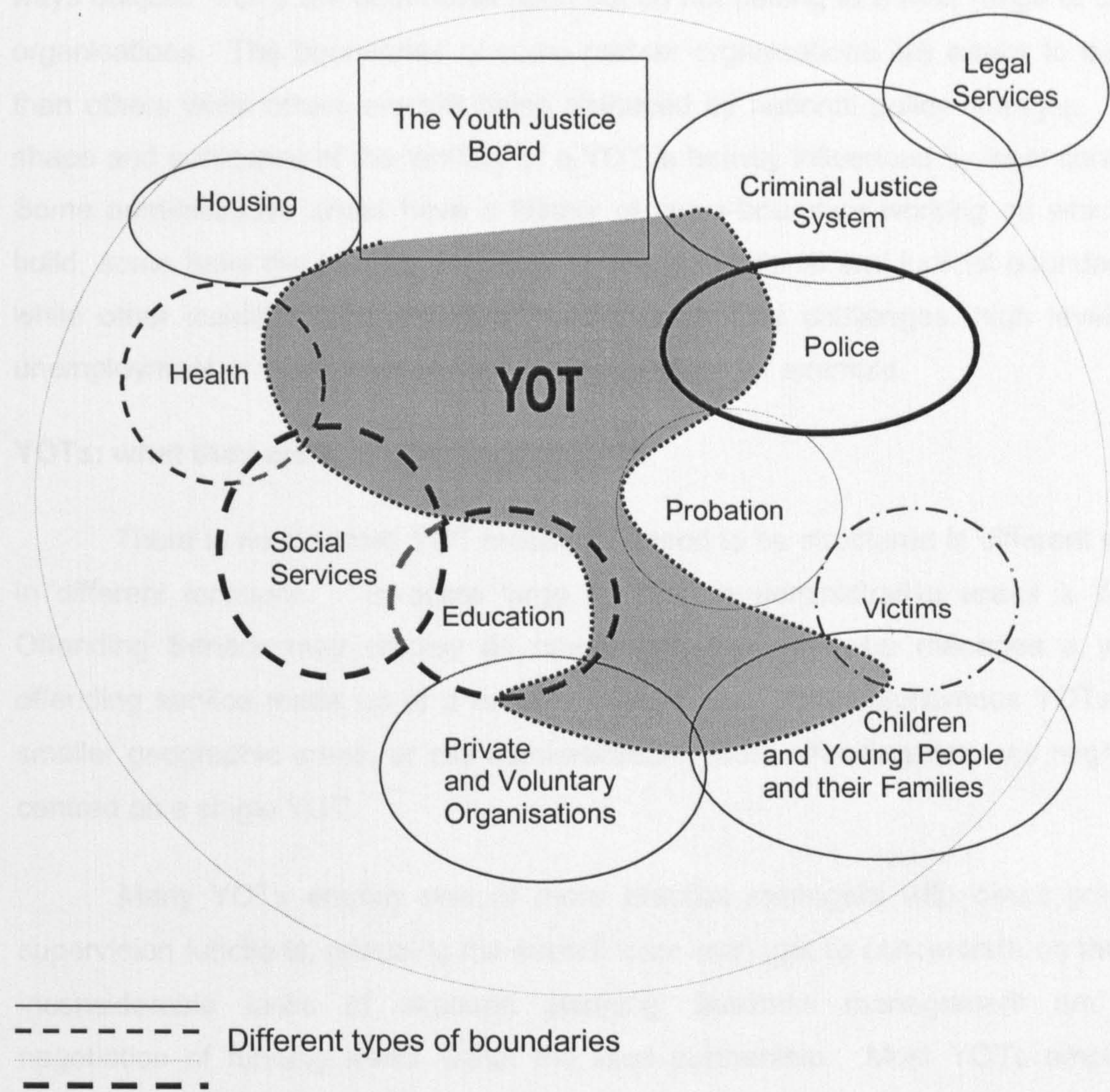


Figure 4 above illustrates the complexity of a YOT's working environment, integrally shaped by the overlapping boundaries created between them and their partners and on the strength of relationships formed. No two YOT territories are likely to share exactly the same landscape but they are likely to share similar challenges in maintaining their territory in a public services arena where the pressures can be intense. A central difficulty is that New Labour launched a period of possibly unprecedented change in their attempt to reform the public sector. Most of the public sector agencies have been restructured, reorganised and redefined. The relationship between social services and health agencies for example appear to have been in a state of perpetual flux for more than a decade.

The territory now occupied by YOTs in the public services arena is in many ways unique. YOTs are dependent upon but do not belong to a wide range of other organisations. The boundaries of some partner organisations are easier to define than others while others are still being reshaped by national policy changes. The shape and substance of the territory of a YOT is heavily influenced by local context. Some administrative areas have a history of cross-boundary working on which to build, some have the benefit of coterminous organisational and judicial boundaries, while other localities face significant social or political challenges: high levels of unemployment or weak local authority administration for example.

### **YOTs: what they are and what they do**

There is no standard YOT model; they tend to be structured in different ways in different locations. In some large geographic administrative areas a Youth Offending Service may employ an operational manager who manages a youth offending service made up of a number of individual, semi-autonomous YOTs. In smaller geographic areas, or city administration, youth offending services might be centred on a single YOT.

Many YOTs employ one or more practice managers with direct practice supervision functions, releasing the overall team manager to concentrate on the not inconsiderable tasks of strategic planning, business management and the negotiation of funding levels within the local partnership. Most YOTs employ a permanent core group of staff, including administrators, supplemented by professional practitioners seconded from other statutory and voluntary organisations to fulfil specialist roles. A wide range of job specifications and contracts, managed in different ways, may be held by a diverse group of individual workers, not all of who may have a youth justice background. Posts can be funded on a temporary basis, jointly funded through external grants and contributions from partner organisations to deliver new projects or initiatives. The result is a distinctively complex workgroup structure.

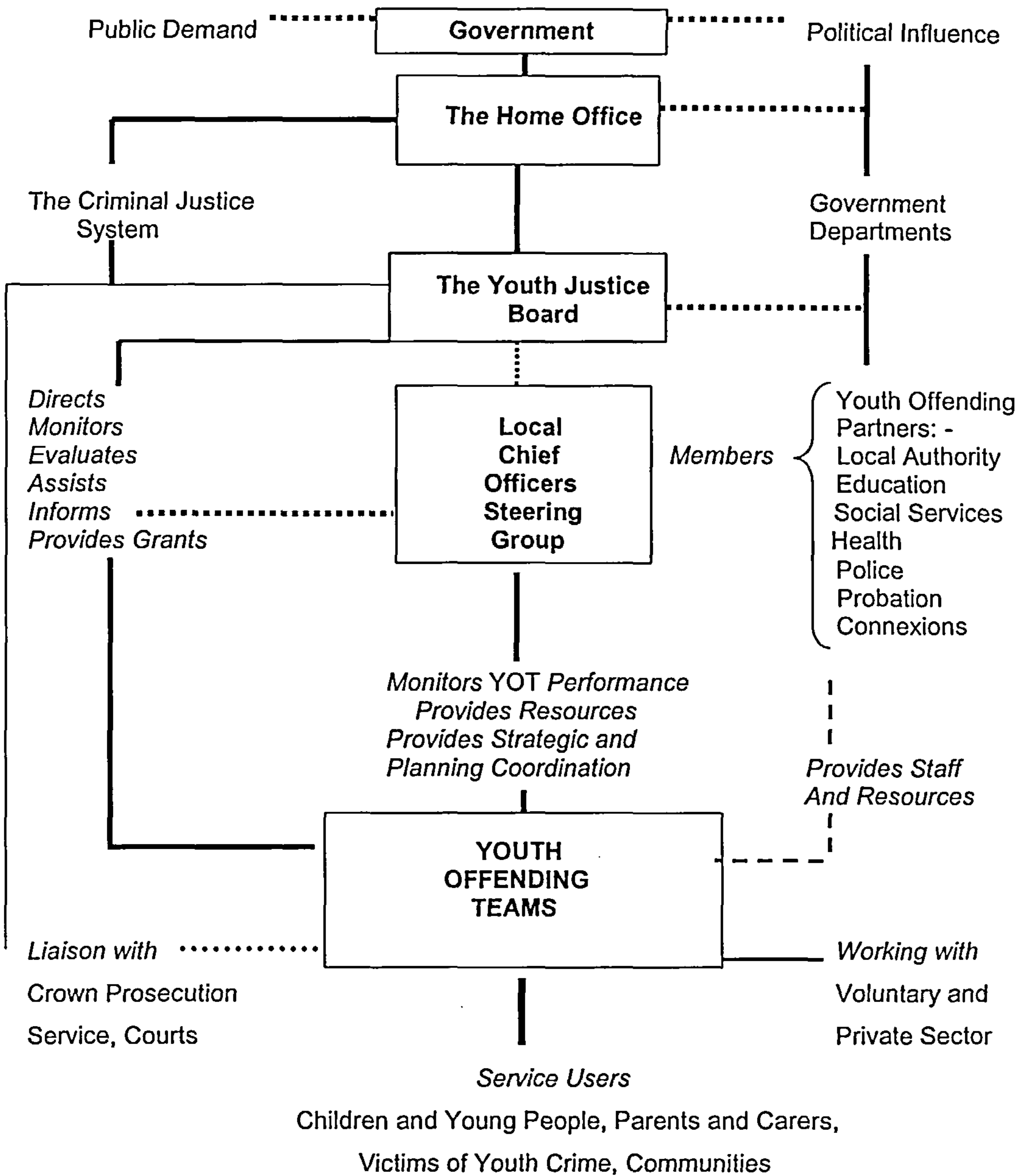
YOTs are involved with a broad range of activities designed for children and young people up to the age of eighteen, who are in contact with the criminal justice system or who have been broadly identified at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. The parents and carers of children and young people, and the victims of

youth crime also fall within the broad remit of the teams. Since the teams became fully operational in April 2000 there has been a deluge of new legislation and court orders, national initiatives and schemes to which they are also required to respond. The emphasis placed upon different aspects of YOT work changes regularly as the Youth Justice Board, the Government appointed body responsible for administering the youth justice system, reviews national priorities and progress, and policy imperatives lose or gain favour. Some key YOT functions are listed below, the list is however not definitive, the services required of YOTs are under continual development:

- Assessment of the circumstances of young offenders and the risk of future offending
- Supervision of community punishments
- Provision of appropriate adult services, bail supervision and support
- Placement of young people on remand in open or secure accommodation
- Court work and the preparation of reports
- Through care and the supervision of young people released from custody
- Involvement in crime prevention schemes and activities
- Supervision of parenting and child safety orders
- Administration of community youth offender panels

YOTs are at the core of the new youth justice system and bear the responsibility for implementing the most radical and comprehensive overhaul of youth justice undertaken in England and Wales since its early formation in the late nineteenth century. The organisation of the system, the varying degrees of relationship and influence between its constituent parts and the place of YOTs within it is mapped below in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5 - A Map of the New Youth Justice System



Strong relationship      **—————**

Negotiated relationship      **- - - - -**

Influence      **.....**

Working relationship      **—————**



## **The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998***

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was the flagship of the Government's crime and disorder legislation, supported by the New Labour party's election promise to be tough on crime but also tough on the causes of crime (Bailey and Williams, 2000). The Act represented a significant shift in policy direction from the minimum interventionism of the 1980s and early 1990s to a far more correctionalist and interventionist approach.

While some writers have questioned the justification for describing any part of the criminal justice arena as a system given the lack of synergy between constituent parts (see for example Cavadino and Dignan, 2002), the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* represented a bold attempt to at least lay the foundations for a coherent organisational structure underpinned by clearly defined aims. It was also a significant departure from previous legislation focused primarily on mechanisms for dealing with the punishment and rehabilitation of young offenders towards a system focused on preventing crime (Nacro, 1999).

Reform was intended to permeate all levels of youth justice in England and Wales, from government departments to the national and local, public and voluntary organisations who could share the burden of responsibility for troubled children, children in trouble and children who cause trouble. Six key objectives were identified that required coordinated effort at strategic policy and planning level, and at the level of practice, to prevent offending by young people:

1. The swift administration of justice so that every young person accused of breaking the law has the matter resolved without delay.
2. Confronting young offenders with the consequences of their offending, for themselves, their families, victims and the community and, by doing so, helping them to develop a sense of personal responsibility.
3. Intervention aimed at the factors: personal, family, social, educational or health, that put the young person at risk of offending and intervention to strengthen factors likely to discourage offending.
4. Punishment proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of the offending.
5. Encouraging reparation to victims by young offenders.
6. Reinforcing the responsibilities of parents.

The achievement of the principal aim of preventing offending, through the above objectives required a carefully structured and detailed framework for all

involved. Section 39 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* placed a duty on every local authority in England and Wales with responsibility for education and social services, to establish YOTs and have them fully operational by April 2000. The formation of the teams was intended to offer a fully integrated approach to youth offending, operating independently outside the administration of one single organisation, rather than to simply re-launch existing social services youth justice teams under a different name (Holdaway et al., 2001). The range of sentences targeting youth offending (see *Figure 6* below) was increased to reinforce the underlying principles of the six key objectives.

*Figure 6 - Sentences for 10-17 year olds and parents available to the courts in 1999*

- Action Plan Order  
10-17 year olds (*Crime and Disorder Act 1998*).
- Attendance Centre Order  
10-17 year olds (*Criminal Justice Act 1982*).
- Child Safety Order  
Under 10 year olds at risk of offending (*Crime and Disorder Act 1998*).
- Combination Order  
16 and 17 year olds (*Criminal Justice Act 1991*).
- Community Service Order  
16 and 17 year olds (*Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973*).
- Curfew Order  
10-17 year olds (*Criminal Justice Act 1991*).
- Custodial Sentence  
10-17 year olds (*Children and Young Persons Act 1933*).
- Detention and Training Order  
10-17 year olds (*Crime and Disorder Act 1998*).
- Parental Bind Over  
Parents of young offenders (*Criminal Justice Act 1991*).
- Parenting Order  
Parents of young offender (*Crime and Disorder Act 1998*).
- Probation Order  
16 and 17 year olds (*Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973*).
- Referral Order  
10-17 year olds (*Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999*).
- Reparation Order  
10-17 year olds (*Crime and Disorder Act 1998*).
- Supervision Order  
10-17 year olds (*Children and Young Persons Act 1969*).

In a preface to the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* framework document, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary of the time, claimed that “*for far too long, those working in the youth justice system have been left without any clear central direction as to where their priorities should lie and what outcomes they should be aiming to*

achieve” (Home Office, 1998a, p.4). Detailed guidance was offered to key personnel: police officers, social workers, probation officers, representatives of health and education organisations working in YOTs, officers in charge of attendance centres, magistrates, judges, defence and prosecution lawyers, justices’ clerks, those working in custodial facilities, volunteers and those working in voluntary organisations carrying out functions on behalf of youth justice agencies, who were placed under a duty to:

*have regard to the principle aim of preventing offending by children and young people, in addition to their other duties. It is a duty which recognises the different roles of the agencies and individuals working in the youth justice system but also recognises that, through the administration of justice, they share a responsibility to young people in the youth justice system to do what they can to help prevent those young people offending. (Great Britain, 1998, Section 37)*

In a direct response to concerns that youth justice in England and Wales had, for too long, been inconsistent, ineffective and inefficient, Section 41 of the 1998 Act launched a new government body, the Youth Justice Board, independent of existing government departments to provide national oversight and leadership for youth justice (Home Office, 1998a). The Board was also given responsibility for: providing support and advice to Local Authority partnerships; commissioning secure accommodation for remanded and sentenced young people; developing performance standards for YOTs and monitoring these; and for publishing information about youth offending.

A further administrative tier of management was also set in statute in 1998. Local authority chief executives were required to implement, and preferably lead, a multi-agency steering group comprising at least the heads of service of the key partner organisations: Chief Constable, Director of Education, Director of Social Services, Health Authority Chief Executive, Chief Probation Officer and Clerk to the Justices. Steering Groups were charged with promoting and coordinating an integrated strategic approach to youth offending that was tailored to local crime reduction strategies and resource availability, and delivered through a YOT or YOTs. A key aim was to ensure that policy; planning and budgetary issues were effectively dealt with by those with the power and influence to make decisions and crucially could implement them (Holdaway et al., 2001). The structures put in place were intended to ensure that the new youth justice system remained tightly controlled with

a combined effect of the legislation providing what Austin and Krisberg (2002) characterised as newer, wider and stronger social control nets to deal with youth nuisance.

It is implicit in the magnitude of the response that the problem of youth offending was so serious that radical government intervention was necessary. There is however little evidence that levels of youth crime were increasing prior to 1998 or that the seriousness of crimes committed by children and young people was escalating. The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* appears to have primarily responded to public fear of youth crime, and what it may represent, rather than a balanced assessment of prevalence or magnitude. As Smith (2003) observed youth crime is a legitimate target for political gamesmanship. Crime, and strategies to deal with it, tends to take a central place in election manifestos and provides a useful “*electoral glue*” to hold together a shrinking and disparate electorate (Pitts 2003, p. 2)

### **The problem of youth offending**

There is often little correlation between the public’s perception of the risk of youth crime and the facts and statistics that are available to inform the criminal justice system (Nacro, 2001). Confusion can be compounded by incomplete and sometimes inaccurate crime statistics, and anxiety heightened by conflicting messages about youth justice from academic authors supporting polemic philosophical positions (Burnett and Appleton, 2004). There is little about the problem of youth offending that is unequivocal.

In 1995 the Home Office Research and Statistics Department reported that national crime statistics suggested a steady rise in overall crime rates since the end of World War II (Home Office, 1995). It was estimated that children and young people aged 10 to 17 *might* be responsible for committing at least a quarter, possibly up to a half, of all recorded crime. Official crime statistics can however be limited by the large proportion of crime that remains unreported and they reflect regular changes to counting rules, judicial practices and youth justice policy. Levels of recorded youth crime fluctuate and can be subject to different interpretations. While Farrington (1996) for example proposed that a decrease in juvenile crime recorded during the 1980s was the result of implementation of the Police and Criminal

Evidence Act (1984), Smith (2003) took the view that changes in youth justice practices were the primary influence.

Self-report studies conducted with young people also suggest that petty crime is widely spread across the population of young people in the United Kingdom. Self-report studies however also have limitations. Survey respondents are likely to be the least deviant; researchers rarely have access to respondents who are homeless, already in custody or in residential care (Home Office 1999a). While some young people over-exaggerate offending behaviour, others may chose to minimise their offences leading to some doubt about the accuracy of some responses. Self-report surveys often focus on different age ranges of the population and findings can be limited in their capability to differentiate between petty, serious and persistent offenders. Consequently it is often useful to consider official crime statistics together with self-reported crime studies to obtain a broader picture of youth offending (Home Office, 1999a).

The *Aspects of Crime: Young Offenders* 1999 report (Home Office, 1999a) was designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of youth offending, collating information from several sources including British Crime Surveys, Criminal Statistics and Youth Lifestyle Surveys. In spite of its probable limitations, the report was possibly the best available estimate of the prevalence of offending among 10-17 year-olds, at the point at which the new youth justice system was launched. It offered a timely illustration of some of the inconsistencies that permeated the youth justice melee, through which YOTs were set to navigate.

It appeared from the *Aspects of Crime: Young Offenders* report (Home Office, 1999a) that the nature of offences admitted and committed by young people was changing. More young people were involved in some form of drug taking, including smoking, drinking and alcohol. Crimes associated with drugs and motor vehicles appeared to be in ascendance as were crimes connected with increasingly consumer driven lifestyles, for example the theft of mobile phones. More young women were appearing in court, primarily for shoplifting and receiving stolen goods. Of particular note was that a small minority of young people admitted to a disproportionately large proportion of offences. This appeared to be creating a distorted picture of the prevalence of youth crime and a hardening of attitude towards

young offenders, demonstrated by an increase in the use of custodial disposals and an increase in the numbers of young people sentenced for indictable offences.

There was however little evidence in the 1999 report that the overall level of youth crime was escalating, nor that the offences committed by young people were becoming more serious or more violent. The Youth Justice Board, with its central position to advise government on the administration of the youth justice system, supported a similar assessment three years later, noting: *“much recent media coverage suggests that youth crime is spiralling out of control. A sober assessment of the statistics available, however, does not appear to support this view....they show either a decline in youth crime or little overall change”* (Youth Justice Board, 2002, p.2). What was changing was an increase in anti-social behaviour among young people and a corresponding national intolerance towards it.

### **Public anxiety and fear of children**

Acts of nuisance, anti-social behaviour and petty crime have consequences for perpetrators and their victims. It is often overlooked that the victims of youth crime are predominantly other young people (Edwards, 2000). Fear of bullying, physical assault and the theft of personal possessions is high among school children (Home Office, 2001). It might however be argued that it is the nature of children to cause trouble among their peer groups and to adults, whether from high spirits, lack of judgement, lack of control or overall immaturity. The majority of trouble caused by children is *“relatively minor and fleeting”* (Rutter et al., 1998, p.6). Even the most pessimistic assessment of incomplete crime data, statistics and self-report studies indicates that the greatest majority of young people grow out of crime by their early twenties. Experience of life, employment, the development of adult relationships and the accumulation of adult responsibilities tend to combine to contribute to a rapid decline in the propensity of young people to commit criminal acts as they age. While it might also be that it is the nature of adults to be less tolerant of the misdeeds of other people's children than they are of their own progeny, there appears to be little public inclination to accept that most young people grow out of causing trouble. The British Crime Survey 2001 (Home Office, 2001) reported that public anxiety about crime in general remained unreasonably high while the risk from and the seriousness of youth crime was overestimated.

Many factors contribute to the strength of public opinion about the threat of youth crime. Periods of moral panic generated by fear of an upcoming generation of young thugs have been a regular occurrence in the United Kingdom for more than a century, stimulated in part by the gradual break up of traditional communities,

*(children) continue to herd in their dens of iniquity, to swarm in our streets, to levy a costly maintenance on the honest and industrious, to rise up to be the parents of a degraded progeny of pauper children, or to people our gaols until they are audaciously wicked enough for transportation – in either case to be a drain on our resources, a festering plague spot to society.* (Welfare Campaigner Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) cited in Rutherford, 1994, p. 41)

Rapid urban expansion and overpopulation, exacerbated by poverty, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century increasingly brought the behaviour of children and young people into sharp relief (Bruce, 1982). Both the general public and governments tend to make unrealistic comparisons between the present and the past, failing to recognise the ways that youthful crime and disorder are firmly embedded in the social landscape. Perceptions of past golden ages of childhood and family security persist (Pearson, 2002). While the decline in organised religion and an increase in geographic mobility were in the past replaced by other solidarities such as the nuclear family, the welfare state, trade unions and a belief in the validity of science, McCahill (2002) observed that modern social structures tend to appear less solid and predictable to citizens. Urban design and the introduction of segregated communities may further act to magnify paranoia and generate defensive reactions against difference and insecurity. With the growth of social isolation, neighbours, and crucially the children of neighbours, are more likely to remain strangers.

Images provided by the press and mass media of children running out of control play an important role in further magnifying public anxiety about how dangerous children can be. High profile, but significantly isolated, criminal cases involving children who commit serious crimes, such as the murder of a Merseyside toddler by two ten year old boys in 1993, impact heavily upon the public consciousness (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 2002). As Muncie (1999) observed, children appear to be more often defined in terms of what they lack than by who they are.

## Chapter summary

Children and young people who cause trouble and who commit criminal acts often do so as a direct result of being troubled or in trouble (Rutherford, 1994). A wide variety of children and young people are likely to come into contact with a YOT. As well as young criminals YOT service users encompass children and young people whose behaviour might once have been considered simply naughty, troubled youngsters whose behaviour is the result of psychological or physiological disturbance, children at risk and those who experience psychological or physiological harm. National statistics, crime data and national surveys rarely expose the personal stories of these children, which tend to remain hidden from the public consciousness.

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was a bold attempt to reform youth justice in England and Wales. The new youth justice system was restructured to promote joined up effort to prevent offending by children and young people and within it YOTs have a pivotal role at the frontline of practice. It can be difficult however to reach a balanced judgement about the prevalence and seriousness of the problem of youth crime, at the point the new system was launched. On the basis of the best evidence available at the time it does not appear that the reforms were a response to rising levels of youth crime or increases in the seriousness of crimes committed. It will be argued throughout this thesis that there are many interrelated factors that have shaped joined up youth justice in England and Wales, few of these factors directly concern crime committed by children.

The territory constructed for YOTs, unique in the public sector, is organisationally and administratively complex and the tasks set for them are challenging and demanding. All workgroup structures are living and evolving communities that function within broader institutional and cultural systems, each with deep evolutionary histories. YOTs are inextricably bound by the political, social, theoretical and philosophical contours of the environment in which they are located. The next chapter examines the political and historical dimensions of youth justice in England and Wales. The chapter considers the potential strengths of the new joined up youth justice system, its weaknesses and the implications of these for YOTs.



## Chapter Three

### New Labour: New Youth Justice

#### Introduction

The new youth justice system is rooted in a long history of fluctuating policy and practice and it has been shaped by attempts to reconcile fundamentally different philosophical approaches to children and young people who commit crime. Rutherford (1994) summarised a century and a half of youth justice history as one in which,

*Public policy on young people and crime has remained trapped within a triangle of punishment, welfare and treatment. The prominence of any one of these approaches to young people in trouble has varied from time to time, often as a reaction to what has gone before. The perennial issue has been concerned with the type of incarcerative institution rather than with the fundamental principles involved. On occasion an impasse is reached, and an opportunity arises to take a quite different approach. Such opportunities have been rare, and generally have been missed. (Rutherford 1994, p.40)*

The election of the New Labour Government in May 1997 was an opportunity to take a quite different approach to youth offending. Chapter Three moves beyond the structural organisation of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the new youth justice system to identify the principles, ideologies and philosophies that have shaped them. It begins with a consideration of New Labour's attempt to reconcile the inherent tension between punishment and welfare approaches. It will be suggested *the Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was a skilful attempt to attend to both sets of principles while appearing to be dominated by neither. A key feature of New Labour is its vigorous management of the process of publicising its policy choices. Key ideals and policy goals tend to be reduced to short headline slogans, which are open to a variety of interpretations. The confusion generated by the ambiguity of the slogans used to describe the aims, practices and organisation of YOTs is discussed. The development of the *third way* of governing the state by New Labour and the influence of *third way* politics on interpretations of crime, disorder and social exclusion, and the relationship between these, are also described.

The chapter moves on to identify the close relationship that exists between the policy agendas of youth justice and social exclusion, and the principles of responsabilisation and remoralisation that shape them. The implications of strategies of responsabilisation that now extend to children under the age of 14 are discussed. Since the legal presumption of *doli incapax* was withdrawn through the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* children as young as ten can face the full rigours of the criminal justice system. Effort to develop joined up solutions to the joined up problem of youth offending is traced, from New Labour's modernising agenda to new systems of public management, and the difficulties of joining up government, policy and practice is explored. This is followed by an assessment of evidence-based practice methods, particularly in relation to evidence of what works for children and what works to prevent offending, and how evidence can be selectively used. The chapter concludes with a summary of the potential strengths of the new youth justice system, its weaknesses and the implications of these for YOTs and frontline practice.

### **New Labour, new youth justice**

It is more than 150 years since children ceased being viewed as little adults and became entitled, because of their incomplete development, to special care and protection when they came before a criminal court (May, 2002). An underlying fear of unruly children has nevertheless permeated notions of youth justice in England and Wales, contributing to what some commentators consider to be an overtly punitive response to children and young people who cause trouble (see for example Muncie, 1999; Rutherford, 1994). Throughout its history, youth justice policy in England and Wales has attempted to simultaneously protect the public, punish the offender and attend to the welfare of children and young people in a confusion of conflicting ideologies and principles (Fionda 1999; Muncie and Hughes, 2002). The election of a new United Kingdom government in May 1997 provided an opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of the past:

*At the heart of the crisis in youth justice is confusion and conflict between welfare and punishment. Too many people involved with the system are unclear whether the purpose is to punish and to signify society's disapproval of offending or whether the welfare of young offenders is paramount because their personal development is incomplete. (Home Office 1997, p.7)*

The *Crime and Disorder Act* 1998 was intended to put an end to confusion and conflict. As Garland (2001) observed the control of crime and disorder had increasingly assumed great symbolic significance in late modernity. The roots of policy tend to grow out of the character of social organisation, and the cultural and political choices that are made in relation to it. New Labour's approach to crime control largely responded to their assessment of a society which was sinking into a cycle of crime and social decay,

*The rising tide of disorder is blighting our streets, neighbourhoods, parks, town and city centres. Incivility and harassment, public drunkenness, graffiti and vandalism all affect our ability to use open spaces and enjoy a quiet life in our own homes. Moreover, crime and disorder are linked. Disorder can lead to a vicious cycle of community decline in which those who are able to move away do so, whilst those who remain learn to avoid certain streets and parks. This leads to a breakdown in community ties and reduction in natural social controls tipping an area further into decline, economic dislocation and crime. (Labour Party, 1996, p.4)*

### **Crime and disorder, welfare and punishment**

Newburn (2002) proposed that the inclusion of disorder along with crime as a focus for tough government intervention was one of the most radical redirections of contemporary penology featured in the *Crime and Disorder Act* 1998. Heavily influenced by the work of Wilson and Kelling (1982), whose controversial article in a North American journal proposed the existence of a sequential link between the acceptance of social incivility and crime, New Labour appear willing to intervene on all social matters through a radical menu of social authoritarianism (Driver and Martell, 1998). Through the 1998 Act the youth justice system was re-focussed to intervene in the lives of children and young people before they have the opportunity to embark on a life of crime. The approach has however been strongly criticised as highly political window dressing within which "*the rhetoric of radical reform has created unrealistic expectations of short-term gains*" (Smith, 2003, p.3), including a hybrid of philosophical approaches to youth justice which, as Newburn (2002) observed, can be difficult to characterise.

Cavadino and Dignan (2002) described three core criminal justice strategies: managerialist, punitive and humanitarian, each with different fundamental underpinning philosophies. New Labour appears to find no difficulty attempting to

embrace all three philosophies simultaneously. The new youth justice system is strongly shaped by a managerialist strategy that seeks mechanisms to improve system effectiveness and efficiency, but is less concerned with the people the system is constructed to serve. The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* promotes a punitive criminal justice strategy, which seeks to exclude young offenders as members of society by strengthening elements of punishment. A strongly authoritarian approach has been taken to larger numbers of children and young people through the application a wider range of more restrictive sentences. Children are also held fully accountable for their ability to respond positively to the interventions imposed upon them from a younger age in spite of concern that they often experience enduring patterns of disadvantage that may place them beyond the pressure of legislation to behave or take up the rehabilitative opportunities offered to them (Muncie and Hughes, 2002). The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* however also promotes aspects of a humanitarian criminal justice strategy, which seeks to promote social justice, the rights of young offenders and their victims. Measures were introduced to attend to the welfare of young offenders through schemes of early intervention, the introduction of a wide range of community-based sentences and the aim to transform custodial facilities to regimes of education and rehabilitation. Initiatives have been launched to provide for the education, health and housing needs of young offenders, and support their families.

The New Labour Government takes the view that there is no conflict between protecting the welfare of a young offender and preventing that individual from offending again: *“preventing offending promotes the welfare of the individual young offender and protects the public”* (Home Office, 1997, p.7). The punishment or protection debate has been skilfully reframed around the notion of prevention. The core contention of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* is that punishment is necessary to signal society’s disapproval when any child or adult breaks the law. The Government was unequivocal in this respect: *“Young people who ignore the help offered them, and continue to offend regardless, should be in no doubt about the tough penalties they will face – including custody if that is necessary to protect the public”* (Home Office, 1997, p.15).

The concern of many authors is that the new youth justice system fails to protect the welfare and rights of increasing numbers of children and young people

caught in the wide net cast by legislation (Goldson, 2000; Haines, 2000; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 2002; Newburn, 2002; Smith, 2003). It may be that disputes about the ascendancy of punishment or welfare approaches to youth justice, far from being resolved, have entered a new era. Analyses of policy choices tend to be severely impeded by New Labour's unprecedented use of all-encompassing headline statements representing key government aims (Levitas, 1998; Muncie and Hughes, 2002). The new language of political debate, adeptly managed from the Government's press office, tends to intensify ambiguity between presentation and substance, and deepen the gulf between opposing philosophical positions.

### **Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime**

New Labour's complex approach to youth justice was encapsulated in an early pledge to the electorate to be "*tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime*" which was launched by Tony Blair, when Shadow Home Secretary, on the BBC Radio 4's Today programme in January 1993 (Driver and Martell, 1998). The radio interview flagged Labour's intention to capture the hard-line position on crime traditionally held by their Conservative rivals, which critics such as Pitts (2000) proposed was little more than an electoral hermetic to gain power.

The addition of a commitment to be "*tough on the causes of crime*" to Margaret Thatcher's 1979 election promise to be "*tough on crime*" may to an extent have been intended to lessen anxiety about loss of traditional social welfare principles from the Labour Left. The slogan however offered early indications of what was to come from New Labour under Tony Blair's leadership following the sudden death of the Labour Party leader John Smith in 1994. New Labour more than just borrowed from conservative rhetoric, it took conservative right wing ideology and moulded it into a *third way* of governance, which some writers consider to be a post-ideological approach unfettered by the traditional political dogma of left or right (Pitts, 2000).

### **The *third way* of youth justice**

Many authors support a view that *third way* politics emerged as a pragmatic response to the imperatives of modern political life (see for example Driver and

Martell, 1998; Levitas, 1998; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; Smith 2003). Pitts (2000) asserted that a decline in the voting power of the working class and trade unions, and widespread rejection of the electoral process by large numbers of the urban poor and disadvantaged, forced modern political parties to build new political constituencies. It is broadly the relatively more prosperous of the working and middle classes who remain engaged in the political process, and in middle England that elections can be lost or won. By 1995 political constituencies were beginning to reject traditional right and left wing political stances, developing a preference for governance "*in accordance with the dictates of common sense, administrative and technical competence and value for money*" (Pitts 2000, p.3). A central argument is that crime prevention policies tend to respond primarily to the concerns of the voters of the new constituencies, who are, next to job security, most concerned with the threats of crime and social disorder.

While Giddens (1998) strongly supports a view that *third way* politics represents the renewal of social democracy, other authors consider that the *third way* essentially rejects traditional political ideologies (see for example Driver and Martell, 1998; Szreter, 1998; Lavalette and Mooney, 1999). The majority of authors however agree that the primary goal of New Labour's *third way* is to modernise and reform the whole welfare state. Key aims are to strike a balance between economic growth, the free market and social inclusion and to seek a new relationship between the individual and the social community, through the redefinition of rights and responsibilities. These aims are exemplified in the principles underpinning the reform of the youth justice system and the development of strategies to impact upon social exclusion.

### **Youth justice, social exclusion and responsabilisation**

The Labour Party policy paper *Tackling the Causes of Crime* (Labour Party, 1996) and the Audit Commission report *Misspent Youth: young people and crime* (Audit Commission, 1996) played a major part in highlighting the many forms of social disadvantage and deprivation experienced by children who might be predisposed to become involved in disorderly or criminal activity. Inadequate parenting, unstable living conditions, drug and alcohol abuse and the lack of education, training and employment are key contributors to the proclivity to offend.

The Social Exclusion Unit was launched in 1997, supported by substantial injections of public funds, to take responsibility for developing an integrated nationwide strategy to address social disadvantage and deprivation through a wide range of new initiatives.

The policy agendas of social exclusion and youth justice bear many close similarities, one of which is that New Labour's approach to social exclusion also spans a number of different philosophical positions. Levitas (1998, p.7) described social exclusion as "*the primary significant division in society as one between an included majority and an excluded minority*". Social exclusion for New Labour appears to have the strongest links to traditional notions of a moral underclass, characterised by Levitas (1998) as a group culturally distinct from the mainstream of the population. State intervention to include the moral underclass tends to focus on the behaviour and moral reformation of the poor and disadvantaged, rather than the structure of society as a whole. Strategies to reduce child poverty in the United Kingdom however also bear elements of a redistributionist approach to social exclusion. Many new initiatives such as the National Childcare Strategy, New Deal and Action Zones are aimed at raising the living standards of families, broadly through the redistribution of wealth.

A strong theme common to both the youth justice and social exclusion agendas is a heightened emphasis on the civil responsibilities of all citizens, which has shaped the tough stance taken on social welfarism by both New Labour and their Conservative predecessors. Broadly responsabilisation holds that individuals and communities who fail to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them to become included are likely to face further exclusion through the withdrawal of benefits or action taken against them through the legal system. The responsabilisation of crime involves government seeking to act indirectly through activating non-state mechanisms, rather than relying on traditional public funded bodies such as the police, social work, prisons and courts (Garland, 1996). Families and communities are required by the state to take responsibility for crime prevention. Both adults and children are required to take responsibility for their actions, and are held accountable for them.

The abolition of the legal presumption of *doli incapax* through the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* represented a strong signal of the Government's intention to apply the principles of responsabilisation to children. Prior to its withdrawal the presumption of *doli incapax* held that children from 10 to 14 years of age were incapable of a criminal act unless the prosecution could prove beyond reasonable doubt that the child knew what they were doing was seriously wrong. The rationale for abolishing the presumption, outlined by the Government under the potentially controversial heading "Are children incapable of evil?" was that:

*in presuming that children of this age generally do not know the difference between naughtiness and serious wrongdoing, the notion of doli incapax is contrary to common sense. The practical difficulties which the presumption presents for the prosecution can stop some children who should be prosecuted and punished for their offences from being convicted or from even coming to court. This is not in the interests of justice, of victims or of the young people themselves. If children are prosecuted where appropriate, interventions can be made to help prevent any further offending.* (Home Office, 1997, p.12)

The position outlined above is puzzling, suggesting that the criminal justice system is a rational conduit for children in England and Wales, who are in trouble, or troubled enough to commit a serious offence, to access welfare support. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1999) considered the decision to withdraw the additional protection afforded by the rebuttal of *doli incapax* for young children in criminal proceedings represented an important statement about the nature of childhood, the vulnerability of children and the appropriateness of criminal justice sanctions against children in the United Kingdom. Muncie and Hughes (2002) took the view that it was something of a paradox that, since the implementation of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, young children can be held fully responsible if they cause trouble while they are unlikely to have any control of their life circumstances, yet are not deemed rational or responsible enough to be fully empowered in society.

Haines (2000) offered a compelling review of the long history of international legislation that enforces the special treatment that should be afforded to all children, whether they cause trouble or not. Crucially protection for the welfare of all children is integrally built into the legislative framework of the United Kingdom, from the *Children and Young Person's Act 1933* to the *Human Rights Act 1998*. What constitutes welfare protection for children who cause trouble is however open to interpretation and the principles of responsabilisation appear to override it. It was



Haines view that some of New Labour's reforms, for example the provisions for Referral Orders and Youth Offender Panels, may contravene the principles of the *Human Rights Act 1998*, (also see Bandalli, 2000 and Moore, 2000 for similar arguments). The legality of attempting to expose young children to the full rigours of the criminal justice system might be capable of being challenged if the concerns of Haines (2000) and others are upheld. Meanwhile the new youth justice system has been strengthened to ensure that the full weight of the law can be brought to bear on children as young as 10, ostensibly to justify their access to welfare support through the conduit of YOTs.

To promote heightened levels of responsibility and accountability across all public enterprise the Government has retained, and built upon, managerialist principles such as the purchaser provider split, the focus on competitiveness and audit, developed during the administration of their Conservative predecessors. It was apparent by the early 1990s that unilateral effort by organisations was inadequate to meet increasing demands to deliver more effective public services in ever more cost effective ways, as well as demonstrating competitiveness and stakeholder participation. The Morgan Report (Home Office, 1991b) was pivotal in shaping the concept of responsibilisation as a strategy for approaching crime prevention, recommending the delegation of responsibility for crime prevention to multi-agency, joined up partnerships within the community (Smith, 2000).

### **Joined up youth justice**

The exhortation to join up has been liberally applied across all spheres of government by New Labour. Geoff Mulgan, Special Advisor to Prime Minister Blair is generally credited as the originator of the mantra "joined up solutions to joined up problems", which headlined a proposed strategy for addressing social exclusion (see Mulgan, 1998). A wider interpretation of the concept of joining up was later developed through the Government White Paper *Modernising Government* (Home Office, 1999b), which set out the aim to comprehensively re-model the entire administration of government in the United Kingdom. The goal of joining up has since become pivotal to the drive to modernise all aspects of public administration during the life of the present government.

The overarching imperative to join up government is one that Pitts (2000) argued is intuitively rationale and desirable, based on common sense and the desire to ensure value for money. The joined up imperative is intended to inspire Government departments to work together on areas of joint concern,

*... to establish a new ideological, perhaps even a managerial climate in which the solutions to problems are not sought through the traditional means of individual government departments but rather through varied means according to the nature of the problem. (Clark, 2002, p.108).*

Efforts to join up nationally have a long history and predate New Labour. The amalgamation of the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health in 1968, which lasted for only 20 years, was designed to break down the barriers between government departments and was characterised by joined up principles. The Social Exclusion Unit, a key flagship of the modernising agenda, includes elements of the Central Policy Review Staff, a multi-disciplinary unit created by Prime Minister Edward Heath in 1981 to advise the cabinet on strategy and policy (Clark, 2002). Although, as Clark (2002), observed previous joined up initiatives rarely survived political power brokering and interest protection, substantial efforts have been made by the present government to provide a framework to support joined up criminal justice. Many different groups have been constituted that aim to join up national policy, including the Criminal Justice Joint Planning Unit.

At local level effort to join up criminal justice had some success in the past from initiatives that emerged from a series of seminars at Bramshill Police College in the late 1970s, pioneered in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in the 1970s and 1980s. The Exeter Youth Support Team, set up by Chief Constable John Alderson in 1979 is one early ancestor of YOTs while Northamptonshire Local Authority pioneered an innovative, integrated multi-agency approach to youth justice, developing a model that further inspired the shape and substance of today's YOTs (discussed in more detail in the next chapter). Many informal or localised multi-agency initiatives in youth justice flourished during this period, inspired largely by a research group at Lancaster University, led by notable academics such as Andrew Rutherford and Norman Tutt, who argued that diverting young people from care, court and custody required a systems management approach by all of the organisations involved in the youth justice system (see Cavadino and Dignan, 2002 for a summary of the impact of these developments). Both the National Association

for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders and the Rainer Foundation were also active during the 1980s in promoting joined up, systems management approaches to the complexity of youth offending problems.

### **New public managerialism**

The development of joined up approaches and systems management share common origins in youth justice. New public managerialism is a synthesis of the apolitical, pragmatic systems of public management that developed throughout the 1980s and early 1990s from a drive to reduce conflict amongst professional and interest groups, and encourage consensus within a uniform and co-ordinated system. Within the concept can be traced elements of corporatism, involving the centralisation of policy and increased government intervention, the erosion of boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors and the marketisation of service delivery (Pratt, 1989; Smith, 2000). The local crime prevention partnerships promulgated in the 1980s exemplified corporatist mechanisms for making sense of the processes of regulation and control required by the increasingly decentralisation and diversification of services favoured by the Conservatives.

New public managerialism has however both refined and elaborated corporatism and managerialism. Mechanisms have been developed to identify core competencies to ensure standardisation of delivery. Value for money principles promote competitiveness and economy. Non-essential responsibilities have been externalised to both private and voluntary agencies through tightly monitored service contracting. Service users have been redefined as customers to promote the notion of service satisfaction. Joint effort across multiple organisations has been harnessed through the blurring of agency and professional boundaries. The new form of public managerialism adopted by New Labour has embraced an overriding emphasis on achievement of quantifiable results through the setting of explicit targets, audited performance indicators and the practice of naming and shaming of poor performers in the public services (McLaughlin et al., 2001). Moreover new public managerialism in the *third way* places fiscal prudence as paramount within a system that is robustly controlled and tightly monitored. While the joined up imperative and new public managerialism are often considered symbiotic because of their common roots, they are not necessarily compatible after two decades of development.

The new youth justice system is administered by the principles of economics rather than the traditional ideologies of welfare, reform or punishment. The report *Misspent Youth: young people and crime* (Audit Commission, 1996) was pivotal in extending the principles of new public management to youth justice. The report concluded that the system was both inefficient and expensive. It was recommended that resources be redirected from processing young offenders to addressing delinquent and pre-delinquent behaviour through the implementation of a multi-layered coordination of strategies with an emphasis on what works. What works, or evidence-based practice, lies at the heart of *third way* managerialism.

### **What works principles**

The Government White Paper *Modernising Government* (Home Office, 1999b) proposed that a key aim of agencies working within the joined up agenda was one of disseminating best practice. The dissemination of best practice is also favoured by new managerialism with a stronger emphasis on evidence of what works. What works in the field of youth justice is however subject to situational, as well as political, interpretation. New managerialist approaches are located in the drive to implement policy that works either politically or pragmatically (Muncie and Hughes, 2002). It does not always embrace practice that works best for service users.

Between 1995 and 1998 Rutter et al. (1998) conducted a major review of international literature about antisocial behaviour by young people on behalf of the Department of Health. The review focussed on onset (why delinquency starts), persistence (why some young people continue to offend) and desistance (why most young people stop offending). Key findings were that few children are born with a physiological tendency towards deviant behaviour, and that families, education and communities play a vital role in shaping young lives. Crucially Rutter's review supported a view that offending is a multi-layered and primarily social phenomenon: children who cause trouble are most often troubled children or children in trouble.

Michael Rutter's co-authors, Henri Giller and Ann Hagell were members of the advisory panel to the Audit Commission report *Misspent Youth* (Audit Commission, 1996). It is perhaps not surprising that the 1996 report was strongly influenced by what was one of the most comprehensive reviews of literature on

antisocial behaviour in young people being conducted at the time. Almost all of the findings and recommendations about promising approaches to the onset, persistence and desistence of delinquency published by Rutter, Giller and Hagell in 1998 were included in the Government White Paper *No More Excuses: a new approach to tackling youth crime in England and Wales* (Home Office, 1997) and enacted by the *Crime and Disorder Act* in 1998. Many of the same target areas for intervention also figured highly in initiatives directed towards social exclusion (Smith, 2000), programmes such as: Sure Start, aimed at supporting early years education and parenting; the Teenage Pregnancy Initiative aimed at reducing the high numbers of young single mothers in the United Kingdom; the Connexions Service that combines the provision of positive adult role-models and advisors for all young people with careers advice and entry to training and employment; and the Social Inclusion Pupil Support Service, focussed on reducing the numbers of children excluded from schools. Each of these initiatives contains elements that can be traced back to the review of international literature on antisocial behaviour by young people carried out by Rutter and his colleagues from 1995 to 1998.

The emphasis placed by Rutter et al. (1998) on the dangers inherent in attempting to over-simplify the causes of delinquency received less support. At least five categories of causation for youth offending were identified through the studies reviewed:

1. Those responsible for individual differences in liability to offend, for example hyperactivity.
2. Those involved in translating liabilities into acts, for example dysfunctional parenting or peer group influence.
3. Those accounting for changes in differences in overall levels of crime, for example cultural change, availability of guns or drug use.
4. Those leading to situational variations in delinquency, for example environmental differences in localities.
5. Those responsible for the persistence of behaviour over time in a person's life, for example an unsupportive marriage to a deviant spouse.

Rutter et al. (1998) cautioned that expectations about the modifiability of delinquent behaviour must be realistic given the multiplicity of causes and complexities of

human behaviour. Crucially what works to address causation in one of the above categories might not work to address causation in another. Most causal processes are not simple or unidirectional and they involve indirect chain effects. Typically, the successful interventions reviewed had resulted in around a modest 12% reduction in reoffending and within these there were significant variations between studies as well as variations in their impact upon individuals. Many of the studies reviewed were not specifically delinquency preventative, with a range of different outcomes to be considered, and it was suggested by the authors that great caution should be employed in assuming any of the benefits reported would extend to crime prevention: *“anti social behaviour is common and multi-faceted, and may be measured differently by different people for different reasons”* (Rutter et al., 1998, p.27).

The potential limitations of mass intervention into what are intensely individual and socially situated problems received less prominence in subsequent government documents than those that suggested signs of promise. While research is capable of identifying what appears promising in a snapshot of time, *“crime is a moving target”* (Rutter et al., 1998, p.5) and is heavily influenced by demographic and social changes such as the increasing fragmentation of families. Changes to notions of childhood and the experience of youth, increasing opportunities for crime and the use of surveillance also contribute to movement in criminal activity over time. While some interventions can be evidenced to work with some young people in some circumstances, interventions are often most effective with young people who are least likely to become persistent or serious offenders: the low tariff offender from relatively stable home backgrounds (Farrington, 1996). YOTs may be in the unenviable position of having to be demonstrably evidence-based in their work when evidence about what works in youth offending is also a moving target.

### **Evidence-based practice**

The importance placed on the development of evidence-based practice by YOTs was reinforced on the first page of the report *New Strategies to Address Youth Offending: the national evaluation of the pilot Youth Offending Teams* (Holdaway et al., 2001). It was stressed by Simon Holdaway and his colleagues that the concept of evidence-based practice, described as *“work with offenders to reduce offending,*

*the success of which has been demonstrated through rigorous evaluation*" (Holdaway et al., 2001, p.1) was an essential aspect of the new youth justice system.

Crucially, the demonstration of success through rigorous evaluation requires a clear definition of the extent and nature of the problem being addressed, and a realistic assessment of what is achievable. As the previous chapter outlined however uncertainties surround the nature, significance and prevalence of youth crime in England and Wales. It can be difficult to determine what is achievable or desirable. There are often considerable gaps in the research literature available to *inform practice and the difficulty of implementing research evidence into practice* is well documented (see for example Trinder, 1996; Dunning et al., 1998; Black, 2001; Sheldon, 2001; Webb, 2001). Evidence-based practice has been strongly criticised for the centrality of its place in the toolkit of new public managerialism, with its implicitly political agenda (Webb, 2001). The autonomy and discretion of professional practitioners might be compromised by reducing services for highly complex individuals to outcome targets based on different interpretations of homogenous research findings. Bias can influence how research findings are translated into policy, and practice objectives. Crucially political bias can result in evidence being selected, discarded, distorted or ignored altogether.

### **Unevidenced-based practice**

Evidence from research is overwhelming that imprisonment does not work to deter children from committing crime beyond the period of their incarceration (see Rutherford, 1994; Muncie, 1999; Moore, 2000; Nacro 2000; Smith, 2003). For example it was reported that 80% of 14-17 year olds released from prison in 1999 were reconvicted within two years (Community Care, 8-14 July 2004, p.28) and 67% of the children released from one of the first private jails for children were arrested again within 20 weeks (Hagell et al., 2000).

Evidence from research is equally overwhelming that imprisonment does not work for the welfare of children. Among many indictments to the incarceration of children published, a Home Office *Comprehensive Spending Review of Secure Accommodation for Remanded and Sentenced Juveniles* (Home Office, 1998b) reported that secure estate regime standards were inconsistent and often poor, costs varied considerably and, crucially, there was little positive they could report about the

arrangements made for providing secure accommodation for remanded and sentenced children. In a thematic review undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (1997) it was estimated that as many as 50% of children held in prison on remand had mental health needs, while 39% had a disability or serious health problems. The review concluded: "*the prison service is essentially an organisation for adults, neither structured nor equipped to deal with children..... more damage is done to immature adolescents than to any other type of prisoner, by current conditions*" (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 1997, p.6).

The Audit Commission is highly influential and its reports pivotal in shaping the direction of youth justice reform. The Commission's work is however rarely the subject of critical analysis, "*it is as if the critical faculties of youth justice academics and practitioners are suspended when confronted with financial costings, statistics, or 'evidence' when it is gathered by accountants, auditors or economists*". (Jones 2001, p. 362-363). In a detailed critique of reports on the youth justice system by the Audit Commission, Jones (2001) claimed that the Commission's use of evidence tended to be highly selective and that, crucially they appeared not to understand the complexity of youth justice and the criminal justice system.

Some key headlines from *Misspent Youth: young people and crime* (Audit Commission, 1996) are regularly reproduced to support the tough stance taken against youth crime and the need for reformation of the youth justice system. One headline proposed that in 1994 two out of every five known offenders were under the age of 21 and of these, a quarter of the under 18-age group were estimated to commit over seven million offences each year. A second headline concerned an estimate that public services spent around £1 billion each year processing and dealing with youth crime. Jones (2001) challenged many of the estimations made by the Audit Commission about the data reported and considered these to be fundamentally flawed. He proposed that the Commission had attempted to make unrealistic comparisons between adult and youth populations, between British Crime Survey data and reported offences, and between proportions of undetected and detected crimes. The assumptions that resulted were, Jones proposed, unlikely to be supported by anyone with experience in the field of youth justice, for example practitioners. An assumption that the proportion of undetected crime committed by under-18's was equal to that undetected in the over-18 population appeared to be



fundamentally flawed. Undetected crime committed by juveniles is more likely to be less premeditated, less sophisticated and more liable to detection than that committed by adults. The undetected offences of juveniles are also more likely to be age-related: under age drinking, traffic and criminal damage and not the fraud, theft from employer, blackmail or murder represented in the crimes of the adult population. Jones (2001) considered the calculations of spending on youth crime by public services organisations to be unfounded, lacking the support of evidence published by any of the agencies listed in the 1996 Audit Commission report.

The Audit Commission are in many ways the custodians of new public managerialism, which influences almost every aspect of how the new youth justice system has been organised and is managed. The critique offered by Jones (2001) of the Commission's approach to the use and presentation of evidence suggests the veracity of their publications might benefit from more critical attention than they tend to receive. What works in youth justice appears to be primarily determined by a situational assessment of what works to maintain system coherence and public support for government policies, rather than for the benefit of children or crime prevention. The adoption of evidence-based practice appears to be a strong requirement for those charged with implementing youth justice reforms, but rather more selectively adopted by those with the power to direct the reforms.

### **The strengths of the new youth justice system**

Analysis of the historical and political contours of the youth justice system indicates that it is a complex and often contradictory field in which to work. The new system however has two significant advantages over its predecessors, it is well coordinated and considerably better funded.

The Youth Justice Board was launched in October 1998 with an £85 million development fund dedicated to promoting bail support and effective supervision schemes throughout the country. YOTs have access to some of the wide array of national initiatives that together form the social exclusion strategy: £7 million launched the National Family and Parenting Institute, £525 million was made available to target truancy and exclusion, £540 million assisted the Sure Start Initiative to build on early years provision and expand the role of health visitors, £217 million was invested in approaches to counter the growing drug culture (Nacro,

1999). There has also been a steady expansion in the staffing levels of YOTs, from 4,000 in 2001 to more than 10,000 in 2003 (Youth Justice Board News, September 2003).

The Youth Justice Board has been granted the power to control and direct the youth justice system, reducing to an extent the potential influence of power brokering between government departments. The Board has been active in directing joined up policy development and supporting joined up practice through conferences, training programmes and website. It also leads a strong campaign to promote a positive public image of youth offending services, which is crucial to alleviate public anxiety about crime committed by children and to support community based sentences. The targets set by the Youth Justice Board for improvements to the efficiency of the youth justice system have been challenging, one of the most publicised successes being the time it takes to process a young person between arrest and sentence. By October 2001 the Board was able to celebrate the achievement of one of New Labour's election pledges to halve the time between the arrest and sentencing of a young offender. Lord Warner, Chairman of the Youth Justice Board, considered that by "*addressing offending behaviour more quickly, the system is made more just, more effective and more efficient*" (Youth Justice Board News, October 2001 supplement).

Only four of twelve YOT performance measures for the year 2002/03 – 2004/05 directly concerned the experience of the children and young people coming into contact with the youth justice system, which were to:

- reduce remands to the secure estate to 30% of the total number of remand episodes recorded in 2001
- reduce the use of custodial sentences to no more than 6% of the sentences imposed by both Youth and Crown Courts by 2004/05
- reduce the involvement of young people in recorded crime categories of vehicle crime, domestic burglary and robbery
- achieve a 5% reduction in re-offending rates of subsequent cohorts compared to the first cohort, reported January 2002

(Youth Justice Board, 2002)

If the above performance targets were met it would be difficult to argue against a view that the new youth justice system was capable of reducing young crime and improving the circumstances of some young offenders. Signs of promise and

system efficiency must however be weighed against what the new youth justice system costs the public purse and crucially what cost is born by a wide range of stakeholders.

### **Potential weaknesses of the new youth justice system**

Set against the opportunities brought by increased investment and coherent organisation there are inherent weaknesses in the new youth justice system. Crucially the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* failed to join up youth offending with the systems of child protection and welfare that were disaggregated through the *Children Act 1989*, perpetuating the disenfranchisement of young offenders from their peers in England and Wales. Youth offending services have been refocused towards prevention, channelling a large proportion of YOT work into addressing the wide-ranging symptoms of social exclusion, within which youth crime is considered an unacceptable corollary. It remains unclear however if YOTs are intended to be social welfare agencies or agents of the criminal justice system.

It seems inevitable that increasing numbers of children will become enmeshed in the criminal justice system as the net cast by effort to curb anti-social behaviour widens. While youth offending services traditionally devoted their attention to young criminals they are now required to encompass a very broad range of children, in a wider age band, and to include families and the victims of youth crime as core service users. The boundaries between criminal and anti-social behaviours have become blurred and the boundaries between adult and child in the criminal justice system have also been eroded. The focus of YOTs has widened to encompass breadth at the expense of depth.

The Home Office, through the Youth Justice Board, controls the youth justice system more robustly than has ever been the case. YOTs that fail to have their comprehensive annual youth justice action plan agreed by the Youth Justice Board can have funding withheld from them (Youth Justice Board News, March 2001). The publication of action plans ensures that YOTs adhere to the myriad of principles, aims and targets of the new youth justice system. Additional monitoring for compliance takes place through regular and rigorous inspections, and the results of these are published for public scrutiny. YOTs have little influence on how youth justice policy is interpreted or implemented and even less autonomy. The extent and

pace of change brought about by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, and the deluge of national initiatives and legislation that followed, acts to focus practice effort on compliance and stifles opportunities for experienced youth justice practitioners to contribute to debate about the wider philosophical and moral implications of the reforms.

The pressure to conform to a radically new way of working has been intense. When YOTs were rolled out nationally in April 2000 they relied heavily on experienced youth justice professionals who provided youth justice services prior to joining the new teams. It was primarily Youth Justice Team social workers and probation officers that formed the core of the new teams (Holdaway et al., 2001). The youth justice system, and those working within it, prior to 1998 have however been the targets of severe criticism. The youth justice professionals who formed the backbone of the new system received a large portion of the blame, in an inherently blame orientated public service culture, for past failures: *“an excuse culture has developed within the youth justice system. It excuses itself for its inefficiency, and too often excuses the young offenders before it”* (Jack Straw, forward to Home Office, 1997). Lord Warner, Chairman of the Youth Justice Board, summarised the prevailing attitude in a press release, claiming that: *“an incoherent stumbling amateur system is being replaced with a new professional service. For the first time in this country we have properly trained multi-agency staff, working to agreed plans”* (Youth Justice Board Press Release, 30 March 2000).

The pressure on youth justice practitioners to wholeheartedly support the reforms is strong. Few may wish to appear associated with an *“incoherent stumbling amateur system”* (Lord Warner, above), many may consider the practical benefits tend to outweigh the new system’s less appealing characteristics.

## **Chapter summary**

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was in many ways a showcase for a new government’s key themes and policy goals. The new youth justice system was intended to demonstrate to new electoral constituencies that a refocused and remodelled socialist party was capable of holding the tough stance on crime associated with their Conservative rivals, while maintaining a strong grip on the economy. The additional goal of simultaneously being tough on the causes of crime

aimed to draw youth justice into a radical and far-reaching and much wider programme of social reform and government modernisation.

Crime and disorder, particularly among children and young people has become inextricably linked to social exclusion in England and Wales, they share the same policy agenda with a miasma of approaches that can be difficult to categorise from traditional philosophical positions or sets of principles. Elements of fundamentally different criminal justice and social exclusion strategies have been combined to form a position that is characteristically New Labour. Confusion and conflict are not however new experiences for youth justice in England and Wales, which has been in a state of perpetual uncertainty about its guiding moral principles and purpose for more than 150 years.

It tends to be overlooked that part of the United Kingdom succeeded in creating a juvenile justice system based on the principle of social education, which removed almost all children from criminal proceedings up to the end of compulsory full-time education, more than 40 years ago (see the Kilbrandon Report, 1964; Bruce, 1988). The youth justice system in Scotland is considered "*one of the few bastions of a welfare-based youth justice system throughout the world*" (Muncie and Hughes, 2002 p.8) but it has largely failed to make an impression on policy makers south of the border. The different approaches taken towards children who cause trouble between two countries that are so closely linked by geography, history and government powerfully illustrates the impact of political machinations on policy choices that have far reaching consequences.

There is a sense of convenience that philosophical confusion tends to be overlooked within the overarching New Labour goal to administer the state in what has become known as the *third way*. The *third way* may be claimed to be beyond the dogma of left or right wing politics but it has been characterised by Szreter (1998) as a new political ideology, which is yet to be fully elaborated. *Third way* political administrations claim to govern competently with attention to the use of common sense and the principle of value for money (Pitts, 2000). It is appropriate to common sense, and fiscal prudence, to seek to join up effort and resources at all levels of government and the public sector, and to pursue joined up solutions to joined up problems. Rational aspirations are not however simple to implement by

complex, interrelated organisational systems, each with social and historical dimensions. The Government's aims to radically reform fundamental aspects of the fabric of the nation's administrative structures can sometimes appear naïve, lacking elaborated philosophical foundations on which to build.

The difficulties New Labour have encountered in translating a confusion of policy positions into a new youth justice system based on common sense and value for money principles is brought into sharp relief by the contradictions that have emerged. A central paradox is that joined up thinking appears less capable of promoting joined up government, policy and practice when it is in direct competition with the principles of new public management that were put in place to support it. Additional layers of administration, audit and monitoring have been constituted, at considerable cost, to ensure that value for money principles are pursued in the public sector, and are controlled from the centre. Managerialism is concerned with maintaining internal system coherence. It is driven by economics and is typically apolitical. New public management systems take little interest in the notions of cooperation, participation and consultation that are essential to support joined up effort. The two key drivers of youth justice, joined up government and new public management, do not share a common philosophical or political ideology and are in constant tension.

Tensions between the two main drivers of the new youth justice system are manifested in the rhetoric surrounding the use of evidence. Managerialism and joined up government processes require that youth justice be administered on what works principles. Youth justice practitioners are required to demonstrate that their practice is evidence-based. Determination of what works from a managerialist perspective and from a joined up perspective are however different, neither determination appears to include what works for the increasing numbers of children and young people who are imprisoned in England and Wales. What counts as evidence in youth justice is subject to shifting interpretation and bias, and may not provide the firm foundation for practice it is claimed to offer. The use of evidence by the Audit Commission, pivotal in outlining the need for youth justice reform and the methods for administering it (Audit Commission, 1996), might benefit from closer enquiry. Many of the contradictions identified in this chapter are being played out at the macro level of youth justice. YOTs are expected to encompass breadth of client

group at the expense of depth of focus, while some of the fundamental questions about how justice for children and young people can be achieved remain unanswered. It is possible however that the benefits and opportunities the new system has offered at the micro level may outweigh its weaknesses. The new system has been in receipt of considerably increased and sustained investment by government who are publicly committed to ensuring success. YOTs have access to many opportunities that were denied their predecessors to develop new and innovative ways to prevent offending.

There is a logic to developing joined up policy and strategy to address the *inherently complicated, interrelated and wide ranging causes of crime, particularly those that manifest themselves in the behaviour of persistent and serious young offenders*. There is also logic to how the concept of joined up government has been applied to addressing the problem of social exclusion, within which the youth justice system now resides. Logic does not however wholly extend to the YOT model. It appears to have been assumed that joined up practice is essential for the delivery of joined up youth justice. There is no definition of what joined-up practice is or if, or how, it is different from notions of effective practice, which itself is open to a variety of situated interpretations. It is unclear if constructing new teams of professional staff from different and diverse organisations is the best mechanism for promoting joined up practice or indeed if joined up practice is an essential feature of multi-agency teams. The next chapter moves from the contextual environment of youth justice and YOTs to consider the abundant terminology in use to describe efforts to *join up and mechanisms that might assist the endeavour*. Precedents for multi-agency teamwork are examined and the concept of interprofessional practice explored.

## Chapter Four

### Joined Up Language, Practice and Precedents

#### Introduction

The previous chapter examined the history and politics of youth justice in England and Wales to identify the contextual characteristics of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). New Labour's youth justice policy can be difficult to characterise. The new language of political debate and the *third way* tends to imbue key policy themes with ambiguous language. While headline slogans such as "joined up government" and "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" may serve a useful purpose in anchoring the aspirations of government in the minds of the electorate, the form and functions of YOTs are shaped by key concepts that are poorly defined.

One of many criticisms levelled at youth justice prior to the introduction of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was that organisations and their staffs failed to communicate effectively with one another, impeding increased cooperation and collaboration. Effective communication however requires a common understanding of language and consistency in the use of the terms that describe the concepts and principles that must be shared. Chapter Four begins with an exploration of the perplexing range of terms used to describe the processes and aims of interprofessional and interorganisational practice, which are the foundations of joined up youth justice. The language of joined up government is deconstructed in an attempt to clarify the meaning of what is required of YOTs and the new youth justice system. Different interpretations of the meaning of collaboration and partnership are discussed and new, perhaps more appropriate, ways of describing the processes and aims of the new joined up youth justice system are proposed.

The majority of YOT members are professional practitioners. The chapter considers how professions and professionals might be challenged by the joined up imperative and the barriers to joining up that might be encountered in YOTs. It will be suggested that diversity between individual positions and attitudes may be as great within professions as it is between them, the most unpredictable independent variable affecting the potential of joined up teamwork to be effective may be the



attitudes of individual team members towards it. The potential influence of gender and power differentials in interprofessional practice is then considered, followed by a summary of what might be learned about YOTs from the experience of community mental health care teams, and the Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux. The chapter concludes with a summary of what can be learned about joined up initiatives in criminal justice from published literature.

### **The language of joining up**

The policy drive to join up has generated a plethora of new legislation and a vast new vocabulary. Loxley (1997) identified 10 organisations and 25 Acts of Parliament targeted specifically at joining up health and social services between 1970 and 1990 alone. A deluge of new legislation has since followed. The joined up imperative has been comprehensively taken up across the public sector, very few contemporary authors fail to refer to the concept in some way. Organisations and practitioners are urged to cooperate, coordinate, collaborate and join together to form partnerships. Key process terms however appear in publications in a variety of contexts and they often have subtle, sometimes significantly, different meanings.

A benchmark of definitions was sought to assist understanding of the central processes and concepts of joined up youth justice:

Cooperate	To work together, help, assist.
Coordinate	To bring (various parts, movements etc.) into a proper or required relation, work or act together effectively.
Collaborate	To work jointly, cooperate traitorously with an enemy.
Partnership	The state of being a partner, (a partner, shares or takes part with another or others).

(Oxford Compact English Dictionary, 1996).

The above definitions suggest the terms “cooperate” and “coordinate” are relatively unambiguous and form a relationship with one another. It would be difficult to coordinate functions into a required, effective or proper relationship if the human actors involved were unable or unwilling to cooperate. Payne (2000) described the coordination of social policy as the process of achieving improved relationships between the objectives and administration of different organisations. Two key goals

of a YOT are to improve cooperation between practitioners, and to improve cooperation between youth offending partner organisations to enable the development of coordinated strategy and planning.

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration has been described as a process through which a number of agencies worked together to improve cooperative practice between them (Payne, 2000). The drive for increased collaboration has extended across the public sector from transport to land use and from the provision of social housing to youth offending. The meaning of collaboration, and methods of achieving it, may however hold different meanings for the professionals and organisations involved and the potential for confusion is rarely acknowledged in policy documents (Loxley, 1997; Freeman et al., 2000; Leathard, 2003).

Collaborative ventures can be approached with some suspicion by potential collaborators, possibly because of the term's association with perceptions of a traitor or enemy (Loxley, 1997; Leathard, 2003). Hague et al. (1996) considered that collaborative initiatives in crime prevention tended to be traditionally regarded from two conflicting perspectives. One perspective is that organisations are largely benevolent and collaboration inevitably results in improved crime prevention and services. The opposing view is that collaboration among the disparate organisations involved with the perpetrators of crime, the victims of crime, the criminal justice system and welfare services leads to heightened state social control and risks the infringement of civil liberties. Enforced collaboration often elicits a heightened level of suspicion particularly since collaborative ventures rarely result in equal benefit for all participants.

The previous chapter developed a view that the aims of joined up government and new public managerialism can be in competition. While the demand for organisations to collaborate has increased, the pace of change wrought by legislation has also increased workloads, stress and turbulence, tending to reinforce barriers to collaboration rather than assist in their removal (Hiscock and Pearson, 1999). Moreover the introduction of the internal market to public services and the imposition of layers of inspection and audit mechanisms encourage an insidious culture of competitiveness, which drives potential collaborators further

apart. Organisations compelled to collaborate, cooperate, coordinate and enter into formal partnerships are simultaneously exalted to greater efficiency and proven effectiveness, while in competition for finite resources and the achievement of competitive performance targets.

Moss Kanter (1994) reviewed collaborative alliances in business communities across the world and considered that, to be successful, collaboration must result in recognisable, quantifiable and additional benefits for each organisation involved. She proposed that collaborative alliances were living systems that evolved progressively and were not easy to control formally, relying heavily on an intricate network of interpersonal connections and internal infrastructures to support them. Even when collaborative alliances had a high-perceived value, Moss Kanter (1998) proposed these were likely to be terminated if the time and resources demanded of them were in direct conflict with the core functions of member organisations. It appears highly likely that organisations are capable of accommodating a finite number of demands upon them any given time.

Education and health organisations have been reluctant to commit to a collaborative approach to youth offending, often failing to see the relevance of YOT work to their own core business (Bailey and Williams, 1999; Holdaway et al., 2000). It is easy to forget that the effectiveness of public sector organisations is primarily assessed on their ability to fulfil statutory obligations to their core client groups and these must be balanced against their commitment to local youth offending partnerships. Crucially public service organisations have little choice of potential collaborative partners, and hold little influence over the scope and duration of a collaborative venture demanded by national policy. They are simultaneously under intense pressure from regular changes to policy, structures, procedures and funding streams. Initiative overload is a significant threat to the capacity of public sector organisations to collaborate effectively in the ways desired of them (Leathard, 2003).

## **Partnership**

Payne (2000) proposed that partnerships required long-term agreements between organisations about how much coordination was required and the means of achieving it. The term “partnership” has however achieved greater significance in the agenda of joined up government than simply long-term contractual arrangements

between organisations. Hudson (2002) considered that the concept of partnership was the key to the political *third way* of dismantling the “Berlin Wall” separating public sector organisations (the “Berlin Wall” analogy is generally credited to Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, 1997: see for example Hiscock and Pearson, 1999).

The dictionary definition of partnership offered above does not suggest that all partners have an equal stake. In commercial ventures partners often hold different percentages of shares in a partnership or a company. The prominence given to the concept of partnership within the joined up agenda does however imply equity for all stakeholders. However there are considerable power differentials between the primary agencies involved such as the Police, Probation and Social Services (Blagg et al., 1988); voluntary organisations such as the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders and the Rainer Foundation; and groups of service users who include children, young people and their families, and the victims of crime (Bailey and Williams, 2000). The latter service user groups are encouraged to participate in, or become involved in, the shaping and evaluation of services in the public sector. Participation and involvement are however activities that largely depend upon invitation, placing the service user and victims in the secondary position of being consulted on issues, in ways determined by power holders (Edwards, 2001). Youth justice practitioners are rarely identified as partners in the youth justice system, although they are arguably key stakeholders. As Blagg et al. observed in 1988 *“the tendency to neglect power differentials between various agencies which might come together in an interagency initiative is a serious weakness in current policy thinking, which constrains the practical feasibility of multi-agency work as it is presently conceived”* (Blagg et al., 1988, p.205).

There is little evidence that policy thinking more than a decade later has moved on, *Figure 4* (Chapter Two, p. 13) illustrated that key stakeholder groups, in particular service users and victims of youth crime, risk being squeezed out of youth offending partnerships. The meaning of “partnership” and “collaboration” are rarely defined in ways that are clear to stakeholder groups, possibly because the means of achieving these goals also remain unclear and are implemented in different ways for different purposes.

## Descriptions of joined up work

YOTs are often described in literature as “multi-agency teams”. The terms “multi-agency” and “inter-agency” however can be used interchangeably even within the same book, report or article (see for example Blagg et al., 1988; Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994; Hague et al., 1996; Bailey and Williams, 2000).

The term “agency” is often used in literature to describe all organisations involved with the new youth justice system, including voluntary and private organisations. In this thesis the term “agency” refers to “*the departments or bodies providing a specific service for a government*” (above), while the term “organisation” encompasses all of the statutory, voluntary and private organisations required to work together to preventing offending by children. Dictionary definitions of the key terms used to describe the organisation of joined up work in youth justice are reproduced below (*Figure 7*) in the combinations that can be found in literature.

Figure 7- Definition of terms used in descriptions of joined up work

	<b>Multi:</b> "Many, more than one"	<b>Inter:</b> "Between, among, mutually reciprocally"	<b>Intra:</b> "On the inside, within"	<b>Trans:</b> "Across, beyond, on or to the other side of, into another place"
<b>Process</b>	Requires the input of more than one or many:	Implies the adaptation of roles, skills, knowledge, responsibilities to adjust to those of other:	Focuses on the processes and functions within one:	Requires the development of new roles, skills, knowledge and responsibilities additional to, or different from those traditionally offered by:
<b>Agency</b> "A department or body providing a specific service for a government"	agencies	agencies	agency	participating agencies
<b>Profession</b> "A body of people engaged in a profession vocation or calling that involves some branch of advanced learning or science"	professional groups and the functions and activities associated with them	professions	profession	the professions involved
<b>Discipline</b> "A branch of instruction or learning"	representatives of a branch of learning or knowledge, often members of professions	disciplines	discipline	the disciplines involved
<b>Organisation</b> "An organised body, especially a business, charity etc"	organisation from the public, private or voluntary sector	organisations	organisation	the organisations involved

(Oxford Compact English Dictionary, 1996)

Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994) took the view that both the terms "inter-agency" and "multi-agency" were synonymous with a wide definition of the term "partnership", described as any type of arrangement involving multiple agencies directly. The crime prevention partnerships reviewed by these authors included formal and informal arrangements, where specific planning took place and working agreements

made between public sector agencies. Liddle and Gelsthorpe proposed that there were many models of partnership in youth justice that could be described as “multi-agency” but they reserved the use of “inter-agency” for situations where partnerships also involved the building of relationships around contractual agreements.

Crawford (1998) also considered both inter-agency and multi-agency approaches to be synonymous with partnership. Adam Crawford's view however was that the term “multi-agency” described the coming together of various agencies to cooperate in relation to a specific problem, without significantly altering or affecting the core of the work each performed. He took a view similar to that of Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994) in that “inter-agency” described the development of relationships that interpreted and therefore affected the normal internal functions of an agency, and resulted in interdependence and adaptations to forms, structures and practices. The prefix “inter”, when applied to joining up public service functions, appears to signify the development of meaningful relationships and adaptations to practice. This proposition is further reinforced by a review of the use of language in literature concerning professional teams.

There is no significant difference in how the terms “interdisciplinary” and “interprofessional” are applied in literature. Both terms are used interchangeably to describe to how individuals affect, or are affected by, working cooperatively with others who have a different knowledge base, practice culture, skills, or values. The term “interprofessional” is however most prominent in literature emerging from the health sector concerning the drive to fuse health and social care organisation and practice (see for example Hewison and Sim, 1998; Norman and Peck, 1999; Williams and Laungani, 1999; Molyneux, 2001; Hudson, 2002). Literature from a psychological perspective tends towards a preference for the term “interdisciplinary” (see for example Derry et al., 1998). “Disciplinary” in the context of a psychological enquiry focuses on the cognitive processes involved in the acquisition and sharing of a discreet body of knowledge, skills, power or values. Research in this field tends to focus on the adaptations required by staff to work cooperatively with colleagues both within the same profession; for example relations between psychiatrists and nurses, and with those from different professions; for example relationships between social workers and general practitioners.

The prefix “multi” has a variety of uses in relation to practice. The term “multi-disciplinary” has gained more currency in respect of practice in North America where the structure of social welfare services has a longer history of complex cooperative organisational and practice structures (Kane, 1980). Payne (2000) considered that “multiprofessional” practice simply involved several different professional groups working together without adaptation to aspects of their professional role, their skills or knowledge base, or their agency responsibilities. In contrast work by Poulton and West (1993) and Freeman et al. (2000), although also concerned with multiprofessional practice, strongly focused on the adaptations that were required of professionals to adapt to joined up teamwork.

A detailed examination of the language of joining up might be considered as something of a pedantic academic exercise. It is highly likely that a variety of terms will continue to be utilised by authors from different disciplines as they seek an understanding of the processes of joining up professional practice. It is possible that new conventions will be devised, adding further to the potential for confusion. It can however be strongly argued that common understanding of the language in use is an essential component of effective communication, from which meaningful social relationships are built. Confusion about what is desired or intended by the promotion of different and often-problematic new work practices, with different descriptions, does not assist professional organisations or practitioners to understand what is expected of them. The question, as yet unanswered, of what degree of adaptation is desired of professionals and professional organisations is a key source of uncertainty in the development of YOTs and joined up youth justice.

### **Defining joined up youth justice**

The analysis undertaken of the language used to describe the concepts and processes underpinning the new joined up youth justice system does not appear to support the description of a YOT as a multi-agency team. A shared policy objective of joined up government and new public management is that organisational and professional boundaries be at least minimised to promote joined up effort, and that organisations and their members must learn to adapt to a new way of working. YOTs might be most accurately described as interprofessional teams, recognising the adaptations that they are required to make to facilitate cooperative practice.



It might similarly be more useful to consider the youth offending service as one that aims to be interorganisational. A key policy aim is for organisations to adapt their strategic management and planning cycles, policies, resources and services to facilitate a collaborative response to youth offending and to promote partnership.

While the term “transorganisational” did not feature in any of the literature reviewed for this thesis it might most accurately embrace the administrative concept underpinning the structure of the new youth justice system. This approach requires *“the development of new roles, skills, knowledge and responsibilities additional to, or different from those traditionally offered by the organisations involved”* (see Figure 7 above). It is further argued that the overall goal of joined up policy and legislation since the election of New Labour in 1997 has been towards integration: *“combine parts into a whole, complete (an imperfect thing) by the addition of new parts, bring or come into equal participation in or membership of society”* (Oxford Compact English Dictionary, 1996). It is the New Labour Government’s view that only a formal, structured; centrally controlled model of integration is capable of sustaining the high levels of cooperation, coordination, partnership and collaboration considered essential to deliver increasingly consumer-led public services in the *third way* pragmatism of late modernity.

Some authors suggest that policies aimed at integration at organisational and practice level may be primarily a response to the failure of successive administrations to integrate at government level (Blagg et al., 1988; Loxley, 1997; Irvine et al., 2002). Even though they might be generally accepted as *“a good thing”*, policies promoting interorganisational and interprofessional relationships often lack coherent direction from joined up government, resulting in barriers that organisations and practitioners find difficult to overcome (Loxley, 1997, p.15). The ambiguity of the language of joining up at all levels might be an indication of confusion about what is possible and why sociological writing about the achievement of joined up of practice has remained largely pessimistic. Professional organisations and their members tend to become the focus of blame for system failures and new ways sought to compel them to change their ways.

## Professions and professionals

Individual workers, largely recognised as belonging to professional groups, dominate the majority of organisations that form the youth justice service. It is almost impossible for one single profession to completely master all of the skills and knowledge for one area of service, or to lay exclusive claim to an ability to respond to any specific problem or need. Every profession and expert system necessarily overlaps with others. Professional separatism, and the relationship between the myriad of disciplines involved in meeting the needs of service users are generally however considered to be major sources of tension in how public services are designed and delivered (Irvine et al., 2002).

Freidson (2001, p.13) considered that what constituted a profession was often poorly defined in literature. Professions have emerged in different ways, each with different histories and hierarchies, different requirements for training, registration and legal status and diverse structures of pay and conditions of service. The boundaries between them can be differentiated by size of membership, demographics, gender composition, the class origin of members, and their educational attainment and status (Irvine et al., 2002). While Freidson (2001) proposed that the term “profession” served to distinguish them and the problems they encounter from those of other occupations, he also considered that what professions have in common with more humble occupations tend to be obscured with a “*fog of mystique*” (Freidson 2001, p.13).

There is an interesting synergy between organisations and their membership. Culture often acts to draw explicit boundaries around an occupational group, which further proclaim its distinctiveness and act to consolidate whatever bonds may already exist between members. Individuals tend to choose a specific profession because it embodies the aspirations, principles or goals that most appeal to them. Professional organisational cultures and values then tend to be reinforced, and defended, by their membership because they identify closely with them.

A study undertaken by Dalley (1993) explored a widely held view that it was primarily allegiance to the belief systems and attitude sets of professions that created barriers to improving interprofessional cooperation. The study findings however suggested that professional ideology: “*particular sets of values and moral*

*attitudes, generally acquired implicitly over time through training and induction processes of professional qualification*" (Dalley, 1993, p.28), might not be constant across a profession. Although Dalley found differences present in the politico-moral attitudes of the groups of general practitioners, social workers and health visitors who took part in the study, the greatest attitude differences were found to be between different categories of respondent within a professional group, for example between managers and frontline staff.

Dalley (1993) used the metaphor "tribalism" described how professional allegiances were regularly modified and redefined in interprofessional healthcare settings. Dalley proposed that allegiances to professional values and attitudes were not fixed, individuals tended to form new tribes on the basis of common perceptions about the welfare of service users as well as to protect perceived common self-interest. Members of a variety of different professions often formed new tribes to define themselves as different from others, working within their organisation and in other organisations, particularly when they perceived external threats.

Professionals in the public sector encounter many external threats, both to their employment tenure and to the level of service offered, through public sector cost saving exercises, restructuring and policy swings. Managerialism may have fundamentally changed the nature of professional models of practice: "*now, 'performance' is the key word with all its connotations, including the theatrical: professions are, more than ever, on show to a paying audience*" (Simic, 1997, p.3). Professional tasks in services concerned with vulnerable people in crisis situations require a high level of individual judgement and professional discretion regarding the circumstances of individual service users (Hudson, 2002). Hudson's concern was that top-down models of policy often failed to appreciate the importance of the skills required by professional practitioners in carrying out their daily tasks, or the pressure under which they practice. Simic (1997) proposed that the key to success in the public sector was an empowered, valued and motivated workforce but observed that this might be the opposite of the experience of many professionals at work.

The costs of employing professional skills and knowledge, and the individualised discretion sought by professionals have become legitimate targets for political intervention. Freidson (2001) took the view that professionals, and all they

represent, had become anathematic to neo-liberal forms of governance. Freidson identified a trend in North America towards the erosion of the status of professions through an increase in the use of less qualified support workers, aimed at cutting costs and strengthening the central control of social care. The identification of social problems and the solutions to them in North America appeared to be increasingly determined by a small professional and academic elite, monitored for compliance by government, and implemented by low status workers. A similar trend might be traced in the United Kingdom with an increase in the employment of community police officers, nursing and classroom assistants, with less standing and considerably less pay than their professional counterparts. In the field of youth justice the Government defines both the problem of youth crime and disorder, and the solutions to it through the Youth Justice Board, which also monitors compliance. An overly strong focus on professional barriers to change tends to divert attention from the multiple layers of factors that influence cooperative partnerships, and the importance of understanding the part played by human actors.

Freidson (2001) was concerned that application of the term “profession” tended to prevent a group of professionals being recognised simply as workers sharing a common occupation. It can be argued that the development of most specialist bodies of knowledge and skill require a group of like-minded people who identify with it, practice it and distinguish it from other forms of work through common training. Common intellectual, social and economic interests are maintained through doing the same work as others in a “*conscious community*” (Collins, 1979, p.58). Professional knowledge and skill, in the same way as technical or academic knowledge and skill, has intrinsic worth to an individual. The identity it generates becomes part of valued personal identity (Hudson, 2002). Professional boundaries play an important part in maintaining social closure and creating mutually reinforcing and secure social environments for individuals (Freidson, 2001). It should not perhaps be surprising that boundaries tend to be nourished and protected around professional workgroups and can sometimes be difficult to cross, particularly if the purpose or method of boundary crossing is not clearly outlined in policy.

## Interprofessional practice

It can become easy to focus on how difficult it has been to achieve the ideal of integrating practice across professional and organisational boundaries to the extent desired by policy makers and lose sight of the amount of networking, liaison and cooperative practice that necessarily takes place in the daily working lives of most professionals, including those involved in the youth justice system: “*what everyone is really talking about is simply learning and working together*” (Leathard, 2003, p.5).

Hudson (2002) considered it was essential to challenge the myth that professionals were incapable of pursuing common interests or develop trusting relationships for the benefit of service users, without the influence of top-down policy. As Irvine et al. (2002) observed it is an ethical imperative for professionals to work together. Interprofessionality might be usefully characterised simply as effective professional practice when different professional organisations are involved with the same communities or different professionals are involved with the same service user (Hewison and Sim, 1998; Amery, 2000). Early work by Davis (1988) to explore the philosophical foundations of interdisciplinary work in the health sector asserted that professional competence was best viewed as a continuum of skills development, within which the highest order of professional skill was competence in working effectively across professional boundaries (Davis, 1988, p.25 below). The use and understanding of language, which can be reinforced by professional cultures and highlighted by organisational differences, may present one of the greatest barriers to the development of Davis’ concept of trans-disciplinarity or contemporary interprofessionality:

Uni-disciplinarity	Feeling confident and competent in ones own discipline.
Intra-disciplinarity	Belief that working with fellow professionals can make an important contribution to care.
Multi-disciplinarity	Recognition that other disciplines have important contributions to make.
Inter-disciplinarity	A willingness to work with others in the joint evaluation and planning of patient care.
Trans-disciplinarity	Making a commitment to teach and practice with other disciplines across traditional boundaries for the benefit or the immediate needs of service users.

Poulton and West (1993) proposed interprofessionalism accrued from professionals sharing a vision of what was possible and desirable for the benefit of service users, crucially it also relied on skilled communication and a shared understanding of the different interpretations of causality and approach.

Communication between professionals is often cloaked in jargon that has particular and exclusive meanings in different fields of specialism (Irvine et al., 2002). The language of professions in common use, in ways similar to the new language of political debate, can intensify confusion and resentment rather than creating a common basis for understanding. Different interpretations of terms such as “culture” or “deprivation” may have different connotations in different professions, signalling critical value positions or relating to differing conceptual frameworks, roles and tasks. The example offered below by Irvine et al. (2002) illustrated how the problem of heroin addiction might be defined and articulated in qualitatively different ways from different professional perspectives:

*Social workers, the police and healthcare professional may define the problem (of heroin addiction) either in terms related to personal deviance or personal responsibility, or locate addiction in the confluence of environmental and geotypic factors. Models that depend on an interpretation of behaviour as individually caused and the result of individual pathology, more easily fit into a role definition that requires the worker to socialise the client into the existing social order rather than challenge it. This may be manifested in the legal requirements attending supervision of the mentally ill, and of those in need of compulsory measures of care, but also, more subtly, through the labelling of individuals and families as ‘problems’. In such instances, services providers will focus their energy on the identifiable and labelled problem. Community workers, on the other hand, might interpret the use of heroin as a structural problem and give a central place to environmental factors and theories of causality. Thus community workers may see legislative reform or institutional changes as a legitimate part of their work. ‘Treatment’ therefore is conceptualised in terms of institutional modification rather than person adaptation. (Irvine et al., 2002, p.205)*

The problems of youth crime and disorder, and social exclusion are highly likely to be defined and articulated in qualitatively different ways by the different professionals and organisations involved in YOTs. It is for example unlikely that a health professional and a police officer would define the parameters of a case involving a persistent young offender who is also a heroin addict in the same way. Such diversity of positions, if brought together towards a common solution, is

however the essence of joined up practice and the central strength of an interprofessional team.

The different meaning ascribed to the language of professional practice is not the only communication barrier to be addressed in pursuing the development of interprofessional teamwork. Research conducted by Freeman et al. (2000) found that individual professionals had different interpretations of teamwork and that crucially interpretations of teamwork were not simply rooted in professional ideology or organisational culture.

### **Individual philosophy: the independent variable of interprofessional teams?**

Freeman et al. (2000) examined six multi-disciplinary healthcare team's understanding of the indicators of effective teamwork developed by Poulton and West (1993). The study found that different interpretations of the concepts of communication, shared vision, role understanding and role valuing were evenly distributed between individuals within the same profession. The findings indicated that individual philosophy, or personal attitude, strongly influenced how both interprofessional practice and teamwork was approached.

Individual professionals holding a directive philosophy understood the meaning of role in terms of tasks and status based on an assumption of hierarchy: "*where one person would take the lead by virtue of status and power, and thereby direct the actions of others*" (Freeman et al., 2000, p.241), and learning was defined by status. Those holding powerful positions in the teams participating in the study appeared to consider they could only learn from their peers or superiors. Professionals who preferred to operate autonomously and adopted an elective philosophy also presented barriers to interprofessional teamwork. An elective philosophy was considered synonymous with insularity of practice, precluding the negotiation of role boundaries and distancing practitioners from participation in team activities. Communications from individuals holding an elective philosophy tended to take the form of informing rather than discussing, they "*referred to other professionals as and when they perceived there was a need*" (Freeman et al., 2000 p.241).

An integrative individual philosophy, which was associated primarily with the social workers, therapists and some nurses who took part in the study, was considered by Freeman and her colleagues (2000) to be fundamental to the higher levels of cooperation that could enable professionals to learn from one another and develop joint working practices. Professional practitioners employing an integrative philosophy were found to be more strongly committed to the practice of collaborative care, gave attention to being a team player and were able to renegotiate role boundaries. Freeman et al. (2000) found that the meanings team members ascribed to teamwork tended shape both how and what professionals communicated, leading these researchers to propose that *“people may have different constructs of multi-professional working which affect how they interpret teamwork”* (Freeman et al, 2000, p.246). If the findings of this study were to be generalised to YOTs it can be argued that it would be difficult to construct mechanisms guaranteed to aid interprofessional team practice given the integral diversity of individual positions likely to be represented in their membership.

### **Gender influences on interprofessional practice**

The achievement of strong interprofessional practice in teams in the public sector may be genuinely difficult, but it is not impossible. Molyneux (2001) offered an example of an interprofessional team, formed to support the discharge of stroke patients, which she proposed was successful because members had achieved *“professional adulthood”* (Molyneux, 2001, p.33). Professional adulthood described a state of having become secure enough in ones own profession to cross boundaries to practice on the basis of patient need, in ways similar to that suggested as *“trans-disciplinarity”* by Davis (1988). Molyneux considered the structure and composition of her team was important, strongly rejecting the typically hierarchical health team structure dominated by a doctor or consultant. No single member sought to dominate the group, each member chose to join and each brought a high level of motivation and commitment to common team goals. The critical success factor according to Molyneux (2001) however was that all team members were women.

The impact of gender on the development of interprofessional relations appears to have been largely neglected in literature even though as Sampson et al. (1991) observed gender division is a pervasive organisational reality. Sampson and



her colleagues studied patterns of agency cooperation in the criminal justice system with the aim of identifying key areas of policy tension and potential conflict between the police, social services and probation services. While it was the view of these authors that the 1980s systems approach to youth justice was “*genuinely sexless*” (Sampson et al., 1991, p.115), the informal cooperative networks studied often heavily relied on a sense of camaraderie and shared understanding that was most often associated with women professionals. Cooperative practices were most strongly supported by women professionals who were driven to seek alliances outside of their own professional organisation often as a response to harassment or discrimination in their place of work. It was suggested for example that women police officers may seek cooperative alliances in youth justice or child protection work in response to feelings of alienation in their own work environments. Conversely female professionals who experience a strong sense of female camaraderie at work may be resistant to, or seek ways to avoid, cooperative initiatives if they fear domination by male colleagues in the partner organisations.

The bland term “partnership” acts to obscure conflicts generated by power differentials. The potential for conflict that might accrue from gender domination in youth offending partnerships is a field of research that would benefit from further attention in its own right given for example the male domination of the police and the female domination of frontline social work practice: key practice partners in YOTs. Gender and power differentials may cut across the boundaries of both organisational and professional cultures in ways that may be difficult to address in formal interprofessional teams without more sustained enquiry to inform strategies. Other aspects of interprofessional team practice have benefited from more detailed examination and offer a platform from which to learn about YOTs.

### **Learning from Community Mental Health Teams**

Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) were formed to provide an organised response to patients with long-term mental health needs, on the basis of priorities that were mutually agreed between the organisations involved, primarily health and social services.

In a depressing report the King's Fund London Commission (1997) outlined a range of systemic problems with interprofessional and interorganisational practice in

CMHTs that it was proposed threatened to fragment the entire mental health service. Mental health practitioners disagreed about what constituted mental illness, there were divisions about effective approaches to treatment, roles and responsibilities were unclear and communication was poor in the teams studied. It appeared that an over ambitious policy agenda, inadequate resources and an entrenched blame culture had largely failed to improve the quality of service experienced by mental health service users in London (King's Fund London Commission, 1997).

Norman and Peck (1999) established an interprofessional dialogue with clinicians, service managers and academics about the work of CMHTs and reviewed a wide range of relevant literature, including the King's Fund London Commission report (1997 above). The outcome of Norman and Peck's work was a view that, while the concept of interprofessional practice was not as fundamentally flawed, as the Kings Fund appeared to suggest, CMHTs had failed in a number of key areas. Mental health professionals had lost faith in the system within which they worked, practitioners were strongly bound by uniprofessional cultures, the teams did not share a strong philosophy of community mental health, and there was a general mistrust of managerial solutions to the problems the teams faced. Norman and Peck (1999) proposed that poor management had failed to clarify roles, responsibility and accountability, and had ignored power differentials. Crucially they also observed that professional staff in CMHTs, who should have been familiar with small group theory from their own training and practice, did not appear to be able, or willing, to apply their knowledge to their own work environment,

*failing to take into account the complex process of professional socialisation. Professional identities are constructed and maintained not only by what people do, or can do, but also by the sort of people they are and the values they bring to, and are given by, their chosen profession. (Norman and Peck, 1999, p.229)*

An analysis of the problems of interprofessional practice in CMHTs by Norman and Peck (1999) led these authors to recommend areas for improvement at two levels. At national level it was proposed that clear guidelines for defining the roles and responsibilities of the teams was required, as well as the identification of core and specialist competencies for the professions involved. It was however considered that these were not sufficient strategies alone to improve joined up mental health services. At local level it was recommended that development programmes were required to: *“allow professions to see themselves as others see*

*them, and to challenge and modify their own professional identities*" (Norman and Peck, 1999, p.229).

Although YOTs operate in a different contextual environment, they have more features in common with CMHTs than differences. It is unclear if sufficient attention has been paid to the tensions that are likely to be generated by diversity, power and status differentials in YOTs. It is also important for YOTs to build upon a shared common philosophy of practice, which was a key contributor to the success of the Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux: a structural prototype of YOTs.

### **Learning from Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux**

Effort to promote a multi-agency approach to young offenders has a long history. Juvenile Liaison Bureaux (JLB) were first established in the 1950s to facilitate joint work between the main youth justice agencies. In 1981 an experimental new initiative was launched in Northamptonshire to create a fully integrated team approach to diverting children from court, and reducing the numbers of children in care and custody. Like YOTs, Northamptonshire's JLB comprised a core team of management, administrative staff and youth justice workers and were supplemented by staff seconded from the police, social services, education, probation and the youth service. Unlike YOTs, JLB only worked with juveniles who admitted their offences.

The Northamptonshire Diversion Unit (NDU) was formed in 1993 as an amalgamation of Juvenile Liaison Bureaux and the Northamptonshire Adult Reparation Bureau. A number of important factors that might affect YOTs and influence formal collaborative partnership approaches to crime prevention can be identified from Northamptonshire's experience of working in partnership, published by the NDU in 1993. A key contributory factor was that Northamptonshire had a long history of partnership working at strategic, planning and operational levels, to the point where partnership working was *"the norm rather than the exception"* (NDU, 1998, p.14). In particular a strong emphasis was placed upon the cultural view of partnership that had developed within crime prevention communities in the county. Partnerships, it was proposed, were *"complex and dynamic processes"* that could not sit on a shelf as simple tools but required *"intellectual, emotional and practical commitments"* (NDU, 1998, p.14). The authors of the 1998 report considered that

Northamptonshire's interpretation of partnership in crime prevention accorded closely to the definition of inter-agency collaboration proposed by Adam Crawford (1998), involving some fusion and melding of relations between partners. A central difference between Northamptonshire's approach and that suggested by Crawford however was that structures and practices had been adapted, rather than new ones formed.

The context of Northamptonshire's collaborative approach to crime prevention was also a key factor contributing to success. It was proposed that the context in which collaborative initiatives operate necessarily shape what arrangements are possible. The achievement of coterminous administrative boundaries between partner organisations in Northamptonshire was a considerable asset (NDU, 1998). In contrast the geographic boundaries of police, health, local authority, probation and criminal court jurisdictions in some areas can vary significantly, and may not for example be coterminous with the administrative area of a YOT, presenting many difficulties for the development of collaborative strategies.

A third critical success factor identified in the NDU report (1998) was that dynamic partnership in Northamptonshire was maintained through interdependency, the importance of the concept demonstrated by the formation in 1983 of a chief officer's interdependency group. A prototype of YOT steering groups, the Northamptonshire chief officer's interdependency group was formed to coordinate the strategies, resources and policies that affected JLB. Partnership and collaboration were considered to be moral issues that were taken to a new level through joint appreciation that partners were heavily dependent upon one another to achieve national targets and operational goals. Interdependency was underpinned by the use of seconded personnel from partner agencies. It was proposed that seconded staff were vital to keep networks of communication alive and maintained productive interorganisational relationships (NDU, 1998). Great care was taken to ensure that seconded staff maintained their parent agency identity and represented the strengths of their professional organisation, and of particular significance to the YOT model, was a commitment to acknowledging difference,

*to be absolutely clear about purpose and vision within an inter-agency approach ..... to allow for different styles, experience and skills, and even for different agencies having different organisational values. (NDU, 1998, p.17)*

The organisational structure of JLB, which were managed as single teams and composed of staff seconded from partner agencies, and directed by an executive level group, is almost identical to that of YOTs and their local steering groups. The Northamptonshire Diversion Unit (NDU), incorporating JLB from 1993, proposed that their aims, policy and practice matched "*both the spirit and the intention*" (NDU 1998, p. 42) of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. They foresaw few difficulties in adapting to the new youth justice system. It can however be argued that there are significant differences between the philosophy of youth justice that advanced the intellectual, emotional and practical commitments to crime prevention partnership in Northamptonshire and the confusion of philosophical approaches that underpin the new youth justice system and the work of the YOTs.

The philosophy of the JLB, which was widely endorsed throughout the 1980s: "*the decade of diversion for juveniles*" (Dignan, 1992, p.433), was one of actively channelling children and young people away from formal court proceedings and crucially diverting them from custody. Diversionary strategies at this time were strongly supported by the Home Office (see for example Home Office Circular 14/85), and derived from interactionist, social reaction and labelling perspectives: "*the argument was that the application of stigmatising labels, followed by negative social reactions, is an inevitable consequence of intervention: the labels produce 'outsiders' and this then necessitates further and more concentrated forms of intervention*" (Goldson, 2000, p.43)

If the practice of diverting children from criminal proceedings had any chance of withstanding a return to the culture of severity that marked the early 1990s it was essential that Northamptonshire, and other areas supporting diversion, could provide evidence of the effectiveness of the strategy (NDU, 1998, p.7). As the NDU observed, after 15 years of development, youth justice managers in Northamptonshire should have been able to argue convincingly that their commitment to diversion had been effective in reducing offending. The county was not however alone in having failed to systematically monitor and evaluate the work they did, "*evidence was not so much equivocal as almost completely lacking*" (NDU 1998, p.9).

Assessment of the efficacy of diversionary strategies of crime prevention appears to largely depend on the ideological leanings of the commentator. Advocates of diversion view the 1980s as a qualified success resulting in a 68% reduction in juvenile imprisonment during the period 1979 to 1989 (see for example Rutherford, 1994; Pitts, 2000; Smith, 2003). Other commentators, such as Farrington (1996) considered that the data simply reflected procedural and demographic changes. In the absence of strong evidence of effectiveness it is perhaps inevitable that the philosophies of diversion and minimum intervention became largely anathematic to the uncompromising stance taken towards children and crime by the Conservatives in the early 1990s, and their successors in 1997.

The new youth justice system incorporates, and has built upon, the way that the Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux and their chief officers interdependency group were structured and organised. A vital opportunity was however lost to demonstrate that the success of the partnership approach to crime prevention in Northamptonshire was not only due to how the system was constructed and managed, but was fundamentally underpinned by a strongly shared intellectual, emotional and practical commitment to partnership based on the principle of diversion.

### **Models of crime prevention partnerships**

The Northamptonshire JLB model may have had the greatest impact on the structural organisation of YOTs. It is interesting however that it was not one of the localities included in an influential review of multi-agency structures and interorganisational arrangements for the local delivery of crime prevention conducted on behalf of the Home Office by Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994a; 1994b; 1994c).

Liddle and Gelsthorpe's first report, Paper 52 (1994a) examined how multi-agency partnerships in crime prevention were structured, led and coordinated and how non-statutory organisations had become involved in local initiatives. Paper 53 (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994b) focused on the relations that had been developed between the organisations involved. A supplementary paper (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994c) examined issues of identity, ownership, training needs, race and gender, information and targeting, resources and evaluation. Five general models of inter-agency cooperation were proposed within which organisations participated in

different ways, ranging from those that are prime movers, taking on a large portion of the crime prevention workload to those that are supportive passengers, offering vocal support but little practical assistance (Liddle and Gelsthorpe 1994b, p.2):

The Communication model	Organisations recognise their roles in relation to each other, but do not go beyond communication.
The Cooperation model	Organisations maintain separate boundaries but work together on a mutually defined problem.
The Coordination model	Organisations maintain separate boundaries but work together in a systematic way and may pool resources to tackle mutually agreed problems.
The Federation model	Organisations build upon the coordination model to integrate services while retaining their distinctiveness.
The Merger model	Organisations become indistinguishable from one another in working on a mutually defined problem and they form a collective resource pool.

Perhaps more controversially Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994b) proposed that some organisations might be regarded as “*agency spies*”, that participated in partnerships as a means of monitoring the activities of other agencies, or even “*proselytisers*”, regarding their participation as an opportunity to publicise their own organisation. It was proposed that each model and level of participation gave rise to tensions between organisations and impacted upon the potential effectiveness the partnership.

In the new youth justice system, social services, probation and the police might be most easily identified as the prime movers. In some localities education and health services might be perceived as supportive passengers. It is possible that some of the private and voluntary organisations participating in youth offending partnerships could be viewed as agency spies or even proselytisers depending on their perceived role or agenda. In general policy makers have largely discarded as ineffective the communication and cooperation models of partnership offered by Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994b). It can be argued that one of the aims of the Youth Justice Board has been to lead organisations from a model of coordination towards one of federation. Contemporary social policy has however already propelled some

of the main agencies involved in local youth offending service partnerships, notably social services, health and education, towards the merger model.

The three papers published by the Crime Prevention Unit (Liddle and Gelsthorpe 1994a, 1994b, 1994c) offered a timely insight into the many dimensions of partnerships in crime prevention. There are few factors that might influence the development of relationships between organisations in the public sector that were not touched upon by the authors, and grounded in the experience of the crime prevention initiatives reviewed. Many of Liddle and Gelsthorpe's recommendations for improving joined up crime prevention have been adopted into the new youth justice system, most notably that multi-agency crime prevention partnerships require a formal structure and national guidelines, new initiatives should integrally be evaluated for effectiveness and that every effort should be made to educate the public about crime prevention. Other recommendations by the authors received less attention. It was noted for example that, although accurate information was needed to inform local partnerships, policy should seek to ensure that information collection did not become a preoccupation (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994b). It was also considered difficult to recommend a standard organisational model of crime prevention that was guaranteed to work in every locality; *"relations between agencies involved in multi-agency crime prevention are highly complicated, seldom static, and influenced by a variety of institutional, individual and local/historical factors"* (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994b, p.26).

Attempts to standardise and tightly control from the centre the arrangements for delivering a collaborative approach to youth crime prevention offer little scope for local authorities to respond in ways that maximise the opportunities available to them, and minimise barriers. The extent to which a wide range of situational and environmental factors can impact upon the potential of partnerships to be successful received scant attention in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter has placed an emphasis on the importance of clarifying the language used to describe the central concepts and processes involved in joining up in YOTs. While the achievement of joined up youth justice in England and Wales was always likely to be a generally and genuinely difficult task it is severely



hampered by the different interpretation, understanding and presentation of key process terms.

The practice goal of a YOT is to be interprofessional, requiring a diverse range of professionals to adapt their roles, skills, knowledge and responsibilities to adjust to those of other professionals (see *Figure 7*, p.54). While YOTs are commonly described as multi-agency teams YOTs they are most accurately described as interprofessional teams and youth offending services as formal interorganisational partnerships: requiring a diverse range of organisations to adapt their roles, skills, knowledge and responsibilities to adjust to those of other organisations. The structure of youth offending services in a locality most closely resembles the federation model outlined by Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994b).

The new youth justice system is central to New Labour's radical project of social reform, within which the boundaries between organisations, professions, crime and disorder, adult and child, are becoming increasingly blurred. Organisations and professions in the public services appear to be gradually driven towards a merger model. The overall aim of joined up government, within the modernisation agenda, is to integrate the professional functions of the public services, through new structures, formal partnerships and collaborative alliances. From this perspective the aim to join up youth justice might be characterised as one that aims to be transorganisational: requiring the development of new roles, skills and knowledge and responsibilities additional to, or different from, those traditionally offered.

The ambiguity of the language often used to describe New Labour's overarching policy goals is perhaps an indication that little is known about how broad concepts might best be translated into sustainable actions in the public sector. The many challenges faced by those charged with implementing policies that are poorly explained or defined are rarely acknowledged in government documents and the greatest proportion of blame tends to coalesce around a perception that professions and professionals are strongly resistant to, and unable, to change.

There is a symbiotic relationship between individuals, their chosen profession and the maintenance of distinct professional organisational cultures and ideologies. There are aspects of each that contribute to difficulties in progressing interprofessional and interorganisational practice, some aspects may be more easy

to address than others. The most unpredictable variable factor affecting the potential of interprofessional team practice might however be the diversity of individual human philosophy. Individual practitioners who share an integrative philosophy may be most amenable to working closely with others for the benefit of service users, particularly when solutions are sought to complex problems that are beyond the capability of one organisation or profession to provide. It is quite possible that the higher order professional practice skill of interprofessionality may be beyond the capability of some individuals to achieve, and may ultimately limit the possibilities of joined up teamwork. Gender and power differentials in organisations may also play larger parts in the potential of a joined up initiative to succeed than has been realised.

Coordination and cooperation between professionals and organisations can however be productive and is more a part of every day professional practice than is often acknowledged. The examples offered above of Community Mental Health Teams and the Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux suggest that skilled organisation and management of new initiatives is crucial. Where formal interprofessional teams have succeeded they appear to have grown from dynamic interpersonal relationships between senior representatives of different organisations, have been maintained because of a shared commitment to a common service user focused goal and have been sustained by a clearly articulated shared philosophy of practice and a high level of support from government. Interprofessional teams appear most likely to fail when subjected to an over-ambitious policy agenda, when roles and responsibilities are not clarified and when practitioners fail to perceive benefits for service users accruing from change.

A strong theme that emerged from the work of Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994a, 1994b, 1994c), and the Northamptonshire Diversion Unit (1998) is that crime prevention partnerships are situated by context. Different models work in different locations, often shaped by influential senior individuals, the constitution of administrative and geographic boundaries and local experience of joined up effort. Crucially Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994b) reported that relationships between organisations were highly complicated, seldom static and influenced by many factors. It is possible that the Government may have underestimated the complexity of the interrelated individual, institutional, political and historical factors that

necessarily shape the development of YOTs and the expectations placed upon them may be over-ambitious.

There are multiple layers to the YOT story that suggest beneath the rhetoric of joining up lie many different realities. In the next chapter YOTs are examined in the context of largely unchallenged assumptions about the power of teams and teamwork, particularly in the public sector, and a further layer of complexity is revealed.

## Chapter Five

### Joined Up Teamwork: Myth or Magic?

#### Introduction

The thesis thus far has focused attention on the interrelated factors that influence the situational and contextual environment of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), and the tasks set for them through the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. Attention has been drawn to the ambiguity of the language of the joined up imperative and some precedents for the teams were identified in the previous chapter. This chapter turns attention inwards to the organisation of joined up work in teams and the implications of the YOT model for the people employed within it.

In many ways YOTs are pathfinders. The YOT model of teamwork is a highly complex structure introduced during a period of rapid and radical change. The aims of the youth justice system have been refocused and underlying philosophies reframed. Methods of controlling and directing work in YOTs have changed with the ascendancy of new public managerialism. The formal interprofessional working environment of YOTs has required significant changes to methods of professional practice. Crucially the organisation of work has also changed. YOTs have been allocated a new territory in the public sector that has no precedent, casting YOTs adrift of the patronage of any one organisation while subjecting it to many different levels of management and control. It can appear that the phenomena that is a YOT has been constructed from assumptions and aspirations of potential rather than grounded in theory or empirical study.

It is implicit in the constitution of the YOT model that joined up youth offending services are best delivered by putting a wide range of professional workers together in one vigorously controlled team and ensuring that they are heavily dependent upon strength of negotiated relationships for the viability and sustainability of the services they provide. Central to this assumption is a belief in the potential power of teams as a method of organising work, which it will be argued in this chapter, is rarely realised.

A disparate but rich body of literature was reviewed for Chapter Five to identify the factors most likely to influence how a Youth Offending *Team* functions and to identify gaps in the literature that might have to be filled if the model is to be optimised or replicated. The chapter begins by locating where the desire for teams and teamwork originated and it examines the myths surrounding the concept of high performance teamwork. As teams have increasingly been chosen as the preferred method of organising work, particularly in the public sector, the emphasis has changed from what workgroups are and what they are capable of, to a focus on what organisations desire of teams and their members. A long tradition of empirical research into the dynamics of groups and workgroups, which may have been largely overlooked when YOTs were conceived, is summarised and the factors most likely to affect the dynamics of the teams are identified.

There is little from existing research capable of encompassing the full magnitude of the multiple changes brought to bear on YOTs. This chapter however considers what the literature reviewed about diversity in teams suggested might influence member experience of YOTs, and integrally impact upon the model's potential for success. The possible implications of increasingly fluid and weakened group boundaries on the nature of teamwork in the future, and in particular the future of the YOT model of teamwork, are outlined.

### **The benefits of working in groups**

The potential benefits of organising work in groups are well documented. A workgroup is likely to possess more knowledge than it is possible for one individual to hold, it can usually accomplish more than a single individual working alone and it can provide a useful method of coordinating work tasks for improved efficiency and effectiveness (Locke et al., 2001). Borrill et al., (2001) proposed that, if properly structured and supported, workgroups have the potential to solve complex problems better than the average of separate individual contributions and that individuals, who effectively share their skills and knowledge in a group, have the potential to produce more creative and innovative solutions to problems. There are distinct advantages to combining and integrating skills in complex organisations rather than having them distributed and in competition (Locke et al., 2001), which provides the underpinning logic for pursuing a joined up approach to youth offending. Effectiveness or enhanced

productivity is not however guaranteed simply by organising work in groups, or teams. More than a hundred years of sustained research endeavour has been devoted to optimising collective effort, with variable levels of success.

From as early as the beginning of the last century organisational theorists have sought methods of organising work in ways that might enable industry to function as efficiently and as profitably as possible. Theorists in the classical management tradition for example proposed principles of scientific management that matched workers to the technical demands of their jobs on the basis of detailed time and motion studies (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). It soon became apparent however that organisations employing basically the same systems of scientific task management tended to produce very different results.

In 1924 research was commissioned by the United States General Electric Company to investigate why classical management strategies produced different results in different locations, with an overall aim to improve the efficiency of their factory in Hawthorne, Illinois. The Hawthorne Studies, as the series of studies became known, are widely recognised as one of the first large social science research projects to identify the value of workgroups for employees as well as their employers (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979; Yeatts and Hyten, 1998). Attention was drawn by the findings of the Hawthorne Studies to the complex relationships that take place within and between workgroups, and the effect that workgroup membership can have on individuals. Significantly it was discovered that attending to the needs of employees contributed to improved production output (Mayo, 1933).

From the late 1920s to the 1960s the efforts of organisational theorists turned more towards an understanding of how work group processes related to task accomplishment. A key theory that developed during that era was that workgroups existed as small social systems that were responsive to their environment. Wilfred Bion was one of the first researchers to highlight that unconscious psychological forces are influenced by the tasks a group is set, and that these forces influence the efficiency with which a task is performed (see Stokes, 1994a, for more on the contribution of Wilfred Bion to this field of work). The socio-technical theoretical framework is a well-researched and grounded paradigm that offered new ideas about how organisations could promote group working in ways that optimised task

completion while also maximising the social benefits of working in groups (Guzzo, 1996). It is perhaps unfortunate that the discovery that the social experience of workers at work influences their efficiency occurred during the period of history when commercial markets were rapidly expanding globally and becoming increasingly competitive.

From the 1970s a surge of interest in work groups as productive entities tended to be driven more by commercial imperatives than by formal workgroup theory and research. Guzzo (1996) for example proposed that "*the practical interest in groups arose just about the time research interest in groups was fading*" (Guzzo, 1996, p.7). Research explored how the management of workgroups contributed specifically to the achievement of overall organisational effectiveness and this stimulated increasing experimentation with structures that were capable of emulating the cooperative and collaborative working practices that appeared to be embodied in successful Japanese car manufacturing companies (Hackman and Morris, 1975). As Hayes (1997) observed however little consideration appeared to be given to how working in groups was integrally supported by Eastern societal cultures of cooperation and collaboration, very different to the West. Working practices were almost impossible to replicate, leading to an increasing fragmentation of approaches to organising work during the 1980s and 1990s as newer and more innovative methods were sought to enable companies to compete aggressively with rivals. Fragmentation was in part also stimulated by the changing nature of research endeavour itself as the study of work groups in the latter part of the twentieth century rapidly became an increasingly interdisciplinary field.

Until the mid 1970s social and behavioural psychologists tended to lead research into workgroups. As attention was drawn towards the potential for workgroups to enhance overall organisational effectiveness however, organisational psychologists gradually took over leadership of this body of work and researchers from disciplines as diverse as information science, education, business management and anthropology joined them. Economists researched the use of workgroup incentives; political scientists concerned themselves with the highest levels of group decision-making processes (see for example Janis, 1972) and engineers enquired into the role of groups in quality systems (see for example Deming, 1986). The diversity of research disciplines involved inevitably brought methodological changes

diversity of research disciplines involved inevitably brought methodological changes to nature of the research itself as inquiries moved from the laboratory to the field, employing a range of research methods.

The expansion and diversity of research effort has generated a vast, confusing and dispersed body of knowledge about workgroups, which Guzzo (1996) warned had the potential to be *“pulled apart by its own heterogeneity, collapsing into a jumble of unrelated research reports and unused knowledge ..... the danger of a disparate, unintegrated research literature should not be taken lightly”* (Guzzo, 1996, p.18). Guzzo’s concern may have been timely, offered during the period when the concept of the YOT model was in development. It can be argued that research that might have aided understanding of how to organise and support such a complex new work structure in the public sector had been scattered and obscured by the mythical status afforded to the concept of teamwork by the time the *Crime and Disorder Act* was drafted.

### **The myth of teams and high performance teamwork**

Over the years the concept of teamwork has grown to assume almost mythical status in the field of organisational management: *“it is as though putting people into a team endows them with superhuman capacities and makes them virtually omnipotent”* (Locke et al., 2001, p.502). The pursuit of high performance teams has evolved into a major business enterprise, resulting in almost too much literature to catalogue about their potential, adding considerably to the dilution of key messages from research and theory that should inform policy makers and business strategists. A quantity of grey literature abounds, which although highly inspirational in character, often has little empirical grounding.

It is perhaps not surprising that “teams” have largely supplanted “groups” in the language of the organisational sciences (Guzzo, 1996) when one considers the claims made for them: *“a real team - appropriately focused and rigorously disciplined – is the most versatile unit organizations have for meeting both performance and change challenges in today’s complex world”* (Katzenbach and Smith, 1994, p. xiii). The myth of teams has however largely developed from a semantic preference and the reason for the semantic preference is relatively simple. The image of the successful sporting team is one that is easily recognised by most people and it is



synonymous with the element of competitive advantage, which is the most sought after commodity of the modern industrial world (Tjosvold, 1991; Guzzo, 1996).

A central contention of many authors about teamwork, which is probably beyond dispute, is that while all teams are groups, not all groups become teams (Tjosvold, 1991; Belbin, 1996; Guzzo, 1996; Tannenbaum et al., 1996; West 1996; Firth-Cozens, 1998). While the term "group" encompasses all forms, size and purpose of human grouping: a group of football supporters remain a group, those engaged in playing the game of football are organised into a formal grouping commonly recognised as a team. Difficulty arises however when a relatively self-evident phrase is adapted for use in the work environment and is simplified to what appears to have become a widely held assumption that workers organised in a team are capable of achieving the heightened level of performance of a successful team in sport. The assumption tends to deny not only the unpredictability of the performance of teams in sports competitions but also that different types of teams are formed for different purposes. A football team has a different structure and different processes from a tennis team for example.

Sportsmen and women are carefully chosen for their skill, often at the peak of their performance for a relatively short period of time, to fulfil specific roles or positions in highly structured and managed contexts. Although the image of a high performance sporting team can be powerful, Hayes (1997) observed that it is as far removed from the daily reality of working life as the gruelling training schedules and strict dietary habits of sportsmen and women are from those of the general population. It requires considerable imagination to identify many similarities between a successful premier league football team and groups of workers in the public sector employed in units called "teams". Nevertheless groups of professionals organised into working units called teams are considered the main instrument for achieving collaborative relations in the public sector (Dalley, 1993). The 1988 Butler-Sloss inquiry into child abuse in Cleveland identified social care teams as the key mechanism for implementing improved organisational collaboration in child protection. The drive towards the integration of children's services, based upon professional teamwork, was formalised in the *Children Act* 1989. The danger is that the label of "team" is often applied to the organisation of work in health and social care on the assumption that enhanced functioning will naturally occur. As Payne

(2000) observed there is: *“the aspiration is of some perfect, seamless robe of shared endeavour, when different people, from different organisations, act in different ways according to different knowledge bases, cultural traditions and objectives”* (Payne, 2000, p.5). Loxley (1997) considered that appeal to both teamwork and collaboration:

*enables policy makers to avoid the crucial issues of irreconcilable structures and limited resources by laying on practitioners the responsibility of mitigating their effects, and practitioners accept it without fully understanding or recognising that it contains unresolved contradictions. The myth serves to disguise the reality with an appealing ideology.* (Loxley, 1997, p.70-71)

The danger is that organisations and policy makers view the use of teams in the public arena as a panacea for structural and administrative failings that they are unwilling and unable to address (Irvine et al., 2002). Joined up youth justice is not guaranteed by the constitution of youth offending services organised around teamwork and there is much more to a YOT than is implied by its title.

#### **YOTs: workgroups or teams and does it matter?**

Most writers broadly agree that a team shares the same essential features of a work group summarised by Guzzo (1996):

- They are small social systems functioning within the larger social system of their organisation.
- They are recognised as a work group by both members and non-members.
- They perform tasks that are relevant to the goals of their organisation.
- The tasks they perform have consequences for others within their organisation and outside it.
- The roles of individual group members are to some extent interdependent.

While many additional characteristics have been offered to distinguish teams from workgroups, including clear and common purpose, sense of belonging, clarification of roles and responsibilities, appropriate leadership and creative operations (see Payne, 2000, p.52-53 for more detailed examples), it can be argued that these characteristics cluster naturally under the key features of workgroups offered above and do not indicate a state of distinctiveness.

It has also been suggested that work group performance results from the effort of individuals, while the performance of a team results from interactive and

collective effort (West, 1996). Guzzo (1996) however considered that attempts to make distinctions between a workgroup and a team, purely on the concepts of interdependence and collective accountability as they relate to the performance of tasks were largely arbitrary. The distinction is derived from what Guzzo (1996) claimed was a very narrow interpretation of the concept of additivity: additive tasks being those completed as members co-act rather than interact. He considered that attempts to restrict the use of the term “work group” purely on the basis of the additivity of tasks, to make room for the term “team” was “*quite unsatisfactory*” (Guzzo, 1996, p.8).

Effort to distinguish a team from a workgroup in literature does have consequences, and it does matter to YOTs. It can be argued that the main distinction made between a workgroup and a team in literature resides with organisational concerns for performance accountability and responsibility, which are the fundamental principles of managerialism. The heightened emphasis on interactive collective effort can appear to be more of a statement of what organisations under pressure desire of workers rather than a feature of teams. The emphasis has changed from what workgroups are and what they are capable of achieving, to what employers require of teams to meet organisational performance objectives. A definition of a team often referred to in literature and which particularly embraces the concepts of responsabilisation and integration, central features of a YOT, is:

*A team is a group of people who work together to produce products or deliver services for which they are mutually accountable. Team members share goals and are held mutually accountable for meeting them, they are interdependent in their accomplishment, and they affect the results through their interactions with one another. Because the team is held collectively accountable, the work of integrating with one another is included among the responsibilities of each member. (Mohrman et al., 1995, p.39 - 40)*

The heightened emphasis on performance accountability suggests that a substantial body of empirical research and theory about groups has been rendered irrelevant to the study of teams at work (Guzzo, 1996). What is most noticeable about Mohrman’s definition (above) is that the essentially human characteristics of a workgroup have been excluded from the definition of a team. Insight into the values and attitudes that individuals bring with them to their work, and the constituents of an

environment necessary to support YOTs as small social systems, and maximise collective potential, appear to have been largely lost.

As the organisation of work into teams has been increasingly viewed as a relatively simple solution to highly complex organisational problems it has become a convention that is rarely challenged (Stein, 1996). Stein observed that the potential success of new work structures, if devised only to meet the needs of organisations, is likely to be limited if the human experience of working together with others in a group is not taken fully into consideration. Work group functioning is integrally influenced by the social experiences of group membership and, crucially it is possible for organisations to positively or negatively influence these experiences (Guzzo, 1996; Tannenbaum et al., 1996; Yeatts and Hyten, 1998). How individual team members experience working in a YOT is likely to be as important to their potential for success as the structure, organisation and management of the model. Hackman (1990) proposed that a basic understanding of the psychological processes that occur in groups was essential to understanding how workgroups function, and how working in a group is experienced by group members.

### **The group experience of YOTs**

It is a natural basic need for people to group together, constructing their understanding of themselves and others almost exclusively through social interaction (Goffman, 1959). Social identity theories offer insight into the relationship between individuals and groups, and encompass phenomena such as group bias and social stereotyping, conflict, cohesion and cooperation: phenomena that feature highly in literature about professional groups at work. Belonging to a group, of whatever size or organisation can be characterised as being:

*largely a psychological state which is quite distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers social identity, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one should behave. It follows that the psychological processes associated with social identity are also responsible for generating distinctly 'groupy' behaviours, such as solidarity within ones' group, conformity to group norms, and discrimination against outgroups. (Hogg and Abrams, 1998, p.3)*

One of the challenges of modern organisational life, particularly in the public sector, is a state of perpetual institutional chaos and change. Fundamentally "teams

*violate the logic of the design of a bureaucratic, hierarchical, segmented organization..... the traditional organization often chews up teams and spits them out*" (Mohrman et al.,1995, p. xvii). It can be difficult for workers to identify who are members of in-groups and who are members of out-groups, an uncertainty that tends to *"lock people into institutional roles"* (Stokes, 1994b, p.124). It can be argued that behaviours described as *"distinctly groupy"* by Hogg and Abrahams (1998, above) are closely related to what Dalley (1993) proposed were the tribal responses of healthcare staff to external threats, stimulating the modification and redefinition of group allegiances. While professional training often raises awareness of how psychological processes influence relationships and offer strategies to minimise their impact, it does not eliminate these processes from the experience of the individual.

Hogg and Abrahams (1998) proposed that when individuals choose to join or be recognised as part of a group it is usually because they have identified some advantage to membership. Joining a group might validate a view or position in society or contribute to accomplish a goal that would be difficult achieve alone. To each group individual new members bring their own unique set of attitudes and assumptions, values and beliefs. Professional organisations exemplify the collective sets of rules and standards, or norms, that are evolved and new members are required to adhere to.

The strength of tribal influence on group membership depends on a variety of factors concerning the group itself: the status and purpose of the group, how much interaction there is between members, the perceived benefits of membership and the power of the group to impose sanctions on non-conformists. Hogg and Abrams (1998) proposed that the stability of group membership, clashes of personalities with other members and the drive for conformity all play a part in how strongly almost any group influences its membership. YOTs appear to present an unstable group environment for workers, comprised of individuals from a variety of different professional groupings who may be group members on temporary basis. Some tension might be inevitable between allegiance to professional organisation and a YOT. Little is known about how team identity is constructed in fluid, multi-membership groups or how successfully a YOT might be able to build a distinct professional group identity of its own.

The majority of inter-group and intra-group processes are largely unconscious phenomena, although attempts can be made to limit the effects of these processes human nature strongly resists manipulation:

*Our experiences of being and working in groups are often powerful and overwhelming. We experience the tension between the wish to join together and the wish to be separate; between the need for togetherness and belonging and the need for an independent identity. Many of the puzzling phenomena of group life stem from this, and it is often difficult to recognize the more frequent reality of mutual interdependence. No man is an island, and yet we wish to believe we are independent of forces of which we may not be conscious, either from outside ourselves, or within. (Stokes, 1994a, p.19)*

## **YOT equity and size**

A long tradition of research into workgroup psychology aims to explain why workgroups do not always produce the benefits for organisations that are intended and why individuals often behave differently in workgroups than they do when working alone.

A central feature of the organisation of work in YOTs is the variety of different ways that team members are employed and deployed. Bowey and Carlisle (1979) proposed that one of the main barriers to cooperation and flexibility in a work group is the distinction made between the job of one person and that of another. Research suggests that while workgroups members respond positively to group rewards and incentives, differentiated individual rewards tend to impede cooperation and act as a barrier to the ability of a group to adapt to change (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979; Hackman, 1990; Guzzo and Shea, 1992; Guzzo, 1996; Cropanzo and Schminke, 2001). Groups comprised of workers holding many different skills, and rewarded differently on the basis of skills held, are likely to face significant barriers to cooperation and flexibility: *"in some situations this kind of demarcation is so entrenched that it would be extremely difficult to introduce group working on a multi-skills basis"* (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979, p.18).

Differentiated rewards at work can lead to what is referred to by some authors as *"social loafing"* (see for example Hayes 1997; Firth-Cozens 1998; Lembke and Wilson, 1998; Karau and Williams, 2001). Karau and Williams (2001) described how work groups respond positively to reward for shared effort, an over-

emphasis on group outcomes however can result in individuals failing to make the connection between their effort, skills and time and the recognition they receive. Social loafing appears more likely to occur when individual effort remains anonymous within a group. An individual may be able to reduce their effort yet continue to enjoy the rewards of the group as a whole, stimulating colleagues to reduce their own effort to restore perceived equity. Locke et al. (2001) proposed that social loafing might also result from perceived dispensability. Individuals may reduce their contribution to their work group if they consider they may be duplicating the contribution of others, or that more able group members are available to fulfil tasks. The way that tasks are distributed and rewarded in YOTs is likely to require careful management to maintain the commitment and motivation of an integrally diverse workforce. YOT members who receive differentiated pay and conditions, because of the skills they hold or the training they have undertaken, may be most resistant to changes that threaten their professional role. It is possible that they may refuse tasks, which they perceive belong to other workers, fearing that their claim to status or special treatment might be undermined, or because they expect others to respect their sole rights to undertake specialist tasks.

Most authors appear to agree that the size of a work group has the potential to influence its functioning in a number of powerful ways. The optimum size of a workgroup is suggested to be no more than about 20 members (Hackman, 1990; West, 1994). The central argument of many authors is that work groups greater than 20 members risk division into competing sub groups, within which individuals are better able to meet their social needs. Subgroups tend to generate division, dissent, and competition for status and resources, strengthening perceptions of "them and us" that is a feature of social categorisation processes. Hackman (1990) proposed that large workgroups were difficult to manage, information sharing mechanisms tend to fragment and communication processes can be impeded without the implementation of additional, and often unnecessary, layers of management. YOTs have been constituted to meet the needs of their geographic locality and vary considerably in both their size and management structure. It is possible that potential effectiveness and cohesion of new and complex work groups, such as YOTs, decrease in inverse proportion to their size (West, 1994).

## **Motivation to work**

Research has explored what motivates people to join and to stay in a work group. Hogg and Abrams (1998) proposed that the strength of an individual's motivation to belong to a work group had a significant influence on the dynamics of a group, and consequently its potential for success. Need theories of motivation propose that behaviour in groups arises from actions aimed at satisfying a range of essential human need (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). Maslow (1970) considered that human needs could be classified in increasing levels of priority: the physiological need for food and shelter the first level of priority, followed by needs for safety and security, socialisation, self-esteem and finally the need for self-actualisation. Maslow's well-known pyramid of need forms the basis of the human resource perspective of organisational theory, which contends that the motivation to work in groups is likely to have the greatest influence on the need for security, self esteem and self actualisation of group members (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). Evetts (1999) however asserted that professionals act with a dual motive: to both provide service and to use their knowledge for personal gain. Although there is little known about how motivation to provide service is classified as a need, for many professionals the motivation to make a difference through service is strong. The achievement of professional self-esteem and self-actualisation through working in a YOT may depend upon an individual's judgement of how effectively they are enabled to make a difference to young offenders, and this may have to be balanced against the potential loss of security, rewards and opportunities for professional and personal socialisation for some members.

Incentive theories of motivation propose that an individual is motivated to perform tasks primarily to obtain either an offered reward or to avoid a possible punishment. Employers may seek to encourage workers to behave in preferred ways through offering financial or status rewards or by threatening punishment: for example through career advancement or the withdrawal of benefits (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). Incentive theories form the basis of many reward and motivation schemes in industry. Distinctions are made between rewards that are intrinsic: gained through the performance of the task, and those that are extrinsic: received in return for the successful completion of a task. It can be difficult to identify either intrinsic or extrinsic rewards that might be gained from the successful completion of



tasks in YOTs, or in the public sector as a whole. Financial rewards can be relatively poor and the culture of blame is strong. Individual professionals and managers are more likely to be reprimanded for mistakes than praised for achievement. The strategy of naming and shaming poor performers in the public sector through the publication of audit and inspection findings, as an incentive for organisations and their members to improve, is one that has yet to be fully explored for its impact on workforce motivation. The opportunity to provide service may be the only positive incentive for YOT workers to behave in preferred ways.

Theories of motivation combine to aid understanding of how working in groups can be experienced differently by different people with different needs at different times. Crucially, the literature reviewed suggests that an individual who does not feel their needs are being met in their work group is most likely to respond by seeking to change their place of work (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). The Audit Commission (2002) took the view that the high turnover of staff experienced in the public sector, causing a growing crisis of unfilled vacancies, might be an indication that the needs of public sector workers were not being met. A strong indicator of how successful the YOT model is in meeting the needs of an integrally diverse workforce is likely to be an assessment of staff turnover and how successfully vacancies are filled.

### **Cooperation, conflict and mental health**

Behavioural psychologists view conflict in groups as a natural occurrence, which can lead to both dysfunction and benefit. Yeatts and Hyten (1998) proposed that while levels of cooperation and conflict could be influenced by workgroup design, the two processes were likely to be in constant tension. Cooperation tends to be maximised when group members share similar values and attitudes, and status within the group. A lack of diverse views however can also reduce the variety of ideas and perspectives available to the group. Beneficial or cooperative conflict concerns situations where two or more employees may hold opposing views and ideas but are motivated to explore them. An elaboration of views and the integration of apparently opposing positions tend to promote effort to seek novel solutions (West, 1994). Competitive conflict is most likely to occur when dissenters aim to define and defend their own positions and attempt to win others over (Yeatts and

Hyten, 1998). An important management task in highly diverse groups, particularly where a key aim is to pursue joined up innovation and creativity, is to seek methods of conflict resolution.

It is proposed that the level of functioning of a workgroup can be determined through an assessment of the methods of conflict resolution employed, although the influence of social processes, social support, member growth and development, and the effective management of the workgroup climate are equally important (Peiró et al., 1992). Individuals in well-functioning work groups, where competitive conflict is minimised and social support maximised, may display fewer indicators of job related stress and depression than those in dysfunctional work groups (Sonnentag, 1996). West (1997) considered that the provision of strong social support was particularly important for work groups involved in complex decision-making, offering a buffer from the influence of negative organisational pressures, increasing an individual's sense of competence and reducing anxiety and depression.

A survey of 1,110 employers in the United Kingdom conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2004) found that stress related absence from work was increasing annually. The main causes of stress related absences identified by survey respondents were workload, management style, relationships at work, organisational change and the pressure to meet unrealistic performance targets. The highest rate of stress related absence was found to be in the public sector. The Audit Commission (2002) warned that the public services were heading for a staffing crisis generated by levels of stress and disillusionment among millions of public service workers. Almost 80% of workers consulted by the Audit Commission's survey team blamed bureaucracy and paperwork, excessive workloads and long working hours for increasing stress levels. Respondents claimed there were far too many performance targets and many felt their work was increasingly driven by what could be measured rather than what mattered to services users. The rapid pace of change in the public sector, and a perception of not being valued by government, managers and the public were also identified as contributory factors (Audit Commission, 2002).

Sonnentag (1996) proposed that the maintenance of social relationships at work was a powerful determinant of job related stress. It is possible that a cohesive

team climate, built on strong social relationships, might help to buffer YOT members from some of the organisational and environmental factors which contribute to stress identified by the Audit Commission (2002) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2004). If poor social relationships, and the range of inhibiting factors identified through the literature reviewed, negatively affect team climate, YOTs may offer members a highly stressful and unstable working environment.

### **Diverse teams**

The dynamics of groups cannot be separated from intergroup relations; there is a dialectical relationship between them (Hartley, 1996). As organisations attempt to become more flexible and team-orientated, it can be argued that an understanding of intergroup relations becomes more critical than ever. The complex diverse team structure of a YOT has been re-engineered and reframed in almost every aspect of its operation. Tannenbaum et al. (1996) observed that: *“structural changes are riskier than most others. They often involve fundamental changes. For this reason it is essential that structural interventions have the full support of senior management and that careful diagnostic work has been conducted prior to committing to the change”* (Tannenbaum et al., 1996, p. 525).

It is difficult to find, in the consultation or policy documents that preceded the formation of the new youth justice system, any reference to attempts to undertake a diagnostic assessment of the possible impact of the proposed changes at practice level or how the proposals might impact upon YOT members. The omission might reflect a lack of published research to inform the changes, strengthening concern that YOTs were launched into unknown territory. Since their launch in 2000 there has however continued to be little research interest in the structure or internal processes of such a complex work structure. The focus of research endeavour has tended towards assessments of their performance against national targets.

There may have been a lack of research to inform the structural changes to the delivery of joined up youth offending services but there has been some research conducted into the dynamics of highly diverse teams from which some indicators of YOT internal functioning might be drawn. Jackson (1996) offered an overview of research from the field of workgroup psychology, which has explored the interpersonal dynamics that arise in multidisciplinary teams and the longer-term

consequences of such dynamics. Jackson's review of research evidence suggests that YOT members are likely to experience a variety of challenges additional to those that might be expected in most groups and workgroups. It was Jackson's view that the term "diversity" could refer to many different aspects of team composition and she proposed a taxonomy to describe the types of diversity found in multidisciplinary teams (Jackson, 1996, p.57 below):

*Figure 8 - A taxonomy for describing the content of team diversity*

	<b>Task Related Attributes</b>	<b>Relations - Oriented Attributes</b>
<b>Readily Detected Attributes</b>	Department/Unit Membership Organizational Tenure Formal Credential and Titles Education Level Memberships in Professional Association	Sex Age Nationality Ethnicity Religion Political Memberships Physical Appearance
<b>Underlying Attributes</b>	Knowledge and Expertise Skills Physical Abilities Task Experience	Socio-Economic Status Attitudes Values Personality

Jackson (1996) proposed that managers and researchers often concentrate on task related attributes and tend to overlook the possible effects of the relations-orientated diversity that might be present in a team. Relations orientated attributes influence the way team members think and feel about themselves and others. The consequences of diversity in YOT composition are of particular interest because of its potential to influence communication patterns within the team, communications across team boundaries, and the distribution of resources, all of which impact upon overall team performance. While no one theory establishes the empirical relationship between aspects of diversity in a team, a variety of theoretical interests and perspectives was outlined by Jackson (1996). Diversity shapes the internal dynamics of a multidisciplinary team and has consequences for the way members process information, make decisions and carry them out. The demographic diversity of YOTs, with members of different status, might be expected to influence participation in task-related decision-making, with lower status members participating

less. While group decision-making processes have been extensively studied, the implementation of decisions has received less attention. It was proposed that teams with diverse task related abilities generally tended to outperform teams with homogeneous abilities, assuming that members are enabled to take on tasks that match their abilities. Conversely teams composed of members who are homogeneous in their demographic characteristics tend to generally perform better than diverse teams.

A reason proposed for why diversity that is not relevant to the task might interfere with the implementation of decisions is that all members of the team might be less strongly committed to whatever solution is agreed upon. If the diversity of perspectives makes reaching consensus difficult, teams may choose to resolve conflicts through compromise and majority rule, instead of persisting to a creative resolution that is acceptable to the whole team. Nemeth and Owens (1996) considered that exposure to diverse perspectives in complex decision-making groups improved the quality of thinking and learning. The dissent and disagreement that can accrue from complex decision-making processes can however also arouse negative emotional reactions that can be directed towards individual team members. Minority team members may assist a YOT to construct a creative decision to a complex problem involving a service user with multiple needs, but may find themselves marginalised by colleagues because of the level of negotiation required to reach a collective view.

Cohesiveness refers to the degree of interpersonal attraction among team members. While Belbin (1996) asserted that teams do not need to be happy to be effective, Jackson (1996) proposed that the way team members feel about one another is important for many reasons. The most important reason may be that feelings of interpersonal attraction contributes to team members' choice to stay in a team and therefore may influence the team's stability and long-term viability. Team cohesiveness also promotes helpfulness, generosity, and cooperation, and contributes to effective communication. Communication in the broadest sense concerns the way a YOT manages information. Studies of communication networks reveal that team composition predicts who talks to whom about what, as well as how much people talk to each other overall (Jackson, 1996). In general research findings

suggest that effective communication networks are better supported by demographic homogeneity (Hoffman, 1985).

### **The long-term consequences of team diversity**

It is possible to predict some of the eventual consequences of diversity in teams on the basis of available research findings. Highly diverse teams can expect a higher turnover of staff, particularly among managers, stimulated by a higher level of internal group conflict (Jackson, 1996). Decreased cohesiveness tends to create feelings of dissatisfaction among team members, and managers, and increases the perceived desirability of other job offers. Under many circumstances high turnover rates may be viewed as a negative consequence of diversity: high staff turnover can be disruptive and costly. Jackson however proposed that a steady and managed high turnover of staff could also lead to benefit. Repeated exposure of team members to one another tends to lead to growing homogenisation of their attitudes and perspectives. The regular introduction of new members can offer the opportunity for the continued introduction of fresh ideas and an increase in individual learning and growth.

The long-term consequences of team diversity that is likely to concern organisations most is its potential to impact upon team performance. As Jackson (1996) observed team performance affects an organisation as a whole and may also have implications for how the organisation responds to the team and its members. High performance teams tend to accumulate power and status within their organisation, which they may be able to utilise in negotiations for increased autonomy and resources. High performance YOTs may be in a stronger negotiating position within local partnerships than do poorly performing teams, although they are in the position of having to negotiate with multiple organisations in concord, about which little is known. The effects of diversity on team performance are however complex, depending heavily on whether task related or relation's orientated attributes are studied. Jackson (1996) concluded that much more research was required to examine the complexity of team diversity and its myriad consequences. She recommended careful consideration of the interplay between the specific nature of a team's diversity and the larger context that surrounds the team's activities: *"including the nature of the tasks to be completed, the technologies used to complete the task,*

*as well as the organizational and societal histories and cultures that serve as the backdrop for the team activities”* (Jackson, 1996, p.68). Guzzo (1996) took a similar view, concerned that the future of teams could be problematic as organisations seek to create ever more fluid boundaries without carefully analysing the potential consequences.

The many aspects of the boundaries of groups and teams can often be difficult to describe accurately. Some are physical, some are temporal, some boundaries are created by qualifications and credentials, by rights, responsibilities and obligations, while others have psychological aspects, such as when stereotyping creates subjective but sometimes insurmountable distinctions between in and out groups (Sundstrom et al., 1990). Boundaries are important to all groups and teams, essential for their integrity as social entities. The boundaries of work teams are however being constantly eroded with the increasing use of computers and distance working, temporary and multiple team membership. Changes to the nature of team working appear inevitable.

The identification of members with their groups is integrally affected by the strength and permeability of group boundaries and as Guzzo (1996, p.14) observed: *“If team boundaries change then the nature of teams will change”*. Guzzo considered that the implications of boundary changes and the increasing fluidity of work practices are likely to be significant. Levels of cohesiveness are likely to decline, the strength of individual identification with a team is likely to diminish and the influence that teams hold in their organisations may decrease. It is also possible that teams with weakened boundaries will be less able to extract compliance from their members, and individuals will be less able to rely on a primary workgroup for information and support. Ironically it may be that, the more traditional boundaries are dismantled to promote joining up, the more professions and professionals may be driven to find ways to substitute them. Loxley (1997, p.50) considered there was,

*a paradox to be recognised and addressed: division and boundaries are devices to make meeting need manageable in the face of complexity, but unless professions and agencies create further devices to manage the divisions and boundaries, total need will not be met.*

Guzzo (1996) posed an interesting question. He wondered if the gains in the effectiveness of organisations, reported in many studies over the past few decades

and largely credited to the formation of teams, would have been achieved if team boundaries had been as weak as they are now. Jackson (1996) considered that the pace and extent of change, and lack of sustained research effort to guide it, has propelled organisations and teams into a new era of uncertainty. The best advice for organisations and managers may be to proceed in the mode of a learning organisation: *“a learning organization recognizes that current actions should be informed by all available information (e.g. the results of past research) but it also accepts responsibility for creating new knowledge through its own actions”* (Jackson, 1996, p.69). Careful attention to feedback from team members about the successes or failures of innovations appears vital to inform alternative ways of structuring tasks and constructing teams. It appears essential to build a new body of knowledge about the contribution of complex teams with weakened boundaries to overall organisational effectiveness.

## **Chapter summary**

No two workgroups or teams are likely to look or behave in the same way, each is composed of unique individuals and the environments within which they function are also undergoing constant changes. No single theory encompasses or explains how groups of people at work behave or how individuals experience group work. Decades of research into group and workgroup processes have however produced a strong body of work that aids understanding of the wide range of factors that are likely to be encountered in YOTs.

Of critical importance is an understanding that a group is a manifestation of its members: *“there is no superorganism called a group apart from its individual members. Take away the parts and the whole is gone”* (Locke et al., 2001, p.502). A workteam is essentially a group of individuals working together and a Youth Offending *Team* is simply a manifestation of its members, whose contributions to it and experience of working within it integrally influences its potential to be successful. There is little to distinguish a group from a team other than a growing emphasis on accountability and responsibility and a semantic preference for the term “team”, with its association with competitive advantage. It is extremely important not to make changes to working practices and working structures without a full appreciation of how these changes might impact upon workers.



Research from the field of behavioural psychology suggests that the experience of belonging to a group at work is largely a psychological state (Hogg and Abrams, 1998). Individuals gain essential support, security and sense of self worth through their social interactions with others in groups (Goffman, 1959). Human psychological processes can however be both distorted and enhanced by the experience of workgroup membership (see for example Locke et al., 2001; Guzzo, 1996). Complex and unique individuals bring their own attitudes, perceptions, history, skills, values and beliefs to their teams and their contributions significantly influence both inter-group and intra-group processes. The psychological processes associated with the development of social identity contribute to expressions of tribal behaviour, such as conformity to group norms, group solidarity and discrimination against other groups that is often considered to be a weakness of professionals who are required to work cooperatively in teams. Professionals should perhaps be more aware than other groups of workers about group dynamics and relationship conflicts through their training, training does not however eliminate these influences.

It can be useful to view YOTs as small social systems with many factors that are capable of influencing their stability and performance. Factors that might influence YOTs include their size, the maintenance of worker motivation and the management of differentiated rewards that may prevent cooperation and impede the ability of a team to be flexible (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979). If YOTs are too large they may be susceptible to fragmentation into competing subgroups, which generate competition and friction, and communication difficulties. A YOT that functions well should be able to support its members, manage and resolve internal conflict and offer team members a buffer against work-related stress and anxiety. A YOT that is dysfunctional is more likely to experience a high turnover of members and managers. As Stein (1996) proposed the success of new work structures is likely to be limited if the human experience of workers is not fully taken into consideration from the outset. It can be argued that Guzzo's (1996) concern about the dispersal of knowledge about group and workgroup processes might have some foundation, there is little to suggest that an analysis of the working environment, which tends to intensify inter-group and intra-group processes, was undertaken before YOTs were launched.

The effectiveness and the efficiency of work groups are strongly influenced by a wide variety of factors concerned with their formation and management (Hackman, 1990). There are many interrelated situational and environmental factors that impact upon on the potential of a group of workers to perform to their optimum potential. Fundamentally *“teams violate the logic of the design of a bureaucratic, hierarchical, segmented organization..... the traditional organization often chews up teams and spits them out”* (Mohrman et al.,1995, p. xvii). It should perhaps not be surprising that teams rarely perform as organisations hope. The myth of teams however often detracts attention from the crucial issues of irreconcilable structures and limited resources and places the responsibility of mitigating their effects on practitioners (Loxley, 1997).

The unresolved contradictions of teams and teamwork have driven some researchers to return to the question that prompted the Hawthorne Studies in 1924: why is it that organisations that appear to employ similar methods and work structures produce widely different results? Attention has turned to exploring the context of teamwork (see for example Mohrman et al., 1995; Borrill et al., 1996; Guzzo, 1996; Tannenbaum et al., 1996; West 1996). Borrill et al. (2001) proposed that the challenge for 21<sup>st</sup> century organisations is to create the conditions in which the potential of teams can be optimised. Research has begun to seek understanding of the constituent parts of organisational systems, of which teams are only one. As might be expected a new phase of research endeavour has stimulated new language. Concepts such as teamworking (Mohrman et al., 1995), open teams and networking (Payne, 2000), self-managed teams (Yeatts and Hyten, 1998) and team-based organisations (Borrill et al., 2001) developed through this new body of work add to the potential for further dispersal of research knowledge that is urgently needed to inform new structural solutions to the complex problems of modern organisational life. The next chapter considers what types of organisational approaches might offer the best opportunities for teamwork to be optimised in YOTs, how YOT effectiveness might be defined and what a model of effectiveness for a YOT might look like.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Creating the Conditions for YOTs to be Effective**

#### **Introduction**

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were launched in 2000 charged with delivering a daunting and sweeping agenda of change in the way that youth crime is addressed in England and Wales. There may however be unrealistic expectations about what the teams are capable of achieving. The previous chapter proposed that teams tend to be viewed as a panacea for weaknesses that organisations and policy makers may be unwilling or unable to address. It can be convenient in the drive for continual improvement to overlook the basic psychological processes that take place in all work groups and which integrally influence their potential.

The previous chapter suggested that YOT staff are likely to have more in common with people working in groups in other occupations than differences. Individuals may be the most unpredictable variable influencing internal team dynamics. Organisations however create the conditions within which a team functions and, while creating and sustaining the conditions for effective teamwork is a challenge for any one organisation, YOTs are not employed by one organisation but depend upon many for the provision of support, guidance and resources. Chapter Six concerns the many multi-faceted and interrelated organisational and situational characteristics that are most likely to influence the potential for effective teamwork in YOTs.

The chapter begins with a consideration of how authors approach teams as vehicles for the achievement of organisational goals in different ways. An emphasis is placed upon the essential need for new team arrangements to be embedded in an organisational and situational context that facilitates success and the concept of a teambased organisation is discussed. The learning organisation perspective might be one of the most relevant to understanding teambased approaches, the literature from this field of research is summarised and the central features of a learning organisation are compared to those of a traditional organisation. The chapter then moves on to consider the contribution that individuals can make to the learning of

their organisation, and the barriers to learning and change that are embedded in the organisations that form youth offending partnerships.

The chapter concludes with a model of YOT effectiveness. The model offers a summary of the literature reviewed in the first six chapters of the thesis and provided a framework to guide the fieldwork that is described in the following two chapters.

### **Experimenting with teams**

Although the demand for high performance teams is high, satisfaction with the performance of teams tends to be generally low (Tannenbaum et al., 1996; Borrill et al., 2001). The response of dissatisfied organisations tends to be to seek different ways of organising work and authors have suggested different models of teamwork that might be capable of encompassing the challenges of modern organisational life.

Mohrman et al. (1995) proposed that the purpose behind each team relates to the challenges of designing it and managing its performance. Overtveit (1993) asserted that the pathway experienced by a client must dictate the shape of a team, proposing nine different ways to describe team structures in health and social care that might enable integrated practice: *“over the longer term, the team structure affects cooperation more than anything else, and is the most critical aspect of team organization for meeting client needs”* (Overtveit, 1993, p.61). Overtveit distinguished teams by their level of integration with other services and staff, and their relationship to a client. He was however concerned that the cost of setting up and maintaining a formal multidisciplinary team might not always be justified, citing a shortage of research into the cost-effectiveness of formal teams, and too ready an assumption that formal complex teams were always the best way to service client needs.

Payne (2000) introduced the notion of developing open teamwork and networking as methods of adapting to change in a health and social care sector, proposing that networking had the potential to extend the professional relationships created by teamwork into interpersonal and community links. Open teamwork might be capable of extending group cohesion and cooperation, within organisations and professional groups, and lead to more cooperative, integrated and empowering

service networks. Payne (2000) however also highlighted the paradox of teamwork in multiprofessional care settings. While teams are required to attend to the internal relationships that enhance practice, they must also look outward to building relationships with other professionals, organisations and service users. Teams are valued as a source of mutual support against the demands of their organisations and policy, yet they are formed primarily as the instrument for meeting these demands.

Mohrman et al. (1995) described the contours of a wide range of teams broadly categorised as work teams, integrating teams, management teams and improvement teams. YOTs most closely resemble Mohrman's description of an integrating team in knowledge settings, established to make sure that work across various parts of an organisation fits together. Susan Mohrman and her colleagues considered the primary challenge was to create structures and processes in knowledge settings that fostered the integration of the work of people with diverse knowledge bases, forming a network of interdependent teams. YOTs face the challenges of integrating knowledge teams, strongly influenced by multiple concurrent organisational processes and characterised by uncertainty, contention and complexity.

Although authors have approached teams as vehicles for organisational success in different ways, Overtveit (1993) from the perspective of service user experience, Payne (2000) from the perspective of developing relationships and Mohrman et al. (1995) from the perspective of team purpose, each author emphasised the importance of clarity of purpose, structure and management. New team and teamwork arrangements must be embedded in an organisational and situational context that facilitates success. It was the view of Irvine et al. (2002) that many organisations lack coherent policies to formalise channels of communication across boundaries and often fail to prepare staff for the changes wrought by new initiatives

### **Teambased organisations**

A teambased organisation is one that is committed to providing groups of workers with the conditions necessary for them to maximise their potential to be effective (Borrill et al., 2001). The potential benefits for organisations adopting a teambased approach may be considerable. A growing body of research evidence

suggests that organisations that invest in and support teams may be capable improving production and the quality of goods and services (see for example Guzzo and Shea, 1992; Weldon and Weingart, 1993). Research undertaken in the health sector by Borrill et al. (2001) strongly suggested that the adoption of teambased approaches to healthcare was capable of reducing levels of hospitalisation and costs, and improving service provision and patient satisfaction.

Teambased organisational practices have their roots in sociotechnical systems theory and are strongly influenced by the work of Richard Hackman (1990). A fundamental principle is that teams should be developed as integrated performing units, their effectiveness dependent upon the level of support for integrated work provided by the organisation within which they are embedded. A critical finding of the four-year study undertaken by Mohrman et al. (1995) to explore teambased organisations in the commercial sector was that the creation of teams required more than just forming workgroups and calling them teams, it required significant changes in how an organisation was structured and managed: *“a team-based organization differs in fundamental ways from the traditional, bureaucratic model (with its lines and boxes, departments, individual jobs, and chains of command)”* (Mohrman et al., 1995, p. xv). Borrill et al. (2001) asserted that to benefit from teambased approaches the National Health Service would have to undergo a systematic and radical organisational change.

There has been a rapid growth of literature in recent years devoted to the difficulties that all organisations face if they are to remain viable in an era of rapid change and intense competition. Research concerning strategies for assisting organisations to learn and to cope with change often clusters under the term “organisational learning”.

### **The learning organisation perspective**

A long tradition of research literature from disciplines as diverse as occupational psychology, management science and cultural anthropology offers valuable insights into the challenges that face the organisations involved in the new youth justice system as they strive to adapt to the magnitude of changes required of them, not the least of which is to find ways to support joined up teamwork.

The organisational learning perspective encompasses the management of teambased approaches and change mechanisms, worker participation, adaptation, management systems and structures, and the processes of delegation, power and control. A learning organisation is generally considered to be the desired end state of organisational learning achieved through intervention (Easterby-Smith, 1997; Edmondson and Moingeon, 1998). The characteristics of a traditional organisation compared with that of a learning organisation are outlined below (see *Figure 9* below from Clarke, 2001, p.7).

*Figure 9 - Comparison of a traditional organisation with a learning organisation*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Traditional Organisation</b>	<b>Learning Organisation</b>
Leadership Style	Director/Instructor	Facilitator
Knowledge and skills	Specific expertise linked to distinct jobs	Expertise combined with excellent learning skills to achieve continuous self development
Organisational structure	Top-down	Flat structure with empowered staff
Staff	Fixed job descriptions	Delegated responsibility
Beliefs, goals and objectives	Achieve performance targets	Pursuit of excellence
Business plan	Fixed	Continuously developing
Performance measurement	Financially based	Includes many factors including finance, organisational knowledge and human resources

### **Categories of learning organisation research**

Pedler et al. (1988) proposed that a learning organisation facilitates the learning of all of members to continuously transform itself. Literature about organisational learning however encompasses different levels of analysis from that of the individual to that of entire organisations. For example Huber (1991) examined organisational processes such as the movement of information, Daft and Weick (1984) explored how individuals interpret and create their organisation and Levitt and Marsh (1988) documented the factors that can influence or impede adaptation and

change. In most interpretations, organisational learning is viewed as something that can be brought about through intervention (Hayes et al., 1988; Senge 1990; Argyris 1993).

Levitt and Marsh (1988) proposed that organisations tend to build their knowledge on the basis of trial, error and imitation, learning to account for the status quo by adopting safe and predictable routines. Weick (1979) explored the processes through which organisations make sense of chaos by sorting experiences into separate, connected and sequenced events based on a shared, but often erroneous, interpretation of reality. Levitt and Marsh (1988) expanded Weick's analysis to include the notion of competency traps into which organisations become so entrenched in the routine of delivering their end product they tend to compound mistakes because they are unable to interpret the need to change. Perceptions that public service agencies are primarily habit driven, and have largely failed to develop mechanisms to assist their learning and growth, tend to reinforce increasingly directive government interventions, and have to an extent shaped New Labour's sweeping policy change agenda.

Research that considers organisations as collections of individuals who can learn and develop seeks to identify the barriers to these processes. Different organisational structures and cultures can offer distinctly different learning opportunities for members. Shrivastava (1983) for example suggested two types of learning systems, the bureaucratic and the participative. In a bureaucratic learning system, management choices are designed to produce meaningful information to aid planning and monitoring. Learning is located within the structures of the strategic and environmental planning systems of the organisation. In contrast a participative learning system tends to be structured around the informal exchange of information, learning occurs through informal transactions and meetings, and becomes the property of all members of the organisation. Pedler et al. (1991) considered that flatter organisational structures aided the personal and professional development of individuals and supported the process of continual improvement and learning.

Public sector agencies tend largely to be bureaucratic structures, primarily due to their size, complexity and state directed functions. The primary agencies involved in youth offending partnerships are traditional hierarchical organisational



structures, which Mohrman et al. (1995) proposed impede both learning and teamwork. Borrill et al. (2001) strongly recommended the development of flatter more team-orientated organisational structures to promote the overall effectiveness of the United Kingdom health sector.

### **Individual contributions to organisational learning**

An organisation is most likely to learn if all of its members are enabled to fully participate in the process and one of the essential conditions for the development of a learning culture is that both organisations and teams value individuals as their most important asset. Some organisational theorists propose that the thinking and decision-making processes of individuals shape organisations and, crucially that these cognitive processes can be changed (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Senge 1990; Argyris, 1993). Organisational learning from this perspective heavily relies on individuals taking responsibility for developing and refining their thinking processes, and for organisations to support them in this endeavour.

Theories of systems dynamics, the principles of which influenced the development of the systems management approach to youth justice in the 1980s, aim to identify features of human cognition that promote or block the ability to understand the interconnections of complex systems. Systems dynamics require the managers to learn to diagnose how organisational systems work in order to be able to improve them. From this perspective learning is characterised as the detection and correction of the errors of reasoning (Argyris, 1993). Argyris however proposed that one of the major difficulties facing organisations was that managers often have an infinite capacity to blame others for failures, a view strongly supported by Beer and Eisenstat (1996). Senior managers may appear willing to commit their organisation to learning principles but may not be anxious to commit to their own personal learning. Beer and Eisenstat (1996) observed that the development of active learning partnerships at all levels could be difficult and painful: *"It requires, among other things, learning how to receive feedback without loss of self esteem, how to collaborate without feeling out of control, and how to own up to weaknesses without feeling incompetent"* (Beer and Eisenstat, 1996, p.617).

Action science theories propose that individual incompetence, rather than the complexity of organisational systems, is the critical cause of organisational

ineffectiveness. The view of Senge (1990, p.13) was that all members of an organisation must engage in a process of learning to understand their own thinking processes and that this process essentially required "*metanoia*": a shift of mind. He contended that individuals could be taught to change thinking processes, or mental models, and learn to detect and correct errors by attending to the difference between what they believe they do and say and what they actually do and say. The model of organisational learning proposed by Peter Senge (1990) encompasses five key disciplines that underpin much of the work in the field of systems theory. The notion of mental models focuses on the mechanisms that individuals and organisations employ to understand and cope with the complexity of daily organisational life. Personal mastery concerns the development of the essential skills that must be learned if individuals are to become proactive in identifying and correcting errors in how they function as individuals, and how their organisation functions as a whole. The concept of teamworking builds upon the contention that, collectively, groups of workers have the potential to be more effective than the sum of their individual parts if teamwork is supported and developed. Senge (1990) proposed that the development of shared vision was an essential goal for any organisation, to ensure it was led in a direction and with a purpose by management that was explicit and overt, and capable of driving participation at all levels.

A central criticism of Peter Senge's model of organisational learning is that few individuals hold power in their organisations. The workers often targeted for training are rarely in a position to make policy decisions or to significantly influence them (Edmondson and Moingeon, 1998). Argyris (1990) was concerned, not only about the commitment to learning of managers, but that the best intentions to change often failed to be implemented by individuals lacking the interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with others. Bain (1998) took the view that Senge did not go far enough in explaining what a learning organisation actually looked like and critically did not take into account that many organisations face external barriers to change. It is possible that some aspects of the public sector, strongly controlled from the centre and integrally shaped by political ideology, may be beyond the influence of individuals or organisations to change in the way that learning organisation theories demand.

## Barriers to change

A daunting agenda of change is explicitly required at all levels of the new youth justice system to refocus towards preventing offending, to embrace the principles of new public management, to adapt to the joined up imperative and to develop methods of working in partnership to supporting teamwork. The barriers to change in organisations, particularly in the public sector, appear formidable.

Bain (1998) proposed that all organisations maintain socially constructed defences against the anxieties that can be stimulated by carrying out primary organisational tasks. Organisations sharing a similar primary task are likely to build similar social defences against the anxieties of change and legitimise them through training and accepted practices. Professional organisations epitomise this. A study of the stress culture of three local authority social services departments by Thompson et al. (1996) identified how strongly organisational culture impacted upon change management. The study found that in one social service department social work staff experienced "*pathologically*" high stress levels, stimulated by an organisational culture of stress that was unable to respond to change. It was proposed that: "*as social work is very much a value-driven occupation, it can be predicted that cultures within social work organizations will be relatively strong and resistant to change, especially where professional values and moral principles are concerned*" (Thompson et al., 1996, p.650). Most of the organisations involved in youth offending partnerships are integrally value driven professional organisations.

The health sector has been the subject of sustained research effort to determine why change is often strongly resisted. Work by researchers such as Bain (1998); Dunning et al. (1998) and Firth-Cozens (1998) suggest that it is rarely sufficient to attempt to change practice in only one part of a complex system domain. A hospital for example operates systems in common with the wider health community, working practices are constantly reinforced through shared training, how funding is allocated and the movement of staff from one location to another within the public sector. A comprehensive review of effort to improve the quality of healthcare in the United Kingdom undertaken by the Cochrane Review Group (1999) concluded that while individual beliefs, attitudes and knowledge influence professional behaviour, other factors including the organisational, economic and

community environment of practice are vitally important. Multi-faceted interventions, such as those launched by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, targeting different barriers to change appear more likely to be effective than single interventions.

### **Defining effectiveness**

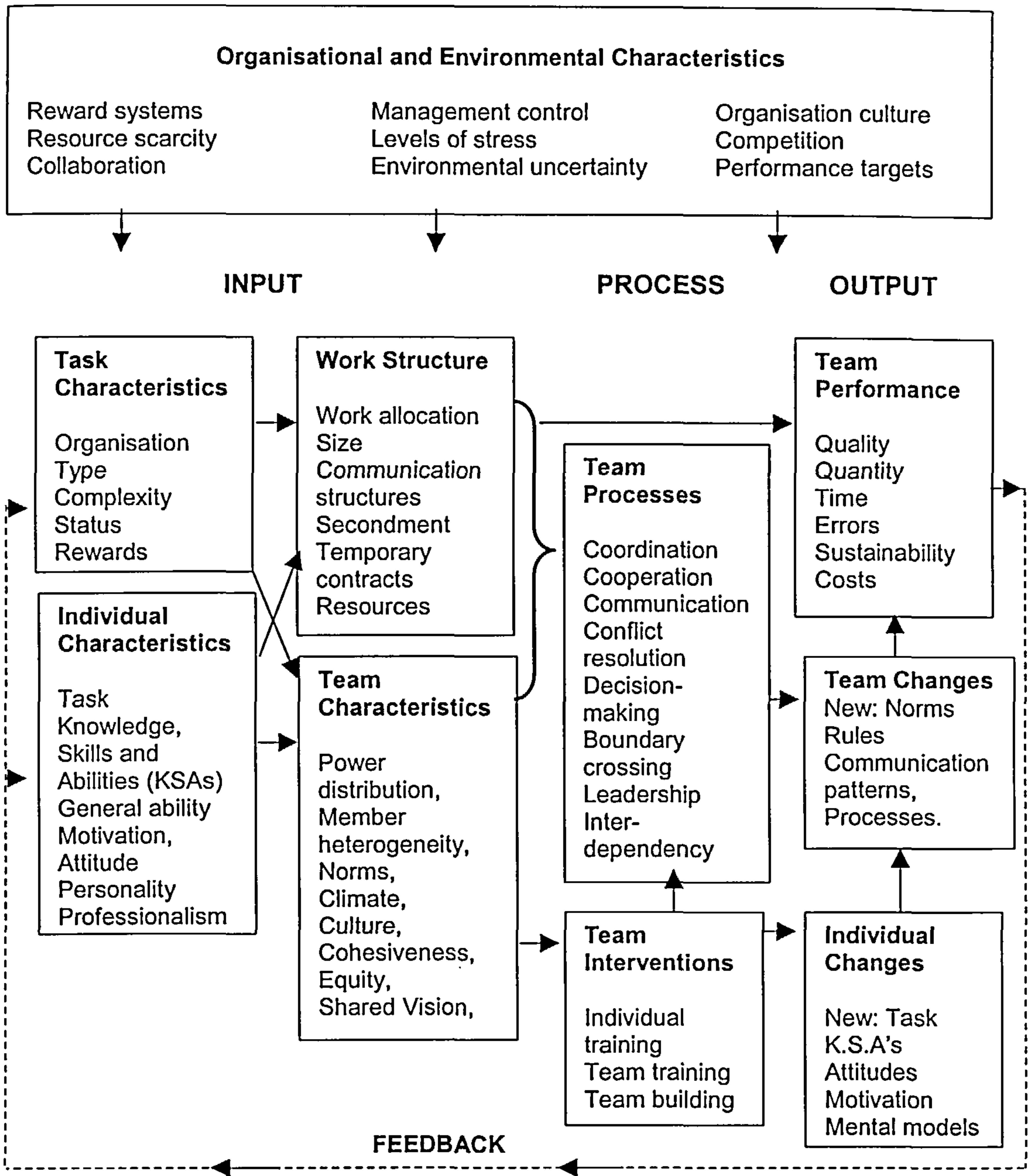
It can be difficult to establish meaningful connections between different parts of complex organisational systems and to assess precisely how any one part contributes specifically to the effectiveness of highly complex organisational structures (Guzzo, 1996). Teams, organisations and their environments change over time; performance goals are multiple and can be in competition. Crucially, what might be viewed as effective for one stakeholder group could be ineffective for another. Speeding up the processing of young offenders through the criminal justice system might be effective in improving system efficiency but the strategy is potentially ineffective for the victims of youth crime if they are not afforded sufficient time to be consulted about their involvement in proposals for restitution or reparation (Dignan, 1992; Williams, 2000).

Many authors consider performance effectiveness to be the most critical dependent variable of interest in research concerning teamwork (Hackman 1990; Mohrman et al., 1995; Guzzo 1996; Katzenbach and Smith, 1999; Borrill et al., 2001), and as Macy and Izumi (1993) observed organisations most often define performance effectiveness in financial terms. Hackman (1990) developed a broad definition of team effectiveness that aimed to embrace not only by how a team contributed to productive output, but also how successfully it enhanced sustainability. Sustainability was characterised by Tannenbaum et al. (1996) as a team's ability "*to reverse the forces of entropy, to remain vital and "alive" and to grow and regenerate itself*" (Tannenbaum et al., 1996, p.505). The core contention of these authors is that teams that are unable to maintain a supportive internal climate and remain viable in the longer term are unlikely to be capable of contributing strongly to improved organisational performance or cost effectiveness. It can be argued then that the effectiveness of a YOT should be measured by how successfully it contributes to reducing offending by children and young people, how successfully it enhances the capability of members to work cooperatively together to integrate professional skills and knowledge, and how capable it is of sustaining itself as a team in the future.

## **A model of YOT effectiveness**

Models of team effectiveness tend to build upon principles similar to those of learning organisations. Theoretical approaches to understanding the performance of workgroups and teams are largely shaped by an input-process-output structure developed by Hackman and Morris (1975). Tannenbaum et al. (1996) expanded the relationship between team inputs, processes and outputs to include the overarching influence of organisational and environmental characteristics on the potential of teams to be effective. The model of team effectiveness put forward by Tannenbaum et al. (1996, p.507) has been adapted below (see *Figure 10*) to offer a representation of the factors, organisational and environmental characteristics that appear most likely, from the literature reviewed for this thesis, to influence the potential of YOTs to be effective teams.

Figure 10 - A Model of effectiveness for YOTs



(Adapted from Tannenbaum et al., 1996, p. 507)

The model of YOT effectiveness proposed above provided a useful method of summarising the many interrelated factors of influence that emerged from the literature reviewed in this and previous chapters. A key advantage of illustrating the

characteristics of team effectiveness in a model relating to YOTs is that it becomes easier to see that a YOT is no more than the sum of its parts, effective YOT processes and performance can only be achieved through careful attention to what is put in place to facilitate them.

The organisational and environmental factors that shape YOTs were explored in Chapters Two and Three. The input factors listed under the headings of “task characteristics”, “work structure”, “team characteristics” and “individual characteristics” were explored in Chapters Four and Five. The strength of influence between input factors appears almost impossible to assess. Teams are small social systems that are a function of their membership (Locke et al., 2001), and are responsive to their environment (Bion, 1961). No two YOTs are likely to have the same characteristics, and these will vary across many dimensions that have implications for how they are designed and managed (Overtveit 1993; Mohrman et al., 1995; Hayes, 1997; Payne, 2000). Of most importance however is that organisations can intervene to positively influence many of the characteristics of teams to maximise their potential for success (Yeatts and Hyten, 1998).

The individual characteristics of YOTs are the only aspect of effective teamwork over which the efficacy of management intervention is likely to be limited. While action science theorists consider mental models and cognitive processes capable of modification, human behaviour strongly resists manipulation (Goffman, 1959; Bowey and Carlisle, 1979; Stokes, 1994a). Individual human philosophy strongly influences how individuals approach both teamwork and interprofessional practice and may transcend allegiances to professional or organisational cultures (Dalley, 1993). Team building, training to change mental models, team management training and leadership development each have a valuable part to play in maximising a team’s potential (Tannenbaum et al., 1996). There is however a strong body of evidence from research in the health sector that training alone is inadequate to promote change: a multi-faceted strategy is required (Bain, 1998; Dunning et al. 1998; Firth-Cozens, 1998; the Cochrane Review Group, 1999).

The organisational and environmental characteristics of team effectiveness suggested by Tannenbaum et al., (1996), which include reward systems; management control; organisational culture; resource scarcity; levels of stress and

environmental uncertainty, are also multi-faceted and interrelated. The potential for any of these characteristics to impact positively or negatively on a single team employed by a single organisation is likely to be considerable. To accurately reflect the conditions of YOTs however the characteristics of “collaboration” and “performance targets” have been added to those suggested originally by Tannenbaum and his colleagues. Crucially all of the organisational and environmental characteristics then must be applied to each of the partner organisations that form the boundaries of a YOT and an extremely complicated pattern of potential influence emerges.

A further complication arises because performance feedback only appears to encompass team level. The Youth Justice Board constructs YOT performance targets, while a range of government bodies set the performance targets of partner organisations, and these are not always compatible. YOTs may be even more limited than most teams to influence the organisational and environmental characteristics that impact upon not only their capability to be effective but also the shape and organisation of the territory they inhabit in the public sector. Research has yet to be undertaken to explore how multiple, concurrent organisational and environmental characteristics might influence the potential of a team to be effective. Since few of the organisations involved in youth offending partnerships are likely to demonstrate the features of a learning organisation suggested by Clarke (2001), they may be limited in their capacity to learn, change or support effective teamwork in YOTs.

It is of particular note that the processes through which a team pursues effectiveness proposed by Tannenbaum et al. (1996): “coordination”, “cooperation”, “communication”, “conflict resolution”, “boundary crossing”, “leadership”, “decision-making” and “interdependency” are those that are central to the development of effective interprofessional practice, interorganisational practice and joined up government. The synergy of processes go some way to reinforce a view that joining up in its widest sense may simply be a high level of practice response to the challenges of joined up social problems. Each process is however capable of a variety of situated interpretations and each is difficult to precisely define, and almost impossible to measure.



## **Measuring YOT effectiveness**

Cost and time effectiveness are two of the team output measures suggested by Tannenbaum et al. (1996). As Macy and Izumi (1993) suggested organisations most often measure team effectiveness on financial terms and the goal of cost effectiveness was the one of the primary drivers for changes to the youth justice system. The cost effectiveness of the YOT model has however yet to be assessed. The approach taken by the Youth Justice Board has been to measure the effectiveness of YOTs against a range of specific targets largely focused on the efficiency of the new youth justice system.

Speeding up the processing of young offenders through the criminal justice system was one key target that relates to time effectiveness. Only four out of twelve performance measures set for 2004-2005 however directly concerned effective outcomes for young offenders. It seems likely that YOT effectiveness will continue to be measured mainly on their ability to meet the pragmatic performance targets of new public management, which only include what it is possible to measure. It might be argued that what matters to promote effective teamwork and what matters for effective justice for children and young people are relegated to secondary importance.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter has considered the expansion of experimentation with different ways to define and structure teams to achieve the heightened level of performance desired by organisations as they struggle to compete in an increasingly chaotic and competitive environment. Most authors agree that whatever way teams are described or structured the defining feature of their potential to be effective is the level of commitment by their organisation to teambased practices. Theories of organisational learning might offer organisations a framework of practices to maximise the potential of the teams they employ.

Becoming a learning organisation is a desired end state of organisational learning that is probably never reached. As organisations act to change in response to changing environmental demands, environmental demands themselves continue to change. Organisational learning is best viewed as a dynamic process. Individuals

contribute to the learning of their organisations by embracing learning and change for themselves through a state of 'metanoia' proposed by Senge (1990). Barriers to change, particularly in public sector organisations, are however formidable. Supporting teams through organisational learning requires sweeping changes to how organisations are structured and to management practices. Public sector organisations are traditionally organised in hierarchical, bureaucratic structures that tend to "*chew(s) teams up and spit(s) them out*" (Mohrman et al., 1995, p. xvii). Managers may be reluctant to adopt learning principles for themselves and tend to react to the weaknesses of their organisations or policies by deflecting blame: usually down through the hierarchy of a service.

Overall the literature reviewed for this thesis suggests that YOTs are likely to encounter more barriers to their potential to be effective than supports. Paradoxically, spite of the challenges, they appear to have been largely successful in meeting the considerable expectations placed upon them. It may be that research knowledge has been overtaken by the pace and extent of change in the organisation of work in the public sector. Existing literature may be inadequate to encompass the many facets of YOTs who function in an environment that is substantially different from working conditions even a decade ago. The literature reviewed surfaced as many questions as answers to the YOT phenomenon, and many potential contradictions.

The fieldwork research conducted for this thesis aimed to create a more holistic view of joined up work in the public sector than it is possible to construct from the many strands of incomplete research literature so far published, and to ground it in practice. *Figure 10* (above) provided a framework to inform the design of a research strategy capable of exploring the YOT model from the perspective of the people who populate it. Chapter Seven describes the strategy developed to allow a narrative of YOTs to emerge from the frontline of practice and the research design chosen for the fieldwork. Chapter Eight outlines how the fieldwork was conducted and introduces the YOT managers and practitioners who offered to share their experience of joined up team practice in the new youth justice system with the researcher.

## Chapter Seven

### Research Strategy and Design

#### Introduction

The previous chapter concluded with the gloomy assessment that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) appear to face more barriers to their potential to be effective than supports. It has been argued that the new joined up youth justice system lacks a clear philosophical grounding and that the *third way* approach to governing the system is weakened through a lack of elaboration. A balanced assessment about the prevalence of youth crime has yet to be reached, casting some doubt about the basis on which successful prevention might be measured. The meanings of partnership, collaboration, coordination and cooperation in youth justice have yet to be defined in ways that support and guide implementation. Public sector organisations may be limited in their capacity to learn to support joined up youth justice. The relationship between joined up government, policy and practice is, at best, ambiguous and, while the myth of teams prevails, there may be unrealistic expectations about what YOTs are capable of achieving.

Some authors are concerned that the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was a lost opportunity to secure a measure of justice for children, the reforms largely perpetuating a morally bankrupt response to children who cause trouble in England and Wales (see for example Goldson, 2000; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; Smith, 2003). Conversely there appears to be broad support for the way the youth justice system has been refocused towards prevention, and the place of YOTs within it. In spite of encountering a formidable range of potential barriers to success, YOTs appear to have achieved much in their first 18 months of operation. It is possible that the teams might inform a new understanding of what joined up practice in teams is capable of achieving, even in the emotive field of youth justice.

The aim of the fieldwork research conducted for this thesis was to enable a narrative of YOTs to develop from the direct experiences of the people who work in them. The approach adopted to designing the fieldwork was founded on the proposition that working in YOTs is both a cognitive and a practical reality for staff,

and that: *“the strength of a qualitative research emphasis is the study of phenomena in context”* (Murphy, E. et al., 1998, p.16). Qualitative research is to an extent an attitude of mind on the part of the researcher and an active relationship between the researcher and the researched. Robson (1993) proposed that: *“one of the challenges of carrying out investigations in the ‘real world’ is in seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally ‘messy’ situation”* (Robson, 1993, p.3). Chapter Seven concerns the development of a research strategy and methodology that was capable of making some sense of the new and messy situation that surrounds YOTs and joined up youth justice.

The chapter opens with the rationale for the inquiry. The overall aims for the research are offered and the multi-method case study design described. The Delphi consensus development technique was adopted for the first phase of the fieldwork and this methodology, its validity and reliability is critiqued. The design of a questionnaire for YOT practitioners is then outlined. The chapter concludes with a summary of the ethical considerations that were relevant to the fieldwork and the overall advantages of the research design chosen.

### **A naturalistic inquiry**

A naturalistic inquiry might be best understood as a dialogue between the researcher and the researched, *“which are dialectical in nature insofar as they seek to transform ignorance and misapprehensions into more informed consciousness”* (Murphy, E. et al., 1998, p. 63).

The account of an individual is necessarily situated in their beliefs and values, and influenced by their membership of society as a whole and the numerous membership groups within it. It can be difficult to determine how situation affects behaviour or how accessible meaning may be to individuals. Murphy, M. et al. (1998) cautioned a researcher to be wary of presenting the perspective of one group as if this defined the objective truth about the phenomenon studied. The development of theory from the interpretation of data grounded in daily life can however provide a powerful method of understanding a phenomenon and for developing action strategies that may allow for some means of control over it. The aspiration of the researcher was to provide a narrative of YOTs, grounded in the experience of youth justice practitioners that was capable of being used to

strengthen both the YOT model and the development of interprofessional practice. The aims of the fieldwork research were to:

Enable a representative sample of YOT managers to articulate their experience of promoting joined up practice in the context of the new youth justice system and to identify the key factors that influence the YOT model.

Further explore the contours of joined up practice, teamwork and the new youth justice system, identified by YOT managers, with a representative sample of YOT practitioners to identify factors that enable or disable the YOT model at the level of the individual, the team and the organisation.

Compare and contrast the views of practitioners and managers, and those of staff from different professional backgrounds and teams about their experience of the YOT model and joined up youth justice.

### **Choosing a research strategy**

A number of different qualitative methodological approaches to conducting the fieldwork were considered. Focus groups can be cost effective and relatively easy to conduct, involving a group of between five to fifteen individuals who participate in structured, semi-structured or unstructured group discussions on a specific topic. De Poy and Gitlin (1994) recommended a minimum of between three to five focus groups to thoroughly explore a theme or topic until a point of topic saturation was achieved. Cost effectiveness is largely dependent upon the possibility of bringing together a representative sample of individuals in one geographic location to form a focus group. There were 144 YOTs in operation in England and Wales in 2000, diverse in their structure, management and membership. It appeared that, to be representative of the larger population of YOTs, a greater number of focus groups, across a wide geographic area, would have been required than would have been possible for a lone researcher to administer competently, or fund.

It was also a concern that focus groups can be susceptible to the influence of unpredictable group dynamics. Although moderated by a facilitator it is not possible to eliminate the influence of individuals who aim to dominate a group because of their strong personality or position of power. It was possible that some individuals might not feel comfortable articulating their own personal or professional experience of working in their YOT in face-to-face focus group meetings with other colleagues.

The attitude of individuals towards interprofessional practice and teamwork was identified in Chapter Four as a key factor likely to influence how well the YOT model functioned. It would have been counter-productive to place restrictions on the ability of participants to raise the issues that concerned them most. Similar disadvantages were considered likely to influence other forms of face-to-face forums for example expert panel discussion groups or use of the nominal group technique.

The prospect of organising formal interviews with a sample of YOT managers, practitioners and local authority steering group members was considered as a method of gaining perspectives of YOTs from different levels of power and influence within the Youth Offending Service. It might however have been difficult for a single post-graduate student researcher to gain access to sufficient numbers of YOT managers and Steering Group members to be representative. It was also uncertain if individuals at a high level of seniority in local partnerships would be willing, or able, to offer the time required to fully explore the YOT phenomenon in a formal structured interview. Permission would have been required from managers to gain direct access to interview YOT practitioners and to release a representative sample of practitioners from their duties to meet with the researcher.

The use of case study methodology was also considered. The research question met the criteria proposed by Yin (1994) to identify when a case study would be appropriate: *“a how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control”* (Yin, 1994, p.9). Many of the factors of applicability and representation, that eliminated the use of focus groups and interviews as a suitable research method, similarly applied to an exploratory case study of a single YOT. While a detailed case study of one YOT was capable of exploring the experience of joined up youth justice in one location, there was some concern that interviewing staff, of whatever level of seniority, on their home territory, might inhibit individuals from articulating their own experiences in their own way. It was possible that YOT staff might be reluctant to share their experiences if their views were not supportive of their own team or the changes to the youth justice system, which have been strongly and skilfully promoted by the Youth Justice Board and the Government. The findings from a single case study would not be capable of being generalised to the larger population of YOTs, or to joined up youth justice in a broader sense, and were unlikely to provide the quantity of data that would be

required to compare views between professional groups, practitioners and managers.

Although a single case study was considered too narrow a methodological approach for the inquiry, Yin (1994) also proposed that case study methodology could be highly effective as part of a multi-method strategy, particularly in triangulating findings: a means of establishing the validity of research findings (Murphy, E. et al., 1998). A multi-method case study design, based upon the use of a survey and a questionnaire, was finally chosen to enable the views of a greater number and wider range of YOT staff to be placed in context and aggregated over a sample population. It was proposed to employ two methods of data collection,

Part One - A survey for YOT managers.

Part Two - A Questionnaire for YOT practitioners.

### A multi-method case study design

A multi-method case study was designed with the Youth Offending Service at the boundary and YOTs at its core (see *Figure 11* below). The operation and influence of the Youth Justice Board and local authority steering groups were included in the overall context of the youth justice framework. Embedded within the case study were two sub-units of analysis, YOT management and YOT practitioners. YOT management was broadly defined to allow for the inclusion of managers holding different titles and levels of responsibility.

*Figure 11 - An embedded multi-method case study design*

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>The Youth Offending Service</b>	
Method	Survey	Questionnaire
Concept Flow		
Sub-Units of Analysis	YOT Management	YOT Practitioners
Levels of Focus	Social Policy The New Youth Justice Framework The Youth Justice Board Local Authority Policy and Practice Organisational Culture and Practice Professional Culture Professional and Social Identity Individual Philosophy	

The previous chapters outlined a range of factors that might, or were likely to, influence YOTs. There are however many gaps in published literature and little that could confidently be generalised to such a new and complex team model. From the outset of the inquiry it appeared essential to avoid being led by assumptions, many of which may not challenged often enough, about youth justice, teams and teamwork, or joined up practices. The literature reviewed offered a rich and detailed framework to guide an inquiry. The largely pessimistic assessment of the potential of YOTs to contribute effectively to the aim of joining up youth justice that developed from it however was considerably different from a general perception of how YOTs had developed. This apparent anomaly presented an interesting dilemma for the design of the survey proposed for the first part of the fieldwork. Survey questions based upon the outcome of the literature review were unlikely to enable respondents to fill some of the gaps in knowledge about YOTs and joined up youth justice, or encourage them to offer a different analysis of the key issues. A strategy was sought therefore that could enable YOT managers to independently develop a body of information about the YOT model and joined up youth justice, that could be triangulated with findings from the literature review, and subsequently inform the development of a questionnaire for practitioners.

### **The Delphi consensus development technique**

The Delphi consensus development technique involves a sequence of postal surveys to a panel of experts that can enable respondents, who are geographically dispersed and numerous, to reach an aggregated view on issues of common interest without ever meeting (Beech, 1991; Duffield, 1993; Murphy, M. et al., 1998). The findings of each stage build upon the results of successive stages, until the collated views of panellists either converge to an agreed level of consensus or appear likely to remain divided. Sackman (1975) proposed that taking part in a Delphi consensus development survey could be a highly motivating experience for practitioners with findings tending to be more acceptable to respondents than those arrived at by other more remote methodologies. Maximum use is made of the experience and decision-making abilities of those taking part and it is particularly suited to areas of research where the aim is to identify opinion (McKenna, 1994). Lindeman (1975) considered the methodology particularly effective where difficult issues would benefit from collective judgment, but crucially for which there may not be a definitive answer.



The Delphi consensus development technique has been widely used as a forecasting tool in North America since the 1950s, and more recently in the health sector in the United Kingdom to determine clinical guidelines and policy direction (Murphy, M. et al., 1998). Although little used in the field of social science research the methodology appeared particularly well suited to developing a narrative about YOTs and joined up youth justice constructed from a consensus of opinion from the practice frontline.

### **The constitution of a survey panel**

A Delphi survey is conducted with a panel of experts. The composition of early panels was generally limited to scientific experts with a common knowledge base who were convened as long-range technical forecasting panels. For the wider purpose of more recent Delphi surveys Goodman (1987) proposed it was more appropriate to recruit individuals who have detailed knowledge of a particular topic and who are consequentially willing to engage in discussion upon it without the potentially misleading title of 'expert'.

It is essential that the criteria for selection to a Delphi panel is make explicit. Many studies have failed to specify inclusion criteria: "*the notion that panel members are experts seems implicit in the fact that they singled out for selection rather than fulfilling any specific standards*" (Williams and Webb, 1994, p.182). Delbecq et al. (1975) and Duffield (1993) took the view that, if the survey findings were to be accepted, panel members should be easily identified as informed representatives of their profession or professional organisation. It was this researcher's view that a panel of YOT managers, responsible for the initial formation and management of the teams in a local context could be widely accepted as qualified to offer authoritative opinions about the YOT model and joined up youth justice.

The survey panel does not meet in person. Anonymity and confidentiality are ensured, with only the researcher in contact with them. Each panellist has the opportunity to put forward their opinion, free from peer group pressure and without the negative dynamics that can sometimes influence group decision-making (Beech, 1991). Individuals are free to change their own position if they choose in the light of information given to them at any stage of the survey. It was the view of Duffield (1993) that the size of a panel was of little consequence to the validity of the findings

of the survey, although she found a panel of 16 members was considerably easier to organise than one of 34. Murphy, M. et al. (1998) however proposed that panels greater in size than 12 to 20 members, while possibly increasing the reliability of results, generally attracted diminished returns in terms of cost, time and attrition.

Potential weaknesses of the methodology can be a poor response rate and a high rate of attrition between survey rounds. Attrition rates as high as 50% between rounds have been reported from some studies (Linstone and Turoff, 1975; Beretta, 1996). Butterworth and Bishop (1995) claimed a 61% response rate from a panel of 2006 members was respectable, although low in comparison to some surveys, while Proctor and Hunt (1994) achieved a 88% response rate between the first and second survey rounds with a panel size of 113, which they claimed was relatively high for a postal survey. The important point to be addressed is that a high rate of attrition has the potential to destabilise the representation of the survey panel. A solution proposed by McKenna (1983) was to conduct individual interviews for the first round, which he claimed increased return rates and decreased attrition because panellists got to know the researcher in person and appreciated the personal contact. The potential benefits of personal contact must however be weighed against loss of cost effectiveness and a reduction in the number of potential participants, who may not wish to be interviewed as well as take part in a long multi-stage survey. It can also be argued that personal contact decreases anonymity and increases the potential for researcher influence. Personal contact with a panel of YOT managers was not therefore considered desirable. It was proposed however to employ the total design method to construct the survey, which aims to maximise survey results by reducing attrition and increasing response (Anema and Brawn, 1995). The total design method proposes utilising the principles of social exchange theory to achieve a balance between costs and rewards: designing an attractive questionnaire on coloured paper, accompanying mailings with a personal covering letter, and providing stamps and rewards, such as chocolate, to stimulate survey completion.

A panel size of between 15 and 20 YOT managers was considered a reasonable target to balance the maintenance of a representative panel against possible attrition, to maximise the reliability of results and to minimise the substantial task faced by a lone researcher of analysing the large quantity of data that can be generated through a consensus development survey.

## Designing the survey

As might be expected in an area of qualitative research concerning the complexity of human life, numerous modifications of the Delphi consensus development technique have been recorded (McKenna, 1994). A reactive Delphi survey involves respondents responding to previously prepared questions or statements rather than allowing the panel to generate the information for themselves. In other modifications the panel votes on a given set of statements using computer technology (Beretta, 1996). There is a danger however that too much adaptation without ensuring rigor can threaten the validity of findings. With the high level of uncertainty surrounding so many aspects of the YOT model it was considered essential for YOT managers to develop a body of information on which they broadly agreed represented their experience of frontline practice. The conventional and most documented version of the methodology was therefore adopted for the first part of the case study drawing on a detailed analysis of consensus development methods undertaken by Murphy, M. et al. (1998).

A conventional Delphi survey elicits qualitative data in the form of a list of statements, which are generated from the panel's responses to a small number of open first round questions concerning the topic of interest. The panel's responses to open questions are classified, reflecting as near as possible the categories of thought and use of language of respondents, and developed into statements that form the content of the survey. Panellists then rate the strength of their agreement to each statement in the second round of the survey and the process progresses until a point of saturation has been reached.

Although in a naturalist paradigm: "*we have to accept that observer bias is a fact of life: we all have values and we cannot wholly avoid allowing these to colour the way we interpret data in a qualitative analysis*" (Hunn, 1996, p.9), it is essential to minimise researcher bias in the classification of the statements generated by the panel in the first round. Yin (1994) suggested the development of a case description within which to look for a set of themes, particularly where there is little background literature or theory, or this is dispersed: an approach that was highly relevant to the inquiry into YOTs and joined up youth justice. In a real world enquiry Yin's approach can be used as a means of organising and selecting materials to work towards an

issues analysis. Robson (1993) observed that the notion of iterative or cyclical analysis was central to many ethnographic approaches (see for example Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The strategy chosen to classify YOT manager's responses to the first round of the survey was to theme these broadly under the factors that the literature suggested were likely to influence the effectiveness of a YOT, outlined in *Figure 10* (Chapter Six, p.110).

In a traditional Delphi survey each questionnaire subsequent to the first open round is analysed quantitatively to offer triangulation and rigour to the findings. At each stage respondents are able to compare their views with the current status of collective group opinion by referring to statistical group response data. A controlled iterative process continues until a predetermined level of consensus is achieved, or seems unlikely to be achieved. Feedback to panellists can take two forms. The panel can be supplied either with the statistical mean results to statements, or these together with a summary of comments submitted in support of the decisions made by panel members. Young and Hogben (1978) considered that the provision of a summary of comments elicited more reasoned responses from panellists and Duffield (1993) and Murphy, M. et al. (1998) proposed that the views of the panellists were more likely to converge quickly if panellists had access to the comments of their colleagues, supporting a process of informed decision making. A simple five-point rating scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was considered adequate to encompass the range of views sought and enable responses to be analysed by the SPSS statistical analysis computer software package.

### **Determining consensus**

The meaning of consensus has been poorly addressed in many studies adopting the Delphi consensus development technique (Williams and Webb, 1994). Studies have determined consensus from 51% agreement (McKenna, 1994) to 100% agreement (Proctor and Hunt, 1994). Standard deviation scores (White, 1991) and median rates (Dwyer, 1999) have also been used. Williams and Webb (1994) proposed that the most reliable method was to assign a numerical level of consensus at the outset based upon the sampling and piloting of the materials. A monitoring group, constituted to advise the researcher for the inquiry into YOTS, considered that a 100% consensus rate was too high. The aim of surveying the

views of YOT managers was not to seek definitive answers, but to explore the contours of YOTs and joined up youth justice as a basis for further investigation and comparison to existing literature. A consensus rate of 80% was finally agreed upon on the basis that the aggregated view of 16 out of 20 panellists: the maximum size of panel sought, was sufficiently high to be reasonably considered a convergence of opinion. It was proposed that the rate of consensus sought would be decreased for smaller panels to remain in a range of 78-82% (see *Table 1* below).

*Table 1 - Setting the level of consensus*

Number of panellists sharing agree/disagree view	Panel Size					
	20	19	18	17	16	15
	Level of consensus sought % (rounded up)					
19	95	/	/	/	/	/
18	90	95	/	/	/	/
17	85	89	94	/	/	/
16	80	84	89	94	/	/
15	75	79	83	88	94	/
14	70	74	78	82	88	93
13	65	68	72	77	81	87
12	50	63	67	71	75	80
11	45	58	61	65	69	73

### **Validity and reliability of the Delphi consensus development technique**

Anyone choosing naturalistic methodologies must be ready to vigorously defend their choices against claims that the work may be unreliable or invalid. Linstone and Turoff (1975) proposed that the Delphi consensus development technique was more of an art than a science, while Sackman (1975) considered that it should be viewed as more of a structured brainstorming session than a positivistic scientific exercise. Robson, (1993) however took the view that a multi-method approach that generates both quantitative and qualitative data was reliable if the approach to data collection and analysis was both rigorous and systematic. The Delphi consensus development technique should be subjected to the same level of rigorous scrutiny and questionnaire design procedures as other methodological approaches (Sackman 1975; Reid 1988; Murphy, M. et al., 1998).

If a survey panel is responsible for generating the content of the survey there should be a high level of concurrent validity: *“the high face value and content validity of the Delphi technique combined with a qualitative approach to data collection and data analysis in the first round (thus reducing researcher bias) acts to uphold an acceptable level of credibility”* (Dwyer, 1999, p.179). Duffield (1993) recruited two panels to identify the competencies that might be expected of first line managers in the health sector, and to test the reliability of the technique. Consensus was achieved after two rounds; both panels agreed 92.86% of the competencies proposed. It was Duffield's view that the similarity of results suggested the technique was valid although she observed that further work would be required to substantiate the findings since it was possible that consensus was reached by both panels primarily because of a lack of disagreement about the topic.

Neutrality requires that data speak for itself rather than relying heavily on the interpretation of the researcher. Yin (1994) offered two possible strategies for qualitatively analysing data. One strategy was to base the analysis on theoretical propositions through a review of literature, the other was to engage those involved with the research in designing the questions. Robson (1993) proposed a third strategy of exploring the data to assist in identifying themes, particularly useful in the absence of a theoretical framework within which to work. The traditional Delphi consensus development technique design chosen for the fieldwork offered the opportunity to utilise all three strategies to maximise neutrality.

Murphy, M. et al. (1998) considered that a Delphi survey should only be used where there is a clear justification for using it, observing that the output from consensus techniques should not be an end in itself. The Delphi survey for YOT managers was not intended to seek definitive answers but aimed to set a framework for further enquiry with YOT practitioners and a basis for comparison with existing literature.

### **Designing a questionnaire for YOT practitioners**

The second part of the case study involved the design of a postal questionnaire for YOT practitioners. Oppenheim (1992) proposed that postal questionnaires have several advantages, reaching respondents who are widely dispersed, offering a cost effective method of data collection and processing and, if

well constructed, reducing the possibility of researcher bias. He considered the disadvantages of postal questionnaires included a generally poor response rate and a lack of control over who completes the questionnaire, which has the potential to affect the integrity of responses. A weakness of postal questionnaire is also that respondents are often denied the opportunity to correct misunderstandings or elaborate their responses. Bias can influence the construction and presentation of questions and secondary bias can occur if the respondents are influenced by the nature of the inquiry and adapt their responses accordingly (Oppenheim, 1992).

The advantages of using a postal questionnaire for the second part of the case study outweighed the disadvantages for the purposes of this inquiry. The strategy adopted was to reduce bias by constructing the questionnaire for YOT practitioners from the survey findings and a review of literature and to also offer practitioners the opportunity to extend the field of study if they wished through a small number of open-ended questions.

### **Potential obstacles to be addressed**

A number of potential obstacles to the successful completion of the case study were foreseen. A major concern was the considerable pressure being experienced by YOTS in the first 18 months of operation. Numerous research studies were being undertaken, many funded by the Home Office to evaluate the impact of the substantial legislative changes that had been made to the youth justice system. Many YOTs were piloting new court orders and new initiatives, most of these the subject of detailed external evaluation and audit. It was uncertain if YOT managers and staff would be willing, or able, to respond to further demands upon their time.

Oppenheim (1992) proposed that the size of a study sample was not as important as the accuracy of it. A Delphi panel of less than 15 YOT managers was however unlikely to offer a representative sample of YOT localities and structures. It appeared likely that a large number of YOT managers would have to be approached to achieve the optimum sample size. A similar situation was predicted for the questionnaire sample. For the questionnaire to be most effective, the sample population of YOT practitioners had to be capable of enabling a comparative analysis to be made across the professions represented in the teams. In small YOTs, police

officers, education practitioners, health professionals and representatives of housing, careers or voluntary organisations were likely to be lone representatives of their professional organisations. Although it was hoped that the YOT managers who took part in the survey would allow access to their teams, and encourage team members to complete a questionnaire, it appeared likely that the majority of practitioners from more than 15 YOTs would be required to complete questionnaires if the study sample was to adequately represent the diversity of professions. A strong case would have to be made about the relevance of the research topic to engage practitioners.

The Delphi consensus development technique is relatively uncommon. Few recipients of invitations to form a survey panel were likely to be familiar with the methodology and it was a concern that the time and commitment required from panellists to complete a multi-stage survey over a period of 6 months or more might act as a barrier to participation. As gatekeepers for the rest of their service it was essential that the support and interest of YOT managers be attracted at the earliest opportunity, and maintained throughout the case study. The most appropriate strategy to address this concern was to emphasise the participative nature of the inquiry and the aim of enabling practitioners to directly contribute their experience towards an understanding of joined up team practice in the wider public service arena. Although careful consideration to the content and structure of the survey and the questionnaire had the potential to maximise returns an overriding concern was to gain access to potential respondents initially, and then to gain and retain their interest.

### **Ethical considerations**

The case study was conducted diligently within the guidance of the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (2002). The basic principles and rules that apply to conducting research: autonomy; non-maleficence; beneficence; justice; veracity; privacy; confidentiality and fidelity were addressed at an early stage.

The autonomy of participants was protected by ensuring that consent to participate was informed. YOT managers and practitioners were invited to participate in the inquiry by outlining to them the potential benefits of developing a



body of knowledge about joined up practices in youth justice and the YOT model from the frontline practice perspective. They were offered information about how much time their participation was likely to take and were offered feedback from each stage of the survey as it progressed. Although a YOT manager is to an extent the gatekeeper to their teams, information about the case study was prepared specifically for distribution directly to team members. Team members were offered information about the survey that provided a platform for their questionnaire and they were offered the option of completing a questionnaire as an individual or as part of their team. Every person contacted was offered the option of contacting the researcher directly by E-mail or telephone for further information to aid decision-making.

The principle of non-maleficence involves an obligation not to harm research participants in any way. The aim of the case study was to gather information that might assist the development of dynamic joined up team practice and strengthen the YOT model. If the aim was realised it might ultimately benefit participants. The rules governing research ethics are meant to ensure the development of trust between researchers and study participants. The principle of justice demands that everyone involved in research should be treated fairly and the principle of veracity concerns an obligation to be truthful about the reasons behind a research project. While it is inevitable that the researcher also brought her own agenda to her research: "*social scientists who apply their science in 'real-life' settings where people live and work, are inevitably acting on morally relevant decisions about what should be changed and why*" (Kimmel 1988, p.13), every effort was made to ensure that the researcher's own agenda was overt and explicit. Information about the researcher's own professional background and reasons for undertaking the study were included in the literature accompanying invitations to participate. YOT managers and practitioners contacted were made aware of the researcher's personal opinion that the voice of youth justice practitioners had been largely absent in debates about the development of the new youth justice system and interprofessional practice. It is possible however that appeals towards the empowerment of potential participants might be viewed as a form of manipulation. Considerable effort was applied to ensuring that potential respondents were given accurate information about how the study was to be conducted, and how their views and opinions would be used.

Westin (1968) characterised privacy as *“the claim of individuals, groups or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others”* (Westin, 1968, p.7). Everyone who participated in the inquiry retained the right to privacy and had the option to choose not answer a question, offer a view or supply personal information. The right to privacy and confidentiality was made explicit in the materials distributed. Confidentiality during the survey was ensured because the traditional version of the methodology chosen required that individual panellists were only in contact with the researcher, rather than with one another. Only one follow up round was undertaken in pursuit of missing survey returns or questionnaires. After one phone call or E-mail request beyond the closing date for returns it was taken that non-returnees had chosen not to continue their involvement and they were not pursued further. Individuals were protected from being identified by colleagues for choosing to take part, or decline participation. YOT practitioners were provided with envelopes to return questionnaires individually if they wished, rather than as part of a group mailing. Surveys and questionnaires could also be completed and returned electronically. The individual practitioners, managers and teams that took part in the study were not identified in staged feedback and they were assured that they would not be identified in any other publications that referred to the findings.

Research fidelity concerns promise keeping. Keeping a promise in research, as in life itself, requires clarity about the nature of the promise. It is important not to raise false expectations about what can be achieved from a single inquiry. Potential study respondents were promised that all YOTs who took part in the study would receive a summary of the overall findings once it was completed and that the findings would be disseminated as widely as possible. It was hoped that the opportunity to add their own personal and professional view of joined up youth justice and the YOT model to those of colleagues, as part of a structured and detailed investigation, would be sufficient incentive to take part. Difficulty can arise however when research findings enter the public domain. The results of social science inquiries can acquire personal, professional and policy implications that are beyond the control of the researcher. The development of interprofessional practice was likely to be of interest beyond the field of youth justice. It was however impossible to predict whether or not the study findings would have any direct

influence on how interprofessional practice in teams or the YOT model developed. Care had to be taken not to make unrealistic claims for the potential of one inquiry to make any significant difference.

The only legal issue that had to be addressed in the planning stages of the fieldwork concerned data protection. Some limited personal details were requested for the completion of a demographic profile of respondents and to aid comparative analysis. The researcher, who was registered according to the Data Protection Registry and the rules of the University of Sheffield, kept personal information securely and it will be disposed of appropriately when no longer required to support her thesis. Service user data was not required or sought.

### **Chapter summary**

Careful attention to the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are widely accepted as the basis of a good qualitative research design (Murphy, E. et al., 1998). The most promising strategy to enable YOT managers and practitioners to document their experience of the YOT model and joined up youth justice was offered by the multi-method case study design proposed.

A naturalistic inquiry requires that there is a high level of participation of the researched in the research process. YOT managers were integrally involved in creating the content of the survey and the findings represented a dependable and credible body of information about YOTs that was strengthened through further investigation by practitioners. The survey and questionnaire findings were subsequently compared to a wide range of published research to assess confirmability and possible transferability. While Murphy, E. et al. (1998) cautioned against unquestioningly taking problems identified by practitioners as a starting point for a study, it is important that the perspectives and experiences of YOT managers and staff are valued and are capable of being grounded in existing theoretical positions and empirical research findings. The recruitment of a representative sample of YOT managers and practitioners to take part in the inquiry provided the possibility of generalising some of the findings to the wider population of YOTs and to joined up team practice in the wider public sector. Neutrality required the data to speak for itself rather than relying heavily on the interpretation of the researcher. Consistency can be difficult to achieve in qualitative research. Unless the context of

the investigation and the sample of respondents remain identical it is impossible to replicate a study and conclude with the same results. Robson (1993) proposed it was the nature of the social world to be in a state of constant change. The best that might be achieved is to predict as much as possible what these changes might be, bearing in mind that the research process is itself likely to change the world it is trying to document. The next chapter describes how the case fieldwork was conducted.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **The Fieldwork**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter a strategy for exploring the YOT model and joined up youth justice from a practice frontline perspective was outlined and a multi-method embedded case study proposed. Chapter Eight concerns how the case study was conducted.

The first part of the case study adopted the Delphi consensus development technique as the methodology for conducting a progressive multi-stage survey with YOT managers. This chapter describes the recruitment of a monitoring group of YOT managers and their role in constructing the open questions for the first round of the survey. The process of piloting the survey materials, the recruitment of YOT managers to form a survey panel and the administration of three survey rounds are described. Information about the composition of the survey panel is illustrated and the process of analysing the considerable volume of data generated through the survey is described and critiqued. The chapter then moves on to consider how the survey findings shaped the content of a postal questionnaire for YOT practitioners. Information about the questionnaire study sample is illustrated and the administration of the questionnaire described. The process of data analysis is outlined and the chapter concludes with an overall critique of the research design.

#### **The recruitment and role of the monitoring group**

The Delphi consensus development technique involves a progressive series of survey questionnaires, each survey round building upon the results of the last until a point of topic saturation has been reached. A survey panel can take up to six months to complete. Piloting the full survey is largely prohibitive, and is not usually necessary. However the information generated by the panel in the first round forms the core of the survey and the choice of first round questions is critical and it is essential therefore to pilot a complete first round cycle, including the analysis of responses and the process of developing the content of the second round survey.

A monitoring group was recruited to advise the researcher, and reduce the potential of researcher bias influencing the open questions. A key task of the group was to suggest a form of questions that would offer panellists the opportunity to put forward their own view of the YOT model and joined up youth justice within the framework of the case study. To recruit a monitoring group a letter, outlining the aims of the inquiry and the role the group would play, was sent to 10 YOTs, geographically most accessible to the researcher, but whose local authorities were not part of the Research in Practice consortium that sponsored the researcher, and from which the full survey panel would be recruited. Research in Practice is a consortium of more than 100 participating organisations including: local authorities, voluntary organisations, the Dartington Hall Trust, the Association of Directors of Social Services and the University of Sheffield. The aim of the consortium is to increase the ability of services in education, health and social care to use research to improve outcomes for children and families.

A male manager from a large city YOT, and a female YOT manager, whose team covered an English county area, indicated interest in forming a monitoring group. An introductory meeting was organised to discuss the thesis topic, the aims of the fieldwork and the methodology, and an action-planning meeting arranged to consider the key themes that had emerged from the literature review and the manager's own views of YOTs and joined up youth justice. The contribution of the monitoring group to the researcher's knowledge and understanding of YOTs and to the construction of the survey questions was invaluable. Among many issues that were discussed during monitoring group meetings was for example the female YOT manager's perception that males tended to dominate YOT management, often from a probation service background. She considered that gender division contributed strongly to how YOTs were developing. A worrying view shared by both YOT managers was that many of their management colleagues appeared little interested in youth justice policy or the concerns of practitioners. They considered it possible that YOT managers would not contribute to the survey in the depth that the researcher hoped.

Six questions were proposed by the monitoring group to encourage YOT managers to think widely about their experience of the YOT model and joined up youth justice, power differentials, teamwork and the challenges of joined up practice

if appropriate to the respondent. It was the view of the monitoring group that managers were most likely to consider YOTs as a multi-agency teams. The first round survey questions put forward for piloting were:

1. What key issues, at both strategic and operational level, are emerging from the experience of developing statutory multi-agency partnerships in the youth offending service?
2. What are the main advantages of the multi-agency team model of working?
3. What are the main disadvantages of the multi-agency team model of working?
4. What are the barriers to effective multi-agency teamworking? (where effective is judged as the ability to meet the objectives of the Youth Justice Board)
5. What support mechanisms are essential to enable the multi-agency team model to succeed?
6. From your own professional and personal perspective, how does it feel to work as part of a multi-agency initiative?

### **Piloting the first round of the survey**

The monitoring group considered it might be difficult to recruit 15 to 20 YOT managers to form a survey panel. It was their recommendation to approach a broader range of individuals than those who would be invited to form a survey panel to take part in the pilot. Those responding to an invitation to pilot the survey were:

- Three members of the project group involved in the national evaluation of pilot YOTs (Holdaway et al., 2001), who were approached on the basis that they held detailed knowledge of the new youth justice system and YOTs and could also contribute their research perspective to the pilot stage.
- A Chief Justices Clerk and a Chief Probation Officer, who agreed to respond to the pilot questions in consultation with colleagues from a local authority steering group.
- A YOT manager from a medium sized city team

Both YOT managers from the monitoring group also chose to take part in the pilot. Although it could be argued that their integral involvement with setting the questions inevitably biased their answers, participation also offered them the opportunity to find out if the questions worked for them in the way that was intended. Pilot survey panellists were asked to answer each question from their own perspective, comment on how clear and appropriate the wording of each question was, and to offer feedback on the composition of the survey completion information and the request for demographic information.

All responses to the pilot first round open questions were collated as statements, transferred to a word document and manually themed using the literature review as a framework. Emerging themes were cross-referenced with records of the issues that had prompted the construction of the questions by the monitoring group. As a result of the comments and feedback received from the pilot alterations were made to the wording of two questions, one question was omitted completely and minor amendments were made to the survey instruction sheet. The decision was taken to continue to use the term “multi-agency team” to describe YOTs. The majority view from the pilot was that “effective” should not be defined as simply meeting the objectives of the Youth Justice Board. In the absence of a short and encompassing definition of effectiveness, the suggestion of “*where effective is doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way*” was offered by the researcher and accepted as an alternative. The final form of the open first round questions after a full pilot of the first round of the survey, reduced in number to five, was:

1. From your own professional and personal perspective, how does it feel to work as part of a multi-agency initiative?
2. What are the main advantages of the multi-agency team model of working? (If possible try to think of these in terms of the individual, the team and the organisation).
3. What are the main disadvantages of the multi-agency team model of working? (Again it might be helpful to think at the different levels of the individual, the team and the organisation).
4. Can you identify three of the major obstacles/barriers and three essential supports to effective multi-agency working? (Where effective is doing the right thing at the right time in the right way).
5. What influence do you hope the YOT experience will have made on multi-agency working in the wider public sector in five years time?

A concern that emerged from the pilot stage was the wide variation of post titles held by YOT managers. It was important to clarify who would be invited to form a Delphi panel. Although it appeared common to consider Youth Offending Team Managers as those responsible for the delivery of the youth offending services in a locality, many different organisational structures and posts appeared to be evolving



as services developed. In some areas senior managers, with titles such as Operational Manager or Service Manager might lead a youth offending service. One youth offending service might however include a number of semi-autonomous YOTs, each with its own YOT manager. In other areas YOTs might employ a Service Manager, a Team Manager or a Practice Manager, or any combination of these. The Youth Justice Board website database of YOTs was of little assistance in providing clarification. The main contact for all 144 YOTs listed was the YOT Manager. In an effort to overcome the potential for confusion the letter sent to YOTs requested the participation of the most senior manager of the Youth Offending Service, and where appropriate one practice team manager.

The monitoring group were asked to consider the possibility of conducting the Delphi survey electronically, which has the potential to reduce costs and the time taken between rounds. Their view however was that not all YOTs had full access to the Internet and some YOT Managers did not access electronic mail regularly. It was agreed to conduct the survey primarily by post and to offer an electronic version of the questionnaires to anyone who preferred to use the facility.

### **The survey – round one**

Two copies of the first round of the survey were posted to 40 YOT managers from a list constructed from the national database of YOTs held on the Youth Justice Board website (N144) cross-referenced with the database of local authorities in the Research in Practice network in 2000 (N56). A covering letter outlined the purpose of the inquiry and offered a description of the methodology. It was proposed to recipients that the completion and return of the first round of the survey, in a stamped and addressed envelope provided, represented agreement to take part in each progressive round of the survey, up to a maximum of four rounds. The initial mailing placed a strong emphasis on the opportunity for those taking part in the survey to set the framework for a detailed investigation of the YOT model. It was emphasised that, although there had been little research into multi-agency teamwork, the enthusiasm of the Government and Youth Justice Board for the joined up model had the potential to influence other areas of service provision. YOT managers were being offered an opportunity to share their learning and experience of the model with colleagues from other sectors. In the event that all of the above

arguments failed to gain the interest of YOT managers, a chocolate enticement was also attached to each survey questionnaire!

A copy of all of the correspondence sent to YOTs was also sent to the officer responsible for liaison between Research in Practice and the local authority. The majority of liaison officers had also received a brief outline of the research proposal at their annual two-day Research in Practice conference several weeks earlier, and given advance notice that they would be asked to support the request for the participation of their YOT colleagues. It had been hoped that Research in Practice liaison officers would support the inquiry and encourage participation. This was not an initiative that was successful. None of the managers who volunteered to form the survey panel indicated that had been contacted by their liaison officer.

The inclusion of a chocolate with each survey was however a highly successful strategy that located the correspondence in the memory of the YOT managers who were contacted by telephone or E-mail after the closing date for return. The task of persuading busy YOT managers to take part in a potentially time consuming three or four part survey had the potential to be a difficult one. Identification of the survey as the correspondence with the chocolate attached to it was an effective method of introduction. By the end of the second week after the closing date 19 questionnaires had been returned (48%, N40) enabling the recruitment of a Delphi panel of almost of the maximum size sought (n20).

### **The composition of the survey panel**

The number of YOTs represented by the managers who formed the survey panel represented just over 10% of the total number of YOTs operating in England and Wales in 2001 (N144) and included a total of 15 YOT areas in England: 8 city based YOTs and 7 covering wider county areas. Panellists held various YOT management posts: Development Manager (2), Group Manager (1), Head of Service (5), Operational Manager (2), Operations Manager (1), Operational Team Manager (1), Team Leader (1), YOT Manager (6). Further information about the characteristics of the panel is illustrated below in *Tables 2 to 6*.

Table 2 – Panel professional background

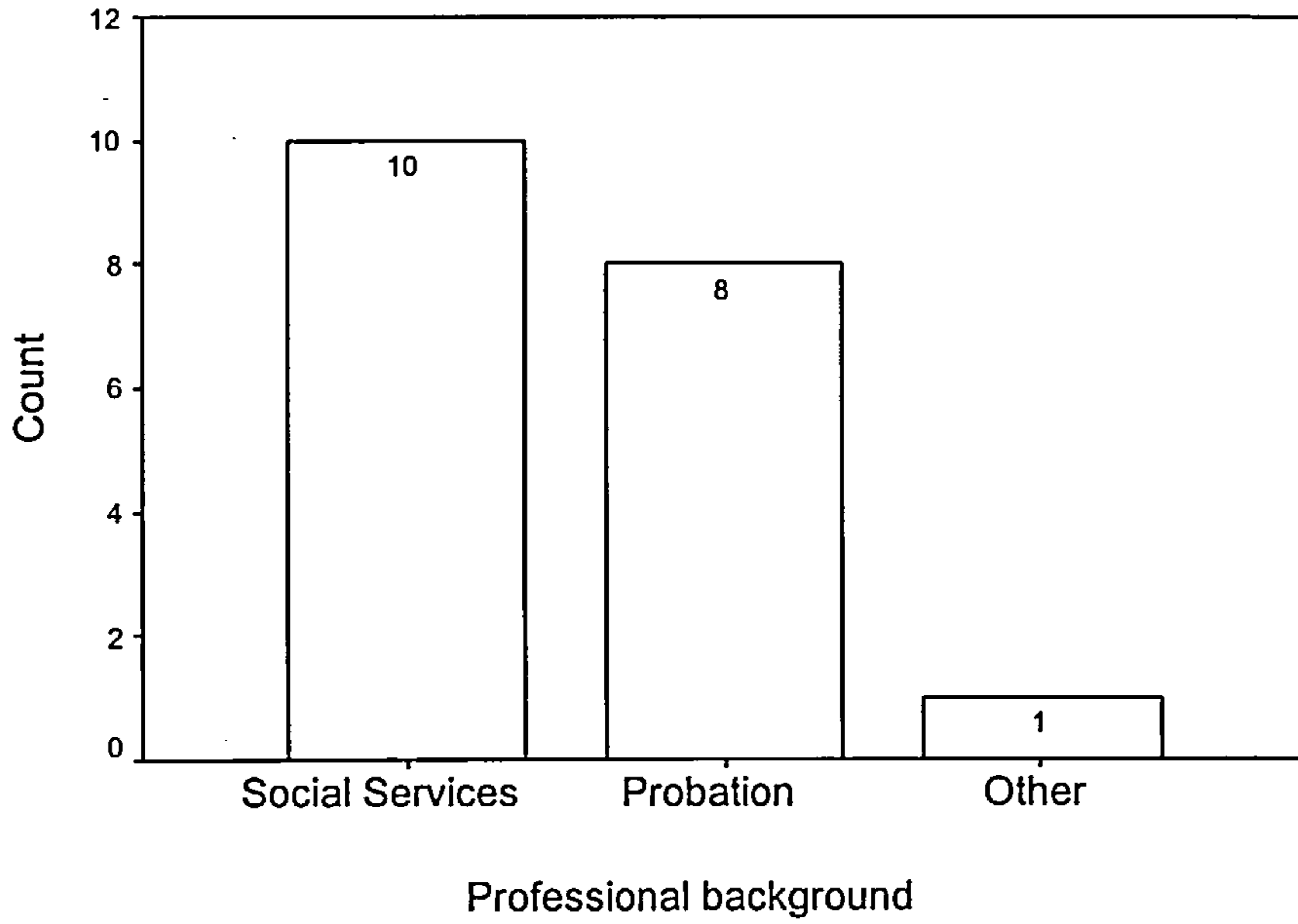


Table 3 - Panel gender

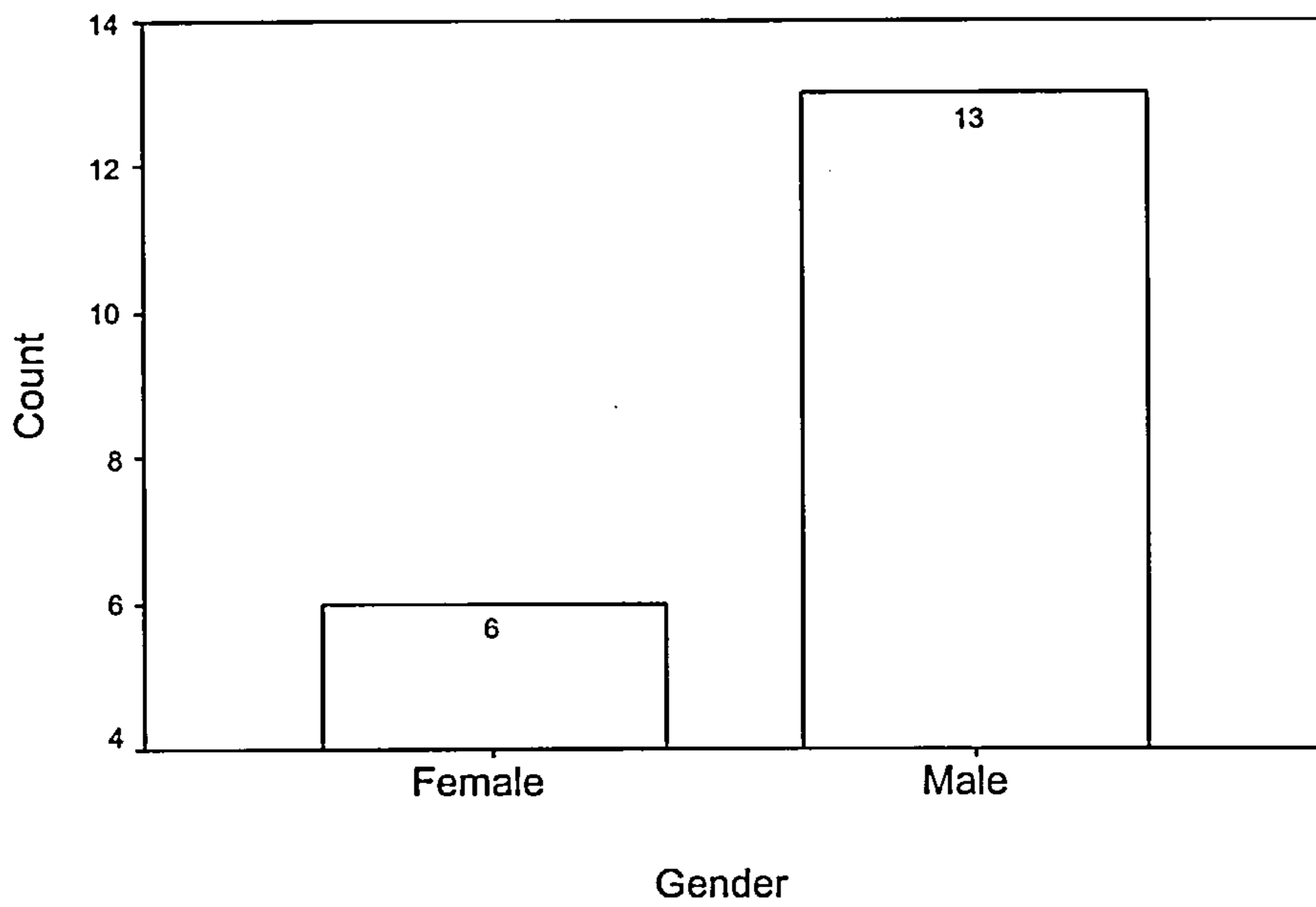


Table 4 - Panel age range

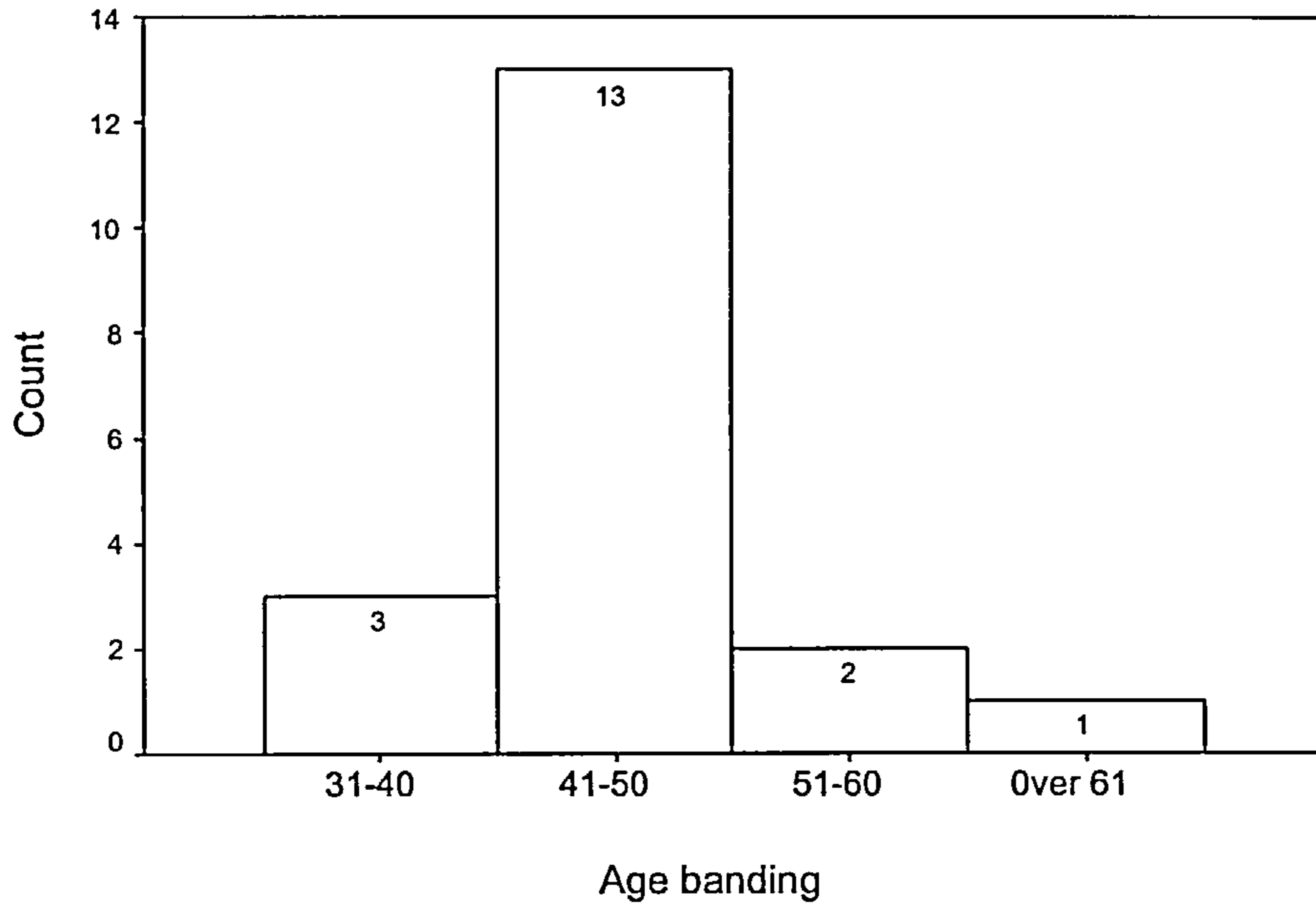


Table 5 - Size of YOT managed

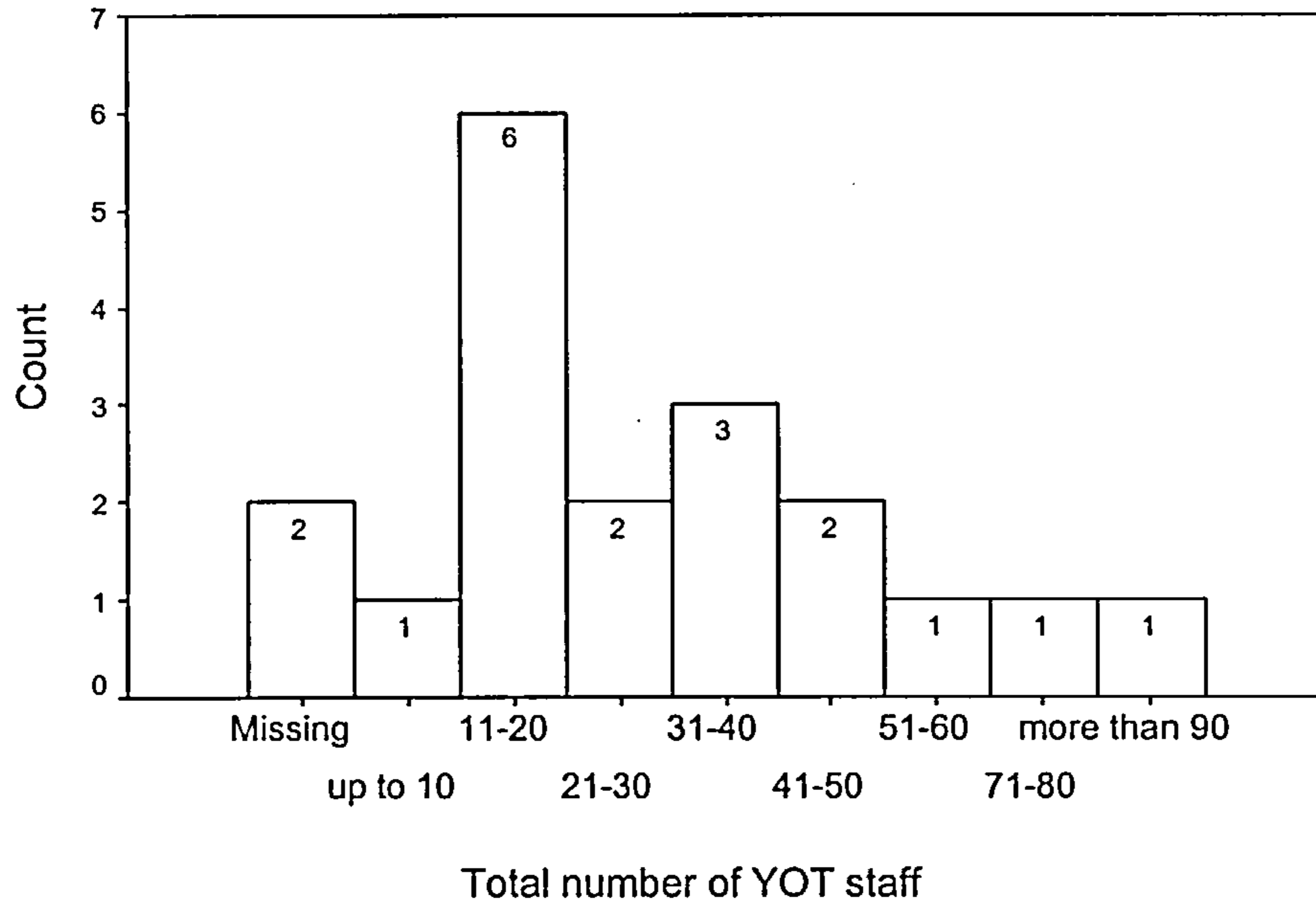
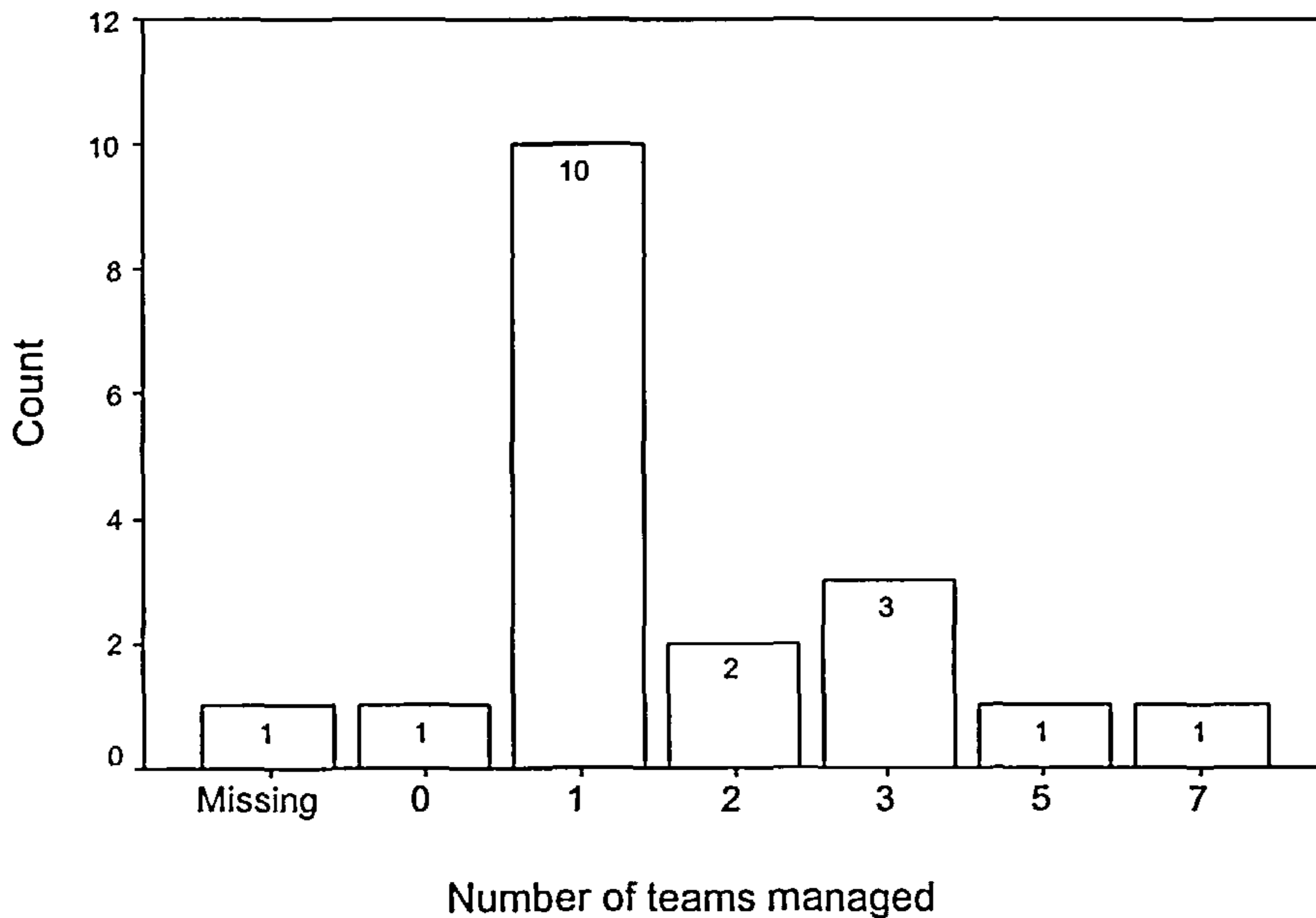


Table 6 - Number of teams managed



There was little information available to compare to the characteristics of the panel to the wider population of YOT managers and YOTs in England and Wales in 2001. The panel did not however appear unrepresentative compared to a broad perception of the characteristics of YOTs and YOT management held by the researcher and the monitoring group. The inclusion of six female panellists (32% N19) was better than had been predicted by the female YOT manager of the monitoring group but supported her view that YOT management tended to be dominated by men.

### Analysis of the first round of the survey

Responses to the first round open questions were transcribed in full to a word document, with the exact language and structure of response being replicated as far as possible. Responses were listed under headings (listed below) that emerged naturally from them, and which corresponded broadly to themes from the literature reviewed. Statements that closely resembled one another were grouped and a statement chosen that offered the clearest representation of the views offered for further consideration in the next survey round. One panellist for example observed that the strength of multi-agency teamwork was *“ease of access to contacts within*

*each partner agency through 'insider' knowledge of team members"; while another proposed that an essential support for multi-agency teamwork was that "representatives of partner agencies know who to contact both through formal and informal means". These views were merged into the statement: "A multi-agency team provides ease of access to contacts within each partner agency through 'insider' knowledge of team members", under heading one below.*

1. Networking/Building Relationships
2. Budget and funding
3. Culture
4. Communication and Sharing Information
5. Conditions of Service
6. Effective Outcomes
7. External Relationships
8. Identity and Role
9. Implications for Individuals
10. Innovation and Creativity
11. Issues for Organisations
12. Sharing Skills and Knowledge
13. Supports
14. Issues for Teams
15. Training, Professional and Career Development
16. Future and General Statements

The methodology required panellists to have the opportunity to consider the collated views and opinions of the entire panel. If the researcher had any doubt about meaning the statement was included in full in the second round of the survey to seek clarification, support or challenge from the panel. Two faculty colleagues independently reviewed the researcher's analysis and decisions and some statements were reconsidered, removed from or added to the second round of the survey following the review.

### **The survey – round two**

The second round survey was of a considerable size, consisting of 237 separate statements. It was essential that the task of completing the second survey did not appear too daunting a task for panellists and stimulate a high rate of attrition. It was brought to the attention of panellists, in the accompanying correspondence, that the volume of information contained in the second survey was a reflection of the panel's interest in the topic as well as the considerable time and thought each member had invested in responding to each of the open questions. The headings

above used to collate responses to the open questions in the first round were collapsed and the statements divided into 11 sections:

Section 1	The Big Picture
Section 2	Building Bridges
Section 3	Culture and Identity
Section 4	Issues for Individual Team Members
Section 5	Issues at Team level
Section 6	Issues for Management
Section 7	A More Effective Service
Section 8	Essential Supports for Multi-Agency Teamwork
Section 9	Barriers to Effective Multi-Agency Teamwork
Section 10	Professional Development and Career Issues
Section 11	What of the Future?

Panel members were offered another chocolate treat to enjoy while completing the questionnaire and each section was introduced with a brief informal note from the researcher to lighten the task. An instruction sheet explained how to respond to each statement using a five-point Likert scale with the options to choose: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. Explanation was offered about the process that would be employed to analyse responses and how a third round was likely to proceed. Each recipient was offered information about the general characteristics of the panel to reinforce their membership of a group with detailed knowledge and experience of joined up youth justice and YOTs. Three weeks were allowed for completion. A telephone and E-mail follow up of missing returns took place one week after the closing date and 19 second round survey questionnaires were returned. A 100% return rate was remarkable given the size of the task.

The second round survey questionnaire was analysed using the statistical package for the social sciences SPSS Version 10. Strongly agree and agree, strongly disagree and disagree categories were collapsed, frequency scores were calculated and 116 statements (49% N237) achieved or exceeded the 79% consensus rate set by the monitoring group for a panel of 19 (see *Table 1*, p.125). All additional and supporting comments offered by panellists were transcribed manually to a word document and grouped by statement number.

The frequency rates for remaining statements and the additional comments offered by panel members to support their decisions were then reconsidered by the

researcher to identify statements that might be taken out of the survey at this point. Statements were removed if the meaning of the observation made in round one had not been clarified during round two. For example no comments were received from the panel to clarify what *“an unsafe environment”* meant in the statement *“A multi-agency team can feel like an unsafe working environment”*. In some cases it appeared that the panel were unlikely to be able to productively pursue a topic further because of the relatively early stage of development of YOTs and lack of information on which to base a decision. Some statements for example: *“There is an unresolved issue about ultimate organisational responsibility if for example the YOT was to be sued”* appeared to apply to some YOTs but not to others, possibly because of the different pace of development of interorganisational protocols. Some responses suggested they were specific to the experience of an individual panellist and were not appropriate for the pursuit of a consensus panel view, for example: *“Managing a multi-agency team has required me to revise the cultural and value base of my own professional background”*. Other items appeared likely to benefit from further investigation with a specific group of YOT practitioners rather than managers, for example: *“Seconded staff members face uncertainty about whether they are accountable to the team or their parent agency”*.

At the completion of the second round the panel had reached a consensus view on 116 statements about YOTs and joined up youth justice (49% N237), 56 statements were set aside from the survey at this point (23% N237) and 65 (27% N237) were carried forward for the panel to reconsider in round three in the light of the position of the panel as a whole.

### **The survey - round three**

The mailing for the third round survey consisted of three separate documents. The first document identified the statements (N116) that had achieved the agreed level of agreement or disagreement. The second document identified statements (N56) that were not being returned for further consideration and the reasons why these had been set-aside at this point. The final document was the third round survey. Panellists were thanked for their continued support and informed that completion and return of the third survey would conclude the exercise.



Each statement in the third round survey was accompanied by a table of frequencies illustrating the spread of views held by the panel about YOTs and joined up youth justice. Each panellist's response from the previous round was highlighted individually to inform him or her how their view compared to that of their panel colleagues. Statements were accompanied where appropriate by the observations offered by panellists in support of their position, and in some cases the researcher also offered a note of clarification. Panellists had the option of changing their response to a statement in light of the cumulative response of the panel, and additional comments offered, or to confirm that their position remained unchanged. They were invited to comment further on any issue if they wished. An example from the third round survey is offered below:

86. Some teams are too big for the control of one team manager	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Missing
	1 21.1%	2 36.8%	3 31.6%	4 5.3%	5 0	5.3%
<p><i>With the help of senior practitioner it is possible to manage a big team. 10 practitioners with no senior practitioner support are too much re supervision.</i></p> <p>Even if this is not an issue for your team, is there an optimum size for a YOT led by one team manager?</p>						

After one follow up exercise 16 questionnaires were returned, a return rate of 84% with 16% attrition. The overall representation of the panel was not significantly altered by the loss of three panellists: one male YOT development manager, one female city YOT manager who was ill, and one male county YOT service manager who had moved on to another post.

The third round survey was again analysed using the SPSS computer software. Frequency rates, variance and standard deviation scores were obtained for each statement. The level of consensus agreed by the monitoring group for a panel of 16 was 81% or more agree or disagree (see *Table 1*, p.125) and this was reached on 23 statements in round three (35%, N65).

A Standard Deviation score and Variance of > 1.0 was recorded for the panel's response to 12 statements (5% N237), suggesting a significant division of

views among the panel that appeared unlikely to be resolved through the consensus development technique:

- D6 Youth Offending services are not 'joined up' at national level.
- D17 YOTs were afforded too short a lead in time.
- D47 Staffing problems could cause a re-entrenchment into traditional roles.
- D63 Different conditions of service create tensions for YOTs.
- D68 Secondments should be for a maximum of five years.
- D88 Multi-agency teamwork can cause a confused value system.
- D134 There are already fewer young offenders excluded from school.
- D177 Barrier - Different perspectives about the causes of crime.
- D180 Barrier - Recruitment of YOT staff.
- D181 Barrier - The complex issue of data exchange.
- D185 Barrier - Lack of IT compatibility.
- D231 It still feels like the whole process is part of a great social experiment to see whether multi-agency teamworking actually succeeds where attempts at closer agency cooperation have failed.

A record of the survey findings, which illustrate frequency rates and the relationship between the survey and questionnaire, is included as Appendix 2 of the thesis and a summary is offered below:

The first open round of the survey generated 237 separate statements.

56 statements were removed from the survey at the end of round two.

The panel reached a consensus view on a total of 139 statements (59% N237): 116 in round two and 23 in round three.

A significant division in the views of panellists were recorded on 12 separate topics (8% N237).

62 statements (26% N237) were chosen by the researcher to be further considered by YOT practitioners through a questionnaire in the second part of the case study.

A large body of written comments, additional to that entered in support of their decisions, were received from panellists throughout the survey. These were transcribed in full to a master word document, re-ordered under the nested themes outlined in *Figure 12* below and stored for reference later in the inquiry.

Figure 12 - Nested themes for organising comments

Nested themes of additional comments collected throughout the case study				
	Team member	Manager	Profession	Organisation
<i>Positive experience</i>				
Effective networking				
More effective service				
New perspectives				
No real adjustment needed				
Development of new skills				
Better communication				
Role and Identity				
Culture and practice				
<i>Both positive and negative experience (frustrating but enjoyable)</i>				
Secondment				
Resources				
Leadership and management				
<i>Negative experience</i>				
Personally difficult				
Professionally difficult				
Not effective				
Government and policy				
Commitment				
Workload				
Terms and conditions				
Attitude				
Defensive Organisations				
Reluctant Organisations				
Team climate				
Power differentials				

### Questionnaire for YOT practitioners

The second part of the case study involved a postal questionnaire for YOT practitioners. The majority of the questionnaire content was drawn from the findings of the Delphi survey, including topics on which managers shared a strong consensual view and those on which their opinion was divided.

The questionnaire contained 89 separate questions and statements, 62 from the survey supplemented by 22 questions that emerged from the literature review. Five open questions were included to offer practitioners the opportunity to articulate their experience of working in a YOT in their own way. It was considered unnecessary to pilot the questionnaire. The view of the monitoring group was that poorly constructed or ambiguous statements had been progressively discarded or

amended as the survey progressed through three rounds and in effect 62 questions (70% N89) had been thoroughly piloted. No negative feedback had been received from respondents about the presentation or organisation of the survey, all parts of which were completed in accordance with the instructions offered. The logical decision was to design and administer the questionnaire in a similar way.

The survey generated a wide and rich body of information from which a questionnaire could be constructed and one member of the monitoring group, the researcher and a faculty colleague chose a shortlist of topics for inclusion. The final draft of the questionnaire was organised in six separate sections:

Section One	The Big Picture
Section Two	Building Bridges
Section Three	Culture and Identity
Section Four	Teams
Section Five	Multi-Agency Teams
Section Six	A More Effective Service

Survey statements were offered to the panel of managers for consideration in the form they had been submitted by panel members. It was however necessary to reframe some statements, or consolidate them, to ensure they would be understood by a considerably larger sample of practitioners, who would only have the opportunity to consider them once.

**Examples of rewording between the survey and questionnaire**

Survey: "The steering group is a virtual team." (D117)

Questionnaire: "Steering groups are also multi-agency teams." (T74)

Survey: "The YOT has an increased professional image in the local area." (D1) and "The YOT has an increased professional image nationally." (D2)

Questionnaire: "The YOT has a more positive professional image than youth justice services of the past." (T6)

The survey generated few statements about the internal dynamics of YOTs, or how practitioners might experience working in a YOT. Additional statements were therefore added to the questionnaire to widen the scope of inquiry to encompass individual member experience, for example: "*I have found it easy to work alongside professionals from other agencies.*" (T18) and "*My team has a common sense of purpose.*" (T49). The questionnaire also offered respondents the opportunity to

articulate more freely how they felt about different aspects of YOT work through the following open questions:

T14. Please try to describe below how it feels (professionally and/or personally to belong to a multi-agency team.

T19. Some agencies are more defensive than others about information sharing. If you agree with this statement, could you give an example please?

T20. Some agencies are more reluctant to commit to the YOT than others, if you agree with this statement, can you give an example?

T26. What has been the biggest adjustment you have had to make to adapt to multi-agency teamwork?

T48. What is the main cause of disharmony in your team?

T58. What do you think the main difference is between working in a multi-agency team and any other team?

T77. What agency has the most power in your YOT and why?

An opportunity was also provided at the end of the questionnaire for any other comments that respondent's wished to add on topics that had not been covered elsewhere. Demographic information, including length of stay in the YOT, professional background, ethnic background, age, gender, and secondment information where relevant was sought to aid analysis of the data. Respondents were also asked if they had chosen to join a YOT or were transferred from other posts, if they would chose to stay in a similar environment in the future and if they accessed the Youth Justice Board web site.

### **Recruiting YOT practitioners**

A large and representative sample of YOT practitioners was sought to complete a questionnaire to enable comparisons to be made between the views of different professional groups and different YOT structures. Permission was sought from members of the survey panel to invite their teams to complete a questionnaire. YOT managers had been recruited from 56 of the local authorities that were part of the Research in Practice consortium that sponsored the researcher. YOTs not represented on the panel were contacted again with invitations for practitioners to take part in the second part of the inquiry. The Research in Practice consortium did not however at that time include members from the northeast of England and a further 11 YOTs in that area were also contacted, bringing the total number of YOTs invited to participate to 50.

YOT managers were asked to display a poster entitled "*Multi-Agency Teamwork: How is it for you?*" in their offices, which outlined the aim of the inquiry and what would be required of practitioners to complete a questionnaire. YOTs that returned questionnaires from a representative sample of the professional practitioners in the team were eligible to take part in a small prize draw for a food hamper to contribute to their Christmas holiday celebrations. Practitioners could also contact the researcher directly and complete a questionnaire as an individual rather than as part of a team entry. Expressions of interest to take part were received from 90 YOT practitioners from 16 YOTs. Two extra copies of questionnaires were sent in the mailing to each YOT and 92 questionnaires were returned which was a 100% return rate for questionnaires requested.

### **The characteristics of the questionnaire respondent sample**

The number of YOTs participating in the second part of the inquiry represented 11% of the 144 YOTs in England in 2001. The sample included five YOTs covering large geographic county areas, four YOTs from areas organised as a federation of semi-autonomous teams, and seven YOTs from large city or small unitary local authority administrative areas. It was not possible to determine the sample size as a proportion of the total population of YOT practitioners in England at that time.

Two practitioners chose to take part in the study as individuals rather than as part of their team. Six YOTs indicated that they had returned questionnaires from a representative sample of the professions in the team; four of these were large county YOTs, one was a city-based YOT and one was part of a federation. Members of the survey panel led four of the participating YOTs.

It was difficult to determine the exact size of participating YOTs. Responses to the question: "*How many people in total in your team?*" varied considerably, even from members of the same YOT. Estimations of team size from 15 members of one YOT varied in the range of 9 to 40 individuals. Responses appeared to depend on an individuals' perception of their place within the youth offending service as a whole. It appeared likely that some respondents counted administrators and managers, while others only counted professional practitioners, while others viewed

their team as a specific project team, for example a bail support team operating within the YOT.

The table below (*Table 7*) illustrates the number of questionnaires returned from each YOT and the range of estimates given on team size. The last column in the table indicates the YOTs claiming returns from a representative sample of the professions in the team.

*Table 7- Return of questionnaires*

YOT	Number of questionnaires returned	Range of answers given on total size of YOT	Representative sample returned
1	5	10 - 15	*
2	1	21	
3	4	17	
4	1	12	
5	13	9 - 50	*
6	1	15	
7	4	9 - 30	
8	4	9 - 11	
9	3	13 - 14	
10	3	35 - 36	
11	10	12 - 14	*
12	20	9 - 37	*
13	4	12	*
14	1	18	
15	15	9 - 40	*
16	3	19 - 22	

There was little information available to compare the demographic information provided by respondents with the whole population of YOT practitioners in England in 2001. However the information collected, illustrated in the tables (*Tables 8 to 13*) below did not appear unrepresentative of YOTs and YOT practitioners known to the researcher and the monitoring group.

Table 8 - Respondent age range

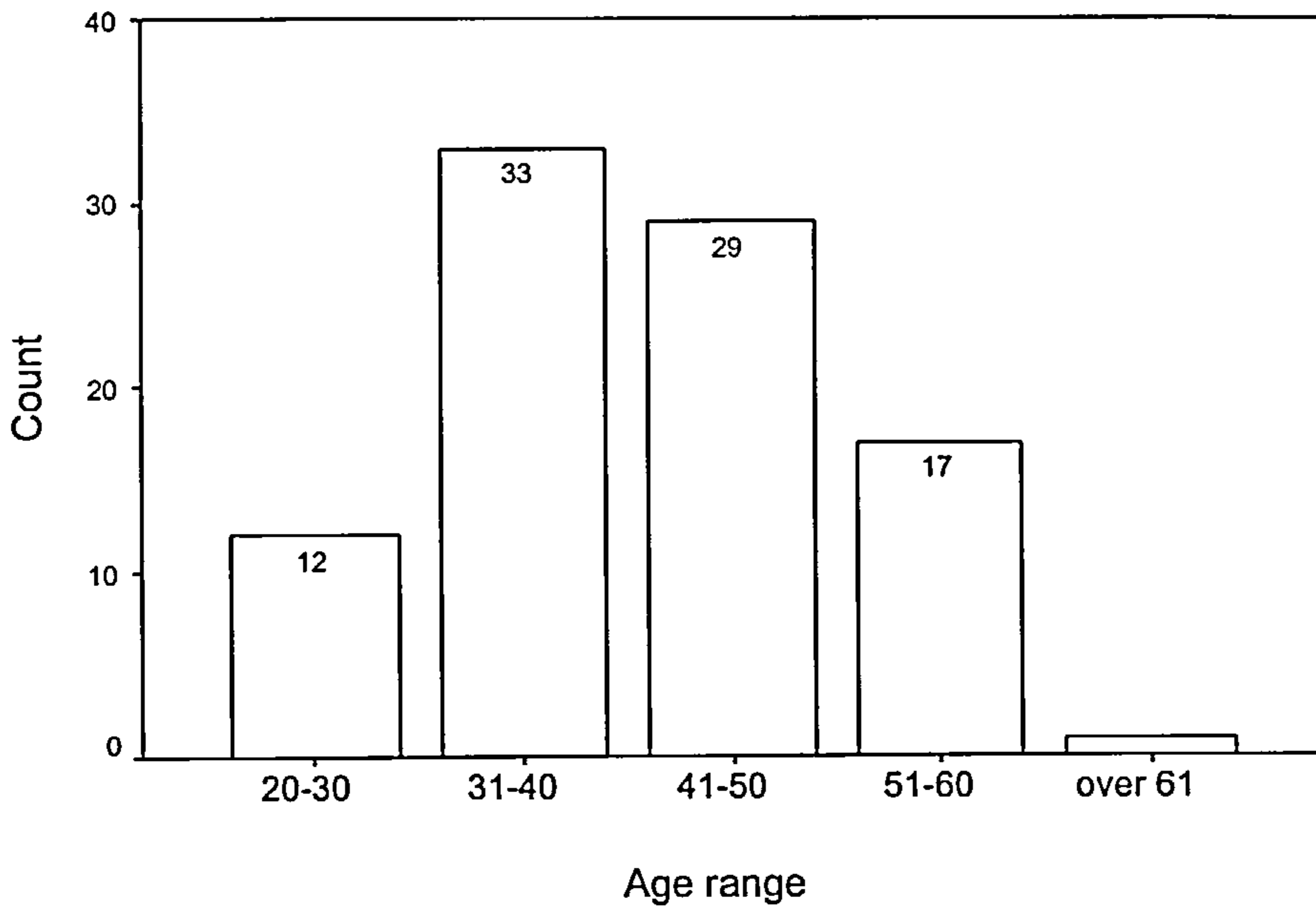


Table 9 - Respondent gender

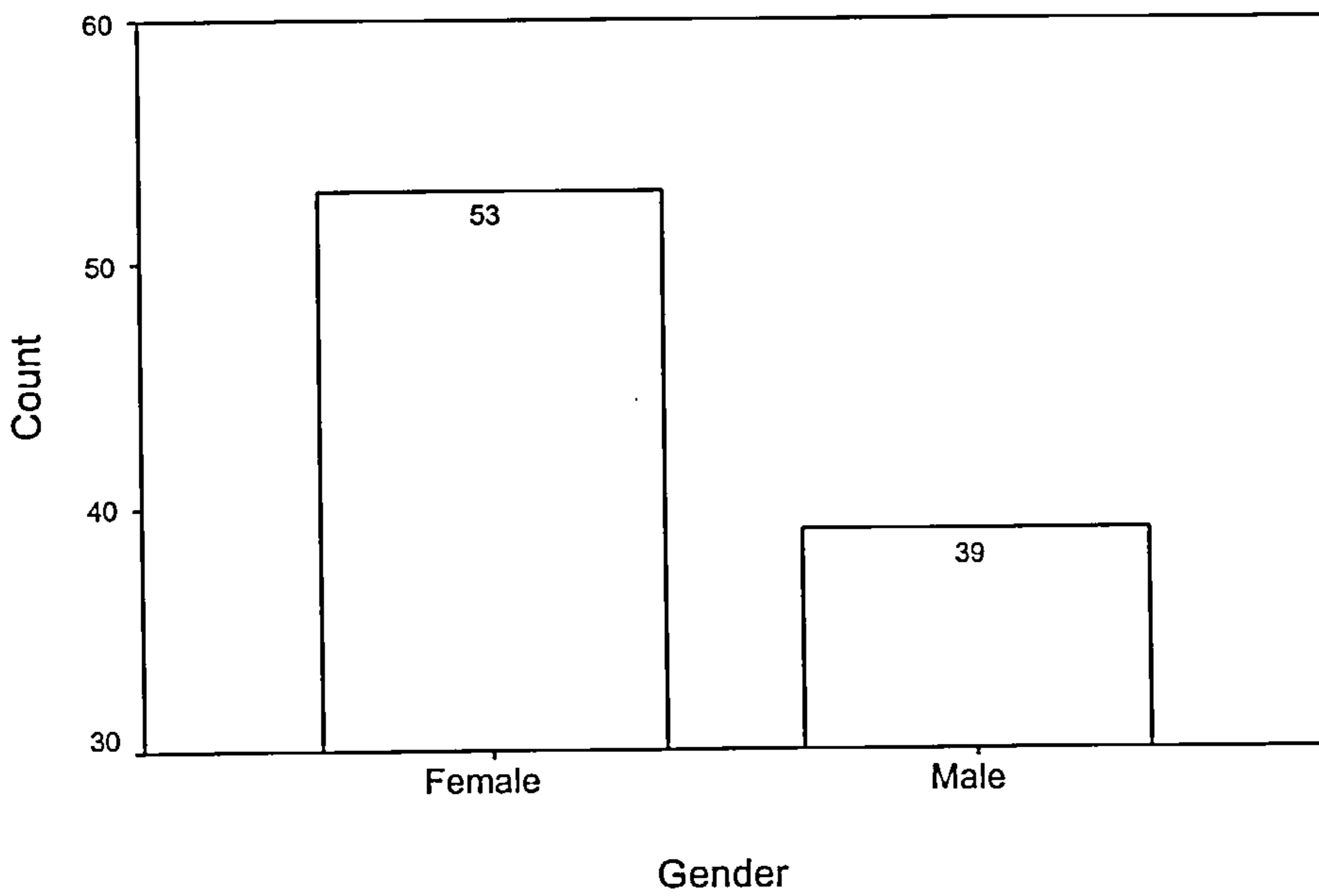




Table 10 - Respondent professional background

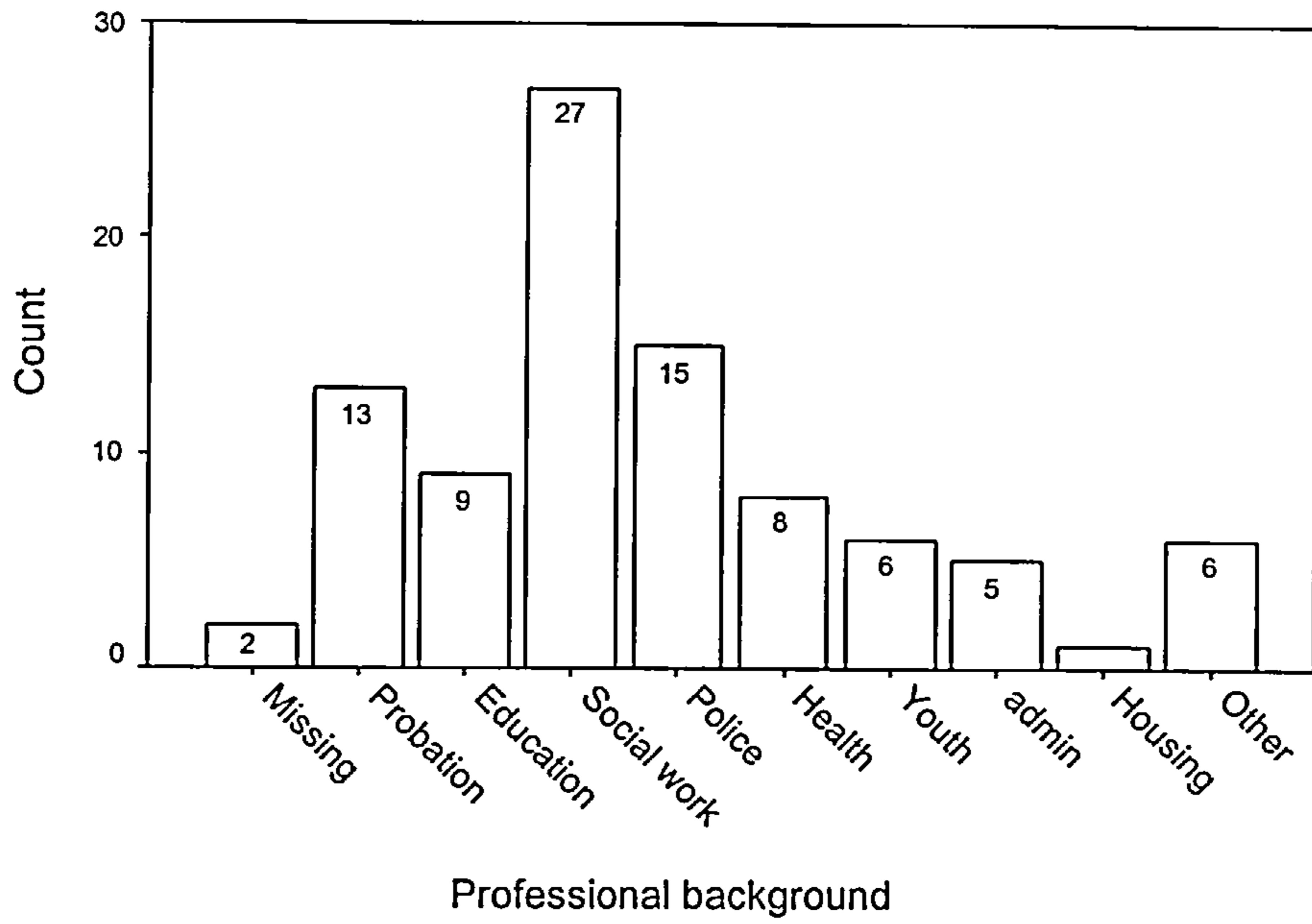


Table 11 - Respondent tenure in YOT

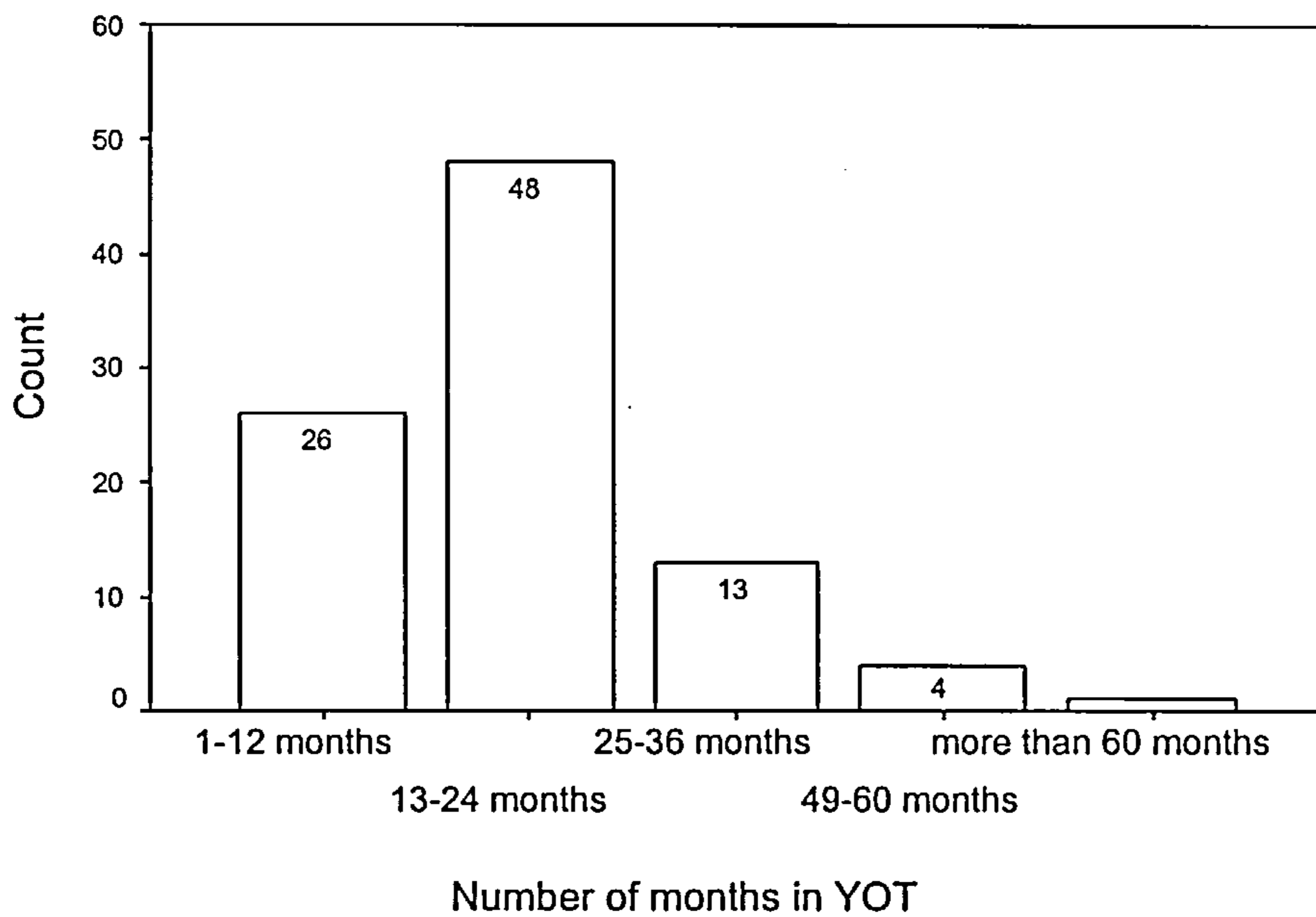


Table 12 - Respondent ethnic/cultural representation

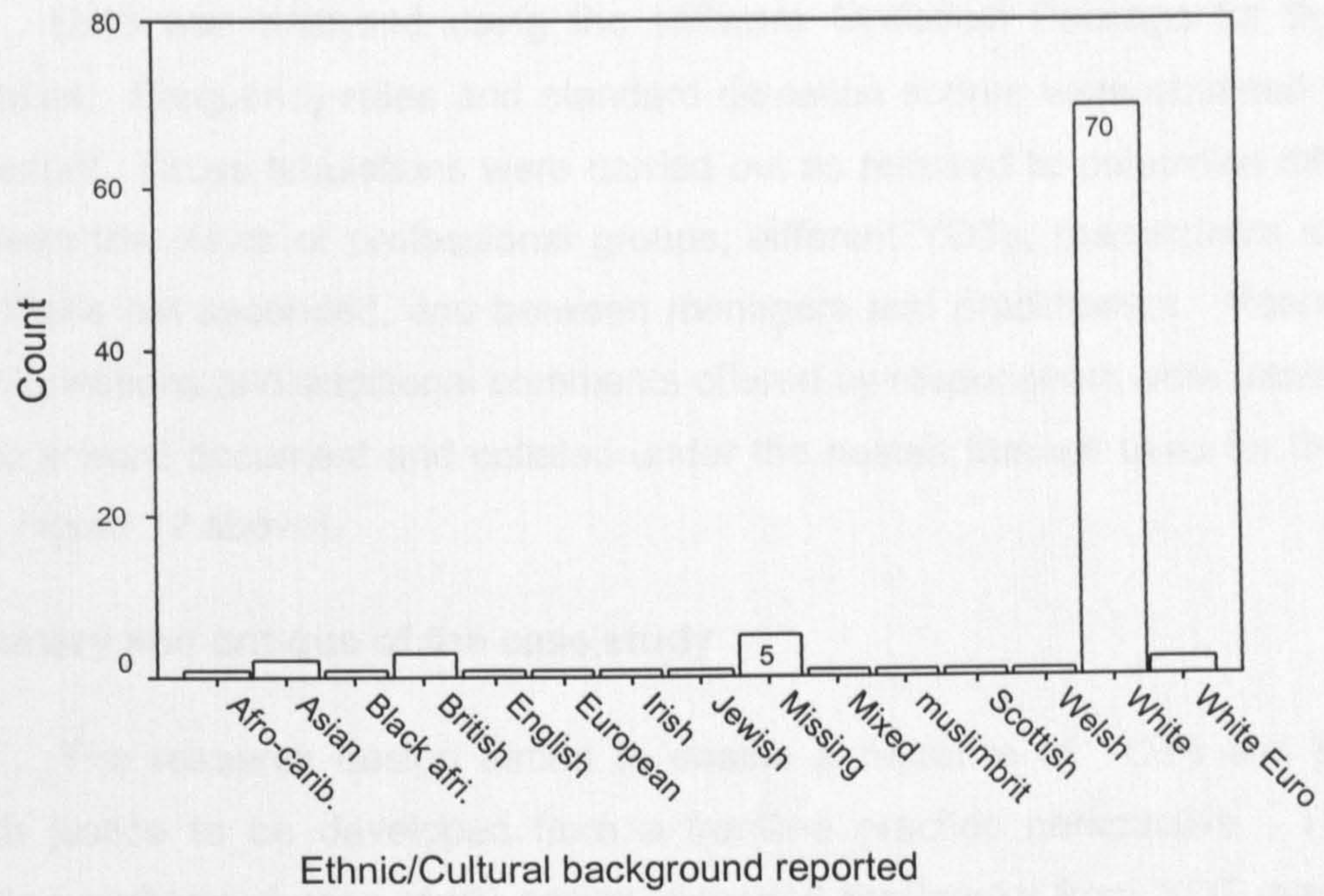
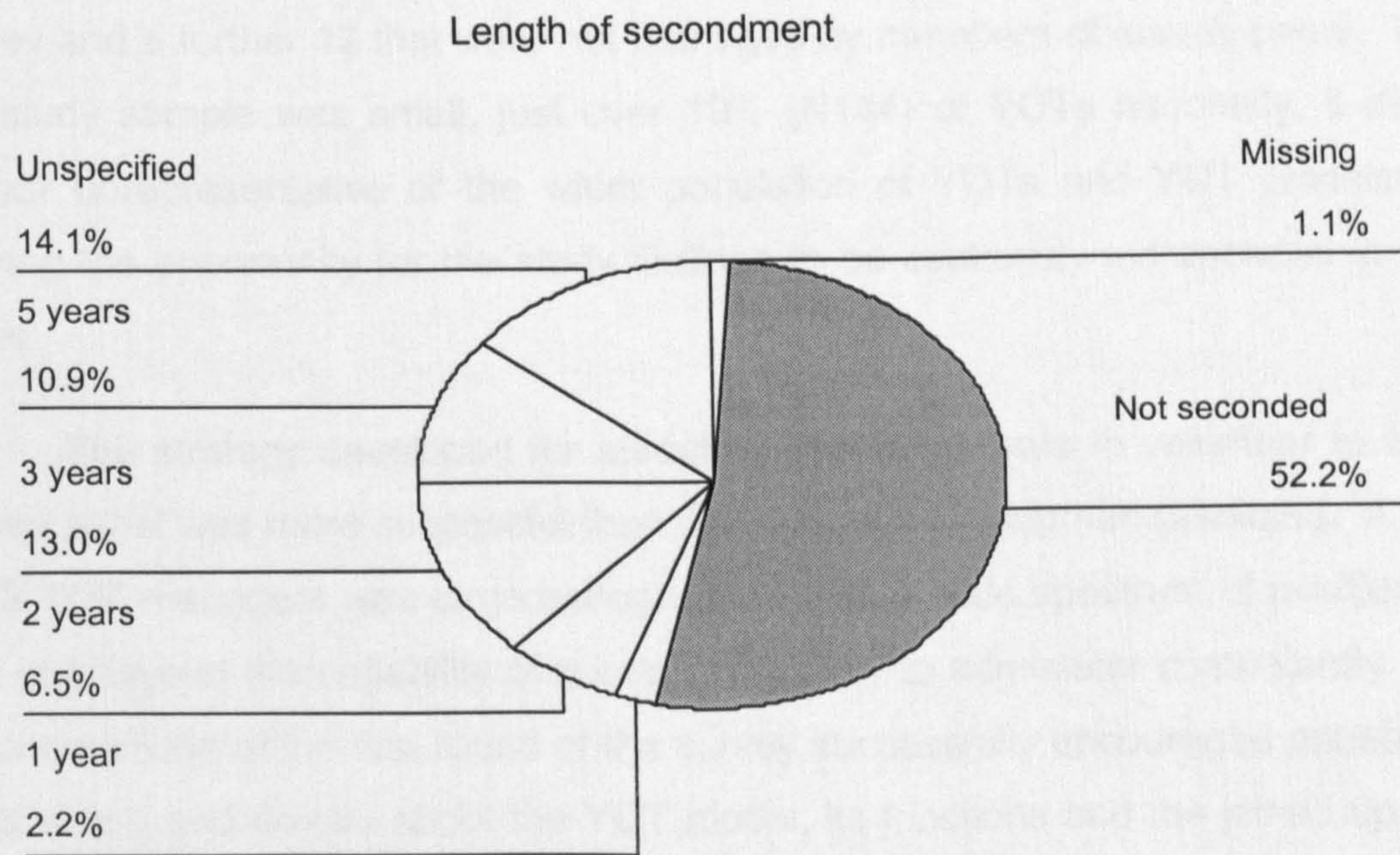


Table 13 - Respondent secondment



## **Data analysis**

Data was analysed using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Frequency rates and standard deviation scores were obtained for each statement. Cross tabulations were carried out as required to determine differences between the views of professional groups, different YOTs, respondents seconded and those not seconded, and between managers and practitioners. Responses to open questions and additional comments offered by respondents were transcribed in full to a word document and collated under the nested themes used for the survey (see *Figure 12* above).

## **Summary and critique of the case study**

The research design aimed to enable a narrative of YOTs and joined up youth justice to be developed from a frontline practice perspective. The multi-method embedded case study design extended the inquiry from YOT managers to YOT practitioners, enabling comparisons to be made between the views of different levels of the Youth Offending Service, and between different groups of staff. In total 27 different YOTs had some form of involvement in the case study: 15 during the survey and a further 12 that were not managed by members of survey panel. While the study sample was small, just over 19% (N144) of YOTs nationally, it did not appear unrepresentative of the wider population of YOTs and YOT practitioners, offering the opportunity for the study findings to be cautiously extrapolated in some areas.

The strategy developed for attracting YOT managers to volunteer to form a survey panel was more successful than the monitoring group had predicted. A panel of 19 YOT managers was large enough to provide a wide spectrum of positions but was not beyond the capability of a lone researcher to administer competently. The open questions of the first round of the survey successfully encouraged panellists to think widely and deeply about the YOT model, its functions and the joined up youth justice environment. The quantity of data generated was however far greater than had been anticipated, presenting a difficult and time consuming task for a single researcher to administer, and prolonging the length of time it took to complete the survey to well over eight months. The retention of 84% of panel members over an eight-month period of continued change and challenge for YOTs might be

considered a considerable achievement. It can be argued that the endurance of managers reflected their commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the joined up approach to youth offending and might also suggest strong support for practice-informed research.

The analysis of survey findings suggested that panellists carefully considered the views and opinions of their colleagues and did not arbitrarily alter responses between rounds. A sample of statements that achieved a consensus of opinion from the third round panel (N16) was cross tabulated the same panel's responses in the previous round. Where consensus was reached the aggregated panel response was found to be the same in both rounds (see example below).

**8. Agencies will inevitably retreat into their own agency priorities without national direction and sanctions.**

Finding:

73.7% agree/strongly agree panel response Round Two (N19)

87.5% agree/strongly agree panel response Round Two (N16)

87.5% agree/strongly agree panel response Round Three (N16)

On issues where the panel was divided in view the findings demonstrated that panellists were prepared to adjust their position in the light of further supporting information offered. In round one for example it was suggested that: *"In a multi-agency team, the baggage which team members carry with them adds tensions which detract from the task of the team and its achievement of outcomes"*. It was considered by the researcher that the statement represented a strong personal viewpoint, expressed in a form that might resonate with other panel members and it was included in round two in spite of the complexity of statement structure and uncertainty about the precise meaning intended by *"baggage"*. In the second round many panellists contributed comments to illustrate their position, for example: *"most team members don't bring baggage and eventually the minority baggage carrier becomes isolated"*. The statement was therefore carried forward for further consideration by the panel in round three, together with comments received from panellists and a small alteration to the statement made by the researcher to assist clarity: the words *"may"* and *"can"* were added to make the statement less emphatic. Consensus was still not achieved but the findings illustrated below suggest that the collective opinion was converging towards agreement. It is possible that a further

survey round might have assisted the three panellists who remained unsure to make a firm decision.

**43.** In a multi-agency team the baggage, which team members may carry with them can add tensions, which detract from the task of the team and its achievement of outcomes.

Finding:

	Round Two (N19)	Round Three (N16)
Strongly agree	0%	6.3%
Agree	31.6%	62.5%
Unsure	31.6%	18.8%
Disagree	36.8%	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%

On some topics however panellists were prepared to hold to distinctly different positions even when presented with supporting arguments from other panel members, and offered the opportunity to subscribe to the majority view. The panel for example contemplated the view that: *“Different conditions of service create tensions in YOTs”*. Panellists who did not support this position commented: *“not if properly prepared for and managed”*, and *“establishing protocols helps to alleviate this”*. A panellist who supported the position added: *“in some cases education staff holiday creates problems for service delivery too”*. None of the panel remained uncertain after further consideration in the third round and the majority view was one of disagreement (63% N16). A Standard Deviation score of 1.11, and Variance of 1.23 suggested the topic was unlikely to be resolved by this panel, and was more likely to benefit from exploration from a wider team perspective.

**63.** Different conditions of service create tensions in YOTs.

Findings:

	Round Two (N19)	Round Three (N16)
Strongly agree	33.3%	6.3%
Agree	0%	31.3%
Unsure	11.1%	0%
Disagree	55.6%	62.5%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%
Missing	5.3%	0%

The practitioners who completed and returned questionnaires offered a candid view of YOTs and joined up youth justice. Although not a large enough sample for the findings to be generalised to the wider population of YOT staff, the collated views of 92 members of 16 different teams offered a strong platform from which to discuss the issues raised by them. The questionnaire enabled a distinctly practitioner based narrative of YOTs to emerge and enabled a comparison to be made between the views of managers and practitioners, and between practitioners from different professional organisations.

Respondents did not report any errors in the construction, format or content of the questionnaire. The instructions offered to guide completion appeared to be generally understood although a number of respondents missed an occasional question. One questionnaire was returned missing one page. The most significant fault in the administration of the questionnaire was caused by a printing error in an additional batch of questionnaires requested by one YOT, which resulted in responses to questions 70 to 76 being entered as missing through error (coded 999) from 10 questionnaires returned.

A practical difficulty that arises from using postal questionnaires is deciphering handwriting. Both parts of the inquiry offered respondents the opportunity to describe how they experienced working in a YOT and many did so at considerable length. Additional time was devoted to deciphering the script of some managers and practitioners to ensure that all of their views were included in the way intended. Inevitably some avenues of enquiry were not followed up that might with hindsight been useful to the analysis. More for example could have been included in the questionnaire to find out how participating YOTs were managed and how tasks were distributed to different professionals.

The fieldwork was progressive and time consuming. A much larger body of detailed information was generated than was anticipated. The support of staff, from all levels of the youth offending service, for the aims of the inquiry however endorsed the decision to enable a narrative of YOTs to emerge from the frontline of practice through a multi-method case study design. The support and guidance of the two YOT managers who formed the monitoring group was invaluable and greatly appreciated. Their suggestions prompted great care to be taken to ensure that

YOTs were approached in the best way to gain maximum participation. The time taken to debate the content of the open questions, which provided a platform from which the inquiry developed, and to pilot them thoroughly, was time well spent.

The achievement of a Delphi panel size at the upper end of the range sought, low attrition between rounds of the survey and 100% return rate of questionnaires suggests that the aims of the study were strongly supported by practitioners and the research materials well prepared and received. The fieldwork findings will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## Chapter Nine

### Joined Up Youth Justice: How is it for You?

#### Introduction

The achievement of dynamic joined up youth justice in England and Wales relies heavily upon the commitment, motivation and skills of the many individuals who make up the Youth Offending Service. There is much that can be learned from attending to the view from the practice frontline for it is here that structural, administrative and legislative changes must be implemented. Practitioners are perhaps not consulted often enough about the work they are required to do: *“it is time someone asked the questions you have posed”* (YOT Practitioner).

The fieldwork undertaken for this thesis was outlined in the previous two chapters. More than 110 YOT managers and practitioners were offered the opportunity to put forward their own views about YOTs and the new youth justice system constructed by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. Chapter Nine presents a frontline practice perspective of YOTs from the data collected from the survey and questionnaire.

The chapter begins with an account of how YOT managers and practitioners described working in a YOT and the successes and achievements they reported. The benefits of interprofessional team practice, broadly welcomed and embraced by respondents, are discussed with reference to personal and professional attitudes to joined up work. Attention then turns to a consideration of how differentiated salaries and conditions of service and the practice of seconding professional practitioners to YOTs impacts upon individuals and overall team functioning. The contrasting views of managers and practitioners about their experience of working in YOTs then leads to a discussion about the status of YOTs as teams and the conundrum that the YOT model represents.

The chapter then turns from the internal dynamics of the teams to explore respondent's views of the new youth justice agenda and how the joined up youth justice initiative is experienced at the frontline of practice. YOT managers and



practitioners offered candid views about the challenges of developing an interorganisational response to youth offending, the role of local authority steering groups and the Youth Justice Board. The chapter concludes with a summary of the strengths, weakness and tensions of YOTs suggested by the findings.

A large quantity of data was collected through the fieldwork research and it is not proposed to refer to all of it in detail in the chapter. A full account of the findings is presented in Appendix 2. The appendix records statements that were carried forward from the survey to the questionnaire and those that were set-aside during the survey, with the reasons for withdrawal. A summary of the data analysis is presented. Statements are coded D = Delphi survey, T= Team questionnaire. D+ statement number + C indicates that the views of the Delphi panel of YOT managers converged to form a consensus view. Response categories of “strongly agree” and “agree”, and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were collapsed unless otherwise noted. Responses to open questions and additional comments offered by respondents are included throughout this chapter to further illustrate the data.

### **How does it feel to work in a YOT?**

How the people who work in YOTs feel about the work they are required to do integrally influences the many interpersonal and interprofessional relationships upon which dynamic joined up youth offending services depend. In the first round of the survey managers were asked to respond to the question: *“From your own professional and personal perspective, how does it feel to work as part of a multi-agency initiative?”* YOT practitioners were asked to: *“Describe how it feels (professionally and/or personally) to belong to a multi-agency team”*(T14).

One of the most striking findings of the study was that the majority of respondents appeared generally and genuinely invigorated by their experience of working in a YOT. Many managers and practitioners commented that it was: *“Great”; “Stimulating”; “A privilege in many respects”*, to be part of their teams. Almost three-quarters of practitioners indicated that they were happy in their work (T50) and were making the best use of their professional skills (T89). Contrary to early concern that many youth justice team practitioners had been required by their employers to transfer to YOTs (Bailey and Williams, 2000; Holdaway et al., 2001), only seven practitioners (8%, N91), who completed a questionnaire and indicated

their choice, did not choose to join their YOT: *“Having worked for different agencies in the past and being a strong believer in interagency working I have been waiting to work in a team like the YOT for years!”*.

All of the managers who formed the survey panel (N19) appeared to have found the experience of setting up and managing a YOT or Youth Offending Service an exciting and demanding task: *“This is the most interesting post (and challenging) that I have held in my professional career of over 25 years”*. Managers considered they were *“at the cutting edge”* of a new way of working and had a key role to play in *“trailblazing”* joined up approaches in the wider public sector:

*Having worked in a Social Services environment for many years with a fairly rigid and unchanging structure both in terms of development and opportunity, the experience of working in a multi-agency initiative is tremendously invigorating.*

The findings suggested a high level of motivation, commitment and enthusiasm for joined up youth justice, from staff fulfilling a wide variety of roles in YOTs. Crucially, respondents appeared to share a strong common belief that a joined up approach to youth offending had the potential to make a more positive impact upon the lives of young offenders than previous systems, which were considered to have been too narrow in approach (D124C, T8).

### **Promising signs of success**

The many diverse perspectives held in YOTs brought new dimensions for the development of youth offending services that managers considered were beyond the capability of one organisation to encompass alone (D146C). A large majority of managers (95% N19) and practitioners (85% N92) asserted that, even at an early stage of development, YOTs were providing an improved service for young offenders (D132C, T83). A smaller majority, 79% of managers and 62% of practitioners, proposed that a better service was being offered by YOTs to the victims of youth crime (D133C, T84) and 74% of managers and 58% of practitioners considered that a better service was being offered to the Courts (D133, T82). Promising signs of success appeared evident to most of those consulted, adding to their determination for YOTs to thrive. Some practitioners however reported frustration that the level of service available from partner organisations could be variable: *“whilst contact is*

*easier the lack of resources e.g. health and social services, means that too little is available or takes too long to be of benefit*". Crucially the majority of respondents appeared to have little doubt that further improvements were possible and that: *"the best is yet to come"* (D237C).

In a Youth Justice Board press release (30 March 2000) Lord Warner, (Chairman of the Youth Justice Board 1998-2004) claimed that the new youth justice system was providing a *"visibly new professional service"* to replace the *"incoherent bumbling amateur system"* of the past. YOT managers and just over half of the practitioners consulted agreed at least in part with Lord Warner's assessment, asserting that YOTs had developed a positive collective professional image both locally and nationally (D1C, D2C, T6). Managers considered that the Government had succeeded in providing clear national direction for everyone involved with youth offending (D5C) and almost three-quarters of practitioners identified a common sense of purpose within their YOTs (T49). Few respondents however viewed pre-1998 youth offending services as a failure. As one practitioner observed: *"the development of YOTs seemed to have been based on a rubbishing of previous systems with good working practices being ignored or discounted"*.

It might be easy to overlook that YOTs have been provided with many of the tools that their predecessors were denied including increased funding, priority government status, a statutory requirement for a coordinated and sustained interorganisational response to youth offending and a reduction of some of the structural and administrative barriers to cooperation. The majority of individuals responsible for enabling YOTs to be fully operational by April 2000 and capable of meeting the considerable range of challenges set out in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* brought many years of experience in youth justice teams and the wider youth justice practice community with them to YOTs.

### **Joined up professional practice**

Many authors propose that robust interventions, guidance and training are required to help professionals overcome their resistance to the development of productive interprofessional relationships (see for example Amery, 2000; Freeman et al., 2000; Payne, 2000; Secker and Hill, 2001). The survey and questionnaire findings did not however support this view. A significant finding was that the

development of interprofessional team practice in YOTs did not appear to have been as difficult as might have been feared from the pessimism of much of the literature reviewed:

*Concerns that the YOT experience would be something like the Monty Python 100 yards dash for the directionally challenged have proved unfounded with members of the team proving motivated to work together and see one another's perspectives" (D230C).*

More than three-quarters of practitioners claimed to have found it reasonably easy to work alongside professionals from other organisations (T18): *"I feel the transition to multi-agency teamwork has, and is, working very well. I do not feel that it has caused any adjustment difficulties to my role or work, rather it has enhanced practice for the benefit of the client group"*. The YOTs that took part in the study appeared to have embraced the concept of interprofessional practice with enthusiasm and had succeeded in laying down the foundations of a dynamic new joined up youth offending service that had considerable potential. Crucially it appeared that a strong and shared belief in the potential of YOTs to prevent offending by children and young people was the primary motivator for the majority of staff who chose to take on the challenge of an interprofessional team environment.

While some respondents reported experience of multi-agency initiatives prior joining a YOT, just over half of the managers and just under half of the practitioners, distributed across professional backgrounds and localities, admitted that they had known little about how other organisations operated (D41, T27). One of the key benefits of working together in the same team is that opportunities abound to find out about the parameters of different professional roles and crucially get to know the individuals who choose to fulfil these roles. YOT practitioners are confronted with the constraints of different professional organisations and specific professional tasks on a daily basis: *"I find that working within a multi-agency team I have learnt a lot about other disciplines and feel that I have had a better chance to show and explain to others my work role"*. All of the managers consulted (N19) and 82% (N91) of practitioners asserted that working closely with other professionals in a YOT had contributed to an increase in mutual professional respect (D100C, T69) and had enabled professional assumptions to be challenged (D188C). The consensus view of managers, and over half of the practitioners consulted, was that there were fewer

tensions in the teams than had existed in previous cross boundary professional working relationships (D42C, T28).

The findings support a proposition that learning to work effectively across professional and organisational boundaries is simply good professional practice (see for example Hewison and Sim, 1998; Amery, 2000): *“In my experience it is a model which offers many opportunities to develop ones own professionalism”*. The case management approach, adopted by YOTs, had required new skills to be learned: *“to make use of other agencies rather than as previously doing it all myself”*. Practitioners are presented with valuable opportunities to grow in confidence and assertiveness, and widen their skills base, through working in a YOT (D190C). Many practitioners agreed that their experience of interprofessional practice had encouraged them to redefine their professional relationships: *“to build trust and respect for other professions who had not shown commitment to new ideas in the past”*. Some had learned to accept different viewpoints and practice methods: *“accepting a range of views and ideas on my ‘specialist’ way of working”*.

One of the main goals of joined up practice, which is to open up organisational and professional boundaries, appeared to have been largely achieved. The detailed knowledge held by YOT members about how other organisations operated and the contacts that members maintained in other organisations had resulted in easier professional and organisational boundary crossing (D25C). Access from YOTs to other services and organisations was reported to be quicker (D24C), and easier (D23C, T15) than ever before. The opportunities that resulted, to approach problems from the diverse perspectives brought to the teams by practitioners from different professions, was greatly valued: *“I enjoy the diversity of opinion and the multi-dimensional approach to given problems”*. Interprofessional teamwork had stimulated individuals to think in new ways and had contributed to creative problem solving (D189C, D144C).

### **Joined up assessments of need**

Respondents proposed that the opportunity to approach difficult situations from a variety of different perspectives had contributed to improved assessment practice. It was considered that assessments were undertaken in more depth than in the past (D127C, D128C) and were more likely to identify a wide range of risk factors

in the lives of young offenders (D138C, T88). The preparation of a holistic assessment of the needs of a young person, a central aim of joining up practice, could be achieved more quickly through the permeable boundaries created around YOTs (D125C, T79). Practitioners were however sceptical about the benefits of the national ASSET tool to the assessment process.

ASSET was introduced by the Youth Justice Board to provide a standard framework of risk measurement and the collation of data from assessment for evaluation. The document is continually under review, and has been since enlarged, in 2001 however the ASSET document recorded 13 aspects of a young person's life: from their living arrangements to their motivation to change offending behaviour. Less than half of the practitioners consulted considered that the ASSET assessment tool had contributed to the improvements to assessment that were reported, almost a third were unsure about its' contribution (T81). Some practitioners objected to the administrative demands and the time taken to complete a document of considerable size at every stage of a young person's involvement with a YOT, and some held very strong views about the document's completion: "*oh my god don't get me started on this!*" Almost three-quarters (70% N91) of practitioners agreed that there was too much of a focus on paperwork and data collection involved in their daily work (T80), an issue that was identified by the Audit Commission (2002) as a prime source of distress for public sector employees. Practitioners observed that they were: "*unable to work effectively with youngsters due to the inflexibility of National Standards and Statistics*" primarily because of the "*bureaucratic demands of the YJB (Youth Justice Board)*". Respondents appeared to consider that improved assessment practice had been achieved through the reduction of professional and organisational barriers rather than the imposition of what some respondents considered to be an inflexible and time-consuming standard assessment tool.

While the development of interprofessional practice in YOTs may not have been as problematic as might have been expected, other difficulties were experienced in the YOTs that took part in the study. Although everyone was doing their best to ensure that only positives were achieved, there was some concern expressed by managers that there may be an unwillingness to consider the costs of the YOT model, not least of which was the cost to staff (D233). Half of the managers consulted (N16) and 45% of practitioners (N92) supported a view that they may

simply be part of an experiment to see if teams could succeed where attempts at closer agency co-operation had failed (D231, T12). While a joined up approach to youth offending may have the potential for considerable benefit, and was strongly supported in YOTs that took part in the study, the findings indicated that a YOT can be an extremely difficult environment within which to work: *“Some days it’s great, other days it’s a complete nightmare”*.

### **Personal attitudes to joined up practices**

A central feature of a YOT is the diversity of its membership. A far wider range of inherently unique individuals is represented in YOTs than in teams constructed in more traditional ways. Diversity extends to personal as well as professional preferences, attitudes and values.

Study respondents were asked to identify the main source of internal tensions in their teams. Communication difficulties and personal attitudes were identified as the main contributory factors. Less than a third of the sample of practitioners and just over a quarter of the Delphi panel of managers considered that tensions were stimulated by clashes of professional culture (D85, T47). External communications between YOTs and other teams and organisations were reported by managers to have been greatly improved by the YOT model (D30C, D28C). Internal day-to-day communication between team members appear however to have been intensified and compounded by the need to encompass different systems of information gathering, protocols for holding and sharing information and different technologies employed by partner organisations (Holdaway et al., 2001). Comments received from respondents about communication difficulties illustrated the range of factors, including personal attitude, which related to barriers to communication in YOTs:

Management Systems: *“data protection issue and showing/having access to data bases”*.

Professional Culture: *“Health workers (not all) keeping to strict views about confidentiality”*.

Personal Attitude: *“Some individuals work on a ‘need to know’ basis, so if they think you don’t need to know then they don’t tell you”*.

Personal attitude is a significant and unpredictable variable in all group and workgroup situations (Hackman, 1990; Guzzo, 1996). Comments offered by practitioners specifically about their colleagues, distributed across all of the YOTs and professions represented, identified issues such as: *“empire building”*; *“fighting to be top dog”*; the existence of *“mavericks”*; colleagues who were perceived as unreasonably inflexible, who did not delegate tasks or were unwilling to share information. Some individuals did not appear to be as amenable to interprofessional teamwork as other colleagues and some had found the experience of joining a YOT extremely difficult. The findings appeared to support a view that many communication difficulties in practice settings accrue from the innately personal attitude, or individual philosophy, of individuals and may be further aggravated by different interpretations of the language used by different professions (Freeman et al., 2000; Irvine et al., 2002).

It was widely considered that practitioners can feel deskilled and insecure when they join a YOT (D60C, T41). Some groups of staff however appear to experience these feelings more acutely than others. All of the health professionals and 11 of 13 (85%) of probation officers who took part in the study reported that they had felt insecure and deskilled on joining their YOT: *“as a newcomer, I found the new system bewildering and had to ‘fight’ for my status in the team. Once done that I began to lose my ‘probation’ viewpoint”*. The perception of not *belonging to* a team might continue to be experienced throughout YOT tenure and the isolation of being the lone representative of a professional organisation in a team appears to be a major contributory factor. Some individuals reported being challenged by the need to adapt to an alien practice culture, as was illustrated by a police officer frustrated by: *“non-same agency management and ethos. Lack of understanding of discipline, lax attitudes. Disorganised ways of working. Lack of decision making (must have a meeting). Out numbered – so out voted”*. For others the difficulty arose from a personal preference for work structures and organisation: *“my own experience has not been a happy one. However I think that it has led me to realise I am better placed to work within a single agency team, coordinating other agencies where appropriate”*.

The personal attitude and preferences of individual team members, which may be immutable, are rarely taken into consideration when teams are formed or



reconfigured. They are however likely to contribute heavily to the success, or failure, of team effort. Interpersonal relationships may be integrally complicated, volatile and unpredictable in a workgroup as complex as a YOT but they are the foundations of effective communication and cooperation. Clashes of personal attitude may ultimately limit the potential of interprofessional practice more than is realised. Moreover the structure and management of the YOT model acts to further amplify whatever personal tensions might already exist between individuals and does little to promote joining up.

### **The allocation and status of specialist tasks in YOTs**

A fundamental dilemma facing proponents of interprofessional practice is how to optimise diverse skills, experience and knowledge if they are to be held within one team. Views tend to range across the continuum:

Separate Specialisms → Core Common Skills → Generic Skills

A separatist approach to the deployment of diverse skills aims to maintain individual professional specialisms, drawing on each as required to contribute to core operations within one interprofessional team. The contrasting position, the generic approach, aims to transform the professional skills and knowledge of individual practitioners to equip them to take a broad and flexible role in a team, overlapping functions with other colleagues as required. The middle ground of the continuum seeks to identify skills and knowledge common across the services offered by a team and aims to ensure that all members develop these alongside their own area of expertise. Considerable confusion emerged from the findings about how the diverse skills and knowledge held in a YOT should or could be deployed and team tasks allocated. Individual preferences, differences between the views of professional groups, between managers, and between managers and practitioners emerged from the findings.

In most YOTs professionally qualified social workers and probation officers manage the cases of young offenders. They oversee the ASSET assessment process, liase with other professionals and services, commission services as appropriate and monitor individual children and young people from their entry to the YOT to discharge. Tasks such as writing pre-sentence reports most often fall to

case managers. Other professional colleagues contribute specialist health, education, housing or career advice to assessments and offer access to the services and support that might be available in other organisations. Other staff members might be involved in the delivery of specific programmes such as bail support or intensive supervision and surveillance programmes (ISSPs). Different tasks in the YOTs taking part in the study appeared to accrue different levels of status and respect: *“I feel that some professions in the team are given more respect and importance than others”* (Youth Worker).

Managers considered it essential that there be no professional status hierarchy within their teams (D168C). Comments were however received from all of the professions, in all of the YOTs represented in the study sample, about disparities in workload and the status afforded to individual professionals undertaking specific tasks: *“Personally I feel some players appear to be worth more than others”* (Housing Officer). While the majority of managers and over half of practitioners did not agree that working in a YOT threatened professional status (D59, T40), half of the health professionals (N8), a quarter of the social workers (N27) and 40% (N15) of police officers consulted indicated dissatisfaction about the professional status afforded to them in their teams. The position that individuals occupy in an interprofessional team, and how they and their colleagues view that position appeared to be more important to team climate than was generally recognised by YOT managers.

The views of managers appeared to lie closest to the specialist end of the specialist-generic continuum. One manager proposed: *“a hockey team does not need 11 goalkeepers, the best results are reached through bringing together individuals for specific team roles in a multi-agency team”* (D91), and three-quarters of his management colleagues agreed with him. The majority of managers were concerned that taking a generic approach to allocating team tasks risked the loss of valuable specialist skills (74% N19, D54). While some managers supported a view that protecting specialisms tended to stimulate tension (37% N19, D55), 63% of the survey panel were uncertain how the specialist demarcation of tasks affected their teams.

The majority of managers disagreed that YOTs should aim towards developing a common youth offending team identity (75% N16, D46). In the first round of the survey however, 74% (N19 D45) also supported a view that professional identity in YOTs was: “*ever changing*”. Many managers appeared to consider that fluidity and flexibility were key components of the YOT model and did not for example agree that there should be a standard model to eliminate inconsistencies in YOT design (69% N16, D10). It was unclear from the findings how managers considered a specialist approach could be maintained if individuals were uncertain about their status in the team, or their professional or team identity.

In contrast, the fluidity of YOT design sought by managers and uncertainty about status and identity caused some of the professional practitioners consulted considerable anxiety. More than a quarter of practitioners agreed that specialist task allocation caused tensions in their teams, almost half were uncertain (N92 T35). Twice as many practitioners (64% N92), than managers (32% N19), supported a view that a specialist approach to the allocation of tasks within YOTs tended to weight caseload responsibility to social services and probation-trained staff (D52, T34), which it was observed: “*Doesn't feel very multi-agency as this YOT is very top heavy by Social Services and I am a SW (social worker). Feels like (we) have other 'assistants' from other agencies – very patronising*”.

The findings suggested that many practitioners sought the security of a standard YOT model (T2): 59% (N90) of the full sample of practitioners and 68% of the sample of secondees (N43) indicated a preference for less flexible and fluid team structures. YOT practitioners from organisations that traditionally held clearly defined roles within the criminal justice system were those who most supported the need for a standard YOT model: 10 of 15 police officers (67%) and 9 of 13 probation officers (61%). Almost half of the full sample of practitioners (N92) supported a view that YOTs should aim towards developing a common professional team identity (T30) in contrast to three-quarters of managers who disagreed.

YOT practitioners' views appeared to lie at the opposite end of the specialist/generic continuum from the views of managers. It is however possible that the separatist/generic continuum has become a redundant concept. Specialist, generic and common skills may have become increasingly accepted by practitioners

as features of contemporary joined up professional practice. As one education worker observed:

*the common and generic skills referred to are not rocket science and can be easily acquired by non SSD (social services department) professionals. There are huge areas of cross over already and the need to relate appropriately to the YO (young offender) is paramount. Anyone who is reasonably well educated can be easily trained to write PSRs (pre-sentence reports) for example. There are plenty of common generic skills even under a specialist approach to the workload.*

It might be argued that the concern of practitioners was less about changes to individual roles and more about the uncertainty, confusion and it can be argued, the lack of social justice, that can be generated by the different ways the YOT model is operationalised. Practitioners appeared to seek a secure and predictable team environment within which to work and the opportunity to build a common sense of identity within which all contributions are recognised and rewarded as of equal value.

#### **YOT salaries and conditions of service**

Equity is an important principle upon which strong workgroup relationships are built. Differentiated status or status rewards in workgroups can lead to divisive perceptions of inequity that contribute to group dysfunction (Bowey and Carlisle, 1979; Hackman, 1990; Guzzo, 1996; Cropanzo and Schminke, 2001). An inescapable aspect of the YOT model is that team members receive different financial rewards and conditions of service, often for performing similar tasks that have equal value in contributing to the achievement of shared team goals.

Practitioners who feel insecure about their status or position in a YOT or resent that they are rewarded differently from other colleagues for what are perceived to be equally demanding and integrated team tasks, are less likely to be able to form, or sustain, the dynamic interpersonal relationships that lie at the heart of joined up practice. Perceived risk of loss of status or reward may stimulate individual professionals within YOTs to protect the boundaries of their job role, leading to a “*preciousness*” about tasks that was described by some managers and practitioners. Many practitioners, almost half of the study sample, were seconded to a YOT from their professional organisation, retaining their pay and conditions of service during the period of secondment. It was not considered appropriate to ask

individual practitioners to divulge details about their salaries or conditions of employment. Some clarification of the extent of variance between pay, terms and conditions was however sought from a variety of sources (see *Table 14* below).

*Table 14 - Pay, terms and conditions of service*

<b>Post</b>	<b>Salary Range in £ per annum</b>		<b>Leave Entitlement Range and Conditions of Service</b>
Qualified Social Worker	19,185	25,911	24 to 32 days* Depending on length of service and scale point
Youth Justice Worker	15,397	19,185	Up to 24 days* Depending on length of service and scale point
Senior YOT Practitioner	25,911	28,320	27 to 32 days* Depending on length of service and scale point
Education Welfare Officer	19,185	23,315	24 to 32 days* Depending on length of service and scale point
Teacher	18,558	27,123	13 weeks * Additional allowances may be added such as Special Needs Allowance £1716 to £3396
Health Visitor/Nurse	13,900	30,975	# 25 to 30 days
Probation Officer	20,257	27,238	36 days* standard entitlement
Police Officer	18,666	29,307	21 days * Can retire at age 50 on full pension after 25 years service or under 50 with 30 years service. Additional payments made for bank holiday and overtime working

\* plus statutory bank holidays

# based on information from a private provider of mental health bank staff

(from Lincolnshire County Council Personnel Department and the National Probation Service; and from the websites of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers and Unison, the trade union for people delivering public services, July 2004).

The information illustrated above is a broad outline of the variations in the pay and conditions of service of professional practitioners who may be employed in YOTs. The fieldwork findings suggested that these were a major cause of dissent in the YOTs that took part in the study and was a matter of dispute between managers and practitioners. The issue of pay and conditions of service was explored further in

a telephone interview (21 July 2004) with a YOT practice manager. In this manager's YOT posts were funded in a variety of ways, through Youth Justice Board development funds, local initiatives, financial contributions from partner organisations and other external sources. It appeared that staff might hold a bewildering mixture of permanent, temporary and secondment contracts in the same YOT at any one time. The practice manager suggested that, where possible, his YOT aimed to recruit to the general youth justice worker terms and conditions of service and they sought applicants that had: "*some relevant experience and an interest in young offenders*". Of particular interest was that the person providing specialist education input to the team had not worked as either a teacher or an education welfare officer. She had been appointed to the general youth justice worker terms and conditions that are the least favourable of employment packages (*Table 14* above). It is possible that some YOTs prefer to avoid secondment contracts because of what the practice manager interviewed described as "*crippling*" recruitment difficulties and budget constraints. It also appears particularly difficult to recruit health workers: "*if it were possible to get a qualified and experienced worker from the DAT (Drug Action Team), few of us can, then it would cost us whatever it would cost*".

There appears to be considerable variations in how appointments are made, and the rewards attached to each post, in different YOTs. An intriguing situation might develop if experienced professionals were not regularly sought, or found, to fill the posts intended to offer specialist skills and extend the networking capacity of YOTS. An interprofessional team that does not contain a team of diverse qualified and experienced professionals fundamentally ceases to be an interprofessional team and, it can be argued, is transformed into something else altogether.

### **Social injustice and dissent**

The inequity of terms and conditions of service in YOTs were an issue of contention between manager and practitioner respondents. While more than half of the practitioners agreed that tensions were generated in YOTs by the different terms and conditions of service held by members of the same team (28% agreed, 24% strongly agreed N92, T59), 63% (N16, D63) of managers disagreed. A third of the sample of social workers (N27) agreed, almost a further third strongly agreed, that inequity generated tensions in their YOTs: "*aware that terms and conditions of*

*employment vary and therefore other YOT officers will have more annual leave e.g. those in probation and education and not resenting it although we all do the same job". Education workers found it difficult: "having a lower salary than other professionals", while probation officers highlighted the challenge of:*

*having to cover extra work for example when a secondee from education holds a caseload and is unable to supervise it during say the school holiday entitlement that they bring with them. It is necessary to suspend feelings about unequal support from parent agency/holiday/pay entitlements in order to work together as a 'joined up team.*

The Audit Commission (2002) proposed that there is a general perception that people working in what might be broadly described as 'the helping professions' are primarily motivated by altruism and may be less influenced by financial rewards than other groups of workers. While altruism may influence career choice, the professionals working in YOTs maintain similar financial burdens and lifestyle aspirations as workers in other occupations. It would be a surprise if inequity did not to some extent influence interpersonal relationships in YOTs where a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of collective effort and cooperation. Failure to address the impact of inequity and social injustice in YOT risks damaging the goodwill and enthusiasm of the staff that support joined up youth justice. The potential of the YOT model to develop further might be limited by how successfully the assets of interprofessional practice are managed and its liabilities minimised. Managers and practitioners however took a different view on the most appropriate strategy to manage the tensions that accrue from social injustice in YOTs.

Almost three-quarters of the survey panel agreed "*Teams that are upfront about celebrating difference do not experience tensions in pay and conditions*" (D65), none disagreed. The underpinning argument of this view is that the career route taken by individual professionals before joining a YOT is likely to be substantially different. The requirements of professional qualifications differ, as do the parameters of the tasks to be undertaken to gain experience in a specific field of expertise. A police officer for example attracts police pay and conditions of service by training and working as a police officer before reaching the level of skill and knowledge that might be useful in a YOT. The majority of managers supported a view that a strategy of openly celebrating the different routes staff took before they joined the team should help to minimise tensions (72% N19, D65). In contrast the

majority of practitioners were unsure if such a strategy was sufficient to address their concerns (53% N92, T60). As one respondent commented:

*there is an irony working in the criminal justice arena, striving to be 'fair and just' when working in a team which has so many different workers on different contracts where it appears that those who have the greatest share of the work and complexity of work (from Youth Justice background) have the worst contracts.*

Inequity and perceptions of social injustice among practitioners appear unavoidable in the YOT model in its present form and at the core of the problem are secondments.

### **The dilemma of secondment**

The YOT model was constructed to make optimum use of secondments from professional organisations as a method of enabling a rotation of diverse specialist skills and knowledge to be available within one team. The rationale for building YOTs in this way is compelling.

All of the managers (N19) and 71% (N91) of the practitioners consulted considered that secondments were essential to ease and accelerate access to contacts and services (D26C, T16). The *"insider"* knowledge held by secondees of the structure and organisation of their professional organisation was considered invaluable, enabling them to offer advice to colleagues on the most the appropriate contacts, decision-making routes and range of services available for young offenders in the wider public sector. There may also be longer-term benefits of secondments if the professionals seconded to YOTs continue to support and promote interprofessional and interorganisational practice when they return to their parent organisations (D27C, T17). There appeared to be little doubt that secondments had strongly contributed to the achievement of the promising signs of success reported by respondents through opening up boundaries around YOTs.

Secondments are not a new development. Professionals have been seconded to other organisations for many years, to enhance professional development, to work on specific projects and initiatives, to undertake research or to provide additional expertise and support to, for example, failing schools. Child protection teams are perhaps the closest model to YOTs in their use of



secondments, usually bringing together social workers, police officers and health professionals. There has however been little research undertaken to consider how *temporary team membership affects individuals or how this influences overall team functioning*. High profile inquiries into child protection cases tend to conclude with recommendations for increasingly detailed legislation, procedures and policies, and more rigorous training to strengthen cooperative practice between professionals (see for example the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, Department of Health 2003a, 2003b). The conditions of employment of practitioners, in stressful and demanding roles, both as individuals and as members of highly complex workgroups, tend to receive less attention.

In many ways practitioners seconded to YOTs are at the apex of the dilemma of interprofessional practice. They are perhaps the key strength of the YOT model. Secondment however aggravates inequity and generates tensions that impede the development of the interpersonal relationships on which interprofessional practice is built. The study findings suggested that many professional practitioners were considerably challenged by their experience of secondment and that secondment was generally not managed well.

### **Length of secondment**

The consensus view of managers was that secondments should be for a minimum period of three years (D67C). Secondment for less than three years may be insufficient to allow practitioners to find their place in a team, develop strong working relationships with colleagues or follow initiatives or projects through to completion. Managers were unable to agree a maximum length of a secondment contract. One manager however suggested that it might be difficult for practitioners to continue to update their specialist skills and maintain dynamic professional networks if seconded to a YOT for more than five years.

In the study sample of practitioners 43 were seconded from their professional organisation, 48 were not seconded and one respondent did not complete the question. Periods of secondment varied from one year to five years and for some practitioners the length of their secondment had not been determined. Police officers and health professionals were the most likely to have been seconded: 14:15 police officers (93%), 7:8 health professionals (88%). The majority of education

practitioners (78% N9) and just over half of the probation officers (54% N13) were also seconded to their YOT posts. Social workers were least likely to be seconded (7% N27).

*Table 15 - Length of secondment and professional background*

Professional background of secondees										
Length of Secondment	Prob.	Ed.	S.Work	Police	Health	Youth	Admin.	Careers	Missing	Total
1 year					1			1		2
2 years	1	2	1	1	1					6
3 years	1	3		5	2	1				12
5 years	4			6						10
Unspecified	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	13
Totals	7	7	2	14	7	2	1	2	1	43

Secondment contracts for 22 YOT practitioners were in the range of three to five years (51%, N43). Six secondees (19%) were contracted to a YOT for less than the minimum length of stay of three years recommended by managers. Of most concern was a finding that 13 secondees, almost a third of the sample, were unable to specify the length of their secondment.

### **Experiences of secondment**

There is strong evidence from research that social processes in workgroups support the growth and development of individuals at work and directly contribute to well being and the reduction of stress (see for example Stokes, 1994b; Sonnentag, 1996; Borrill et al., 2001). YOT practitioners are less likely to benefit from social support at work if they are unable to clarify the basis, or duration, of their team membership, and they are more likely to feel insecure and anxious. Many practitioners seconded to the YOTs that took part in the study reported feelings of isolation:

*“... isolated, patronised, like a mascot, having to invent a role without skills or guidance” (Police Officer).*

*“I am two years into a secondment. I have lost touch with my parent agency. I am worried about returning. I enjoy the work and would stay but would lose out on pay and conditions. I think with more care and liaison I need not have this tension” (Probation Officer).*

*“Personally I think it feels very lonely – I do not belong as I did before when part of a ‘nursing’ team where everyone understood one another. Professionally I think it feels disjointed – maybe because I am new – no one knows what each other should be doing and I think it will take a long time to change” (Health Professional).*

*“Less pay than colleagues, loss of identity, loss of direction” (Education Worker).*

Almost three-quarters of the managers and well over half of the full sample of practitioners agreed that seconded staff can become isolated from their parent agency, particularly if they are the only representative of member of their professional organisation in the team (65% N92, T61). More than three-quarters of seconded practitioners indicated concern about isolation (79% N43, and see *Table 16* below).

*Table 16 - Secondee concern about isolation*

T61 Seconded staff can become isolated from their parent agency particularly if they are the only seconded member from that agency.				
Length of Secondment	S/agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree*
1 year	2			
2 years	3	3		
3 years	6	2	2	2
5 years	2	6		2
Unspecified	3	7	1	2
Total	16 (37%)	18 (42%)	3 (7%)	6 (14%)

(\* No secondees strongly disagreed with the statement)

It might have been expected that the shorter the time away from professional roots the less would be the potential for isolation. However 100% (N8) of one and two year secondees indicated concern about isolation from their originating professional organisation. It is possible that there is less importance given to the maintenance of links with the parent organisation and fewer formal mechanisms put in place to support them during short secondments. Furthermore while almost half of the practitioners on secondment indicated that they missed regular social interaction with professional peers and colleagues (T62), almost half of the managers did not agree that lack of opportunity for social interaction disadvantaged secondees (D71). It may be that managers are unable to get to know some staff members as well as

they might in large teams, or they perhaps take a pragmatic view of the difficulties faced by some members balanced against the benefits of secondment for the team as a whole.

Considerable uncertainty emerged from the findings regarding the possibility that seconded team members experienced a division of loyalty between their professional organisation and a YOT: 37% of managers agreed, 16% were unsure, 47% disagreed that there was a division of loyalty (N19 D56), 23% of practitioners agreed, 40% were unsure, 24% disagreed (N92 T38). There was little difference in response between the cohort of seconded practitioners and those on permanent contracts on this issue, suggesting that the strength of allegiance to professional organisational culture may vary between individuals. Seconded practitioners however held stronger views than their non-seconded colleagues, and managers, regarding uncertainty about accountability: 100% of practitioners on one year secondment contracts, 50% of those on two year contracts, and 46% of with an unspecified length of secondment agreed they were uncertain to whom they were accountable (D90, T68). Confusion about loyalty and uncertainty about accountability appeared to depend on how clearly individual contracts and secondment arrangements were organised and managed, rather than uncertainty about the role a secondee was expected to undertake in a YOT: 63% (N43) of secondees considered that their role in the YOT was clearly defined (T37).

Feelings of isolation and uncertainty experienced by some practitioners also influenced perceptions of belonging to a team. Practitioners were asked to respond to the statement: *"I sometimes feel marginalised within this team"* (T55). More than a quarter of all practitioner respondents (N92) reported feelings of marginalisation in their YOT. However almost twice as many of these were seconded practitioners (38% N43) compared to practitioners not seconded (20% N48). The same distribution of response was received to the statement: *"There was a greater sense of team unity in previous generic teams I have worked in"* (T54). Furthermore, of the minority of YOT practitioners (14% N92) who indicated they were not happy in their work 20% were secondees compared to only 8% of those not seconded (T50).

The negative experience of many of the professional practitioners seconded to the YOTs that took part in the study was worrying. The contribution of their

specialist skills, the currency of their contacts and their knowledge of partner organisations and services are the foundations on which the YOT model was built. The study findings however suggested that many of the difficulties faced by these key team members were capable of being alleviated if the management and support of secondment was improved.

### **Supporting staff on secondment**

Professional supervision in human services is a multi-faceted mechanism. While dominated by the necessity of ensuring compliance and the completion of tasks, supervision has a central role in supporting the professional development of practitioners in stressful and demanding roles (Payne and Scott, 1982). All of the managers agreed that regular and appropriate supervision was essential for ensuring that YOTs were effective (D92C). Effective professional supervision in YOTs should be capable of helping practitioners, particularly those on secondment, to deal with some of the additional stresses of their role in a large and complex interprofessional team environment.

Effective supervision is built upon a developed relationship between the managing supervisor and the supervisee (Payne and Scott, 1982). YOT managers agreed that the management of diverse professional groups required a non-partisan perspective (D39C), the majority of them did not consider it was easier to manage relationships with practitioners whose professional backgrounds were different from their own (D58). More than a quarter of all the practitioners in the study sample however considered that relationships were easier to manage with practitioners from a similar professional background (N92, T39). More than half of health professionals (N7) and almost half of police officers (N13) held this view, the majority of these on secondment. Almost half of all the practitioners consulted found supervision difficult with a manager from a different professional background than their own (44% N92 T70), a further 22% were unsure. Within professional groupings, 100% (N4) youth workers, 77% (N13) police officers, 71% (N7) health professionals, 43% (N7) of education workers, 42% (N12) of probation officers and 40% (N25) of social workers agreed that supervision could be more difficult when the supervisor is from a different professional background from the person they supervise.

Payne and Scott (1982) proposed that professional organisations, and their members, often held different perceptions about the purpose of supervision, how it should be organised, its length and frequency and the roles of supervisor and supervisee. Differences in the language of professional practice, different interpretations of the causes of youth crime and appropriate interventions are likely to become starkly evident during supervision. Careful attention to effective, regular and appropriate professional supervision in an interprofessional team is likely to be crucial. The findings however suggest that a strong case can be made for secondees to have access to additional professional supervision to assist them with their difficult role in a YOT. Over half of the full sample of practitioners considered that seconded staff should receive supervision from within their originating professional organisation as well as in a YOT (T71). All of the practitioners on one and two-year secondments (N6); 91% (N11) of those on three-year secondments; 67% (N9) on five-year secondments and 73% (N11) of those on contracts of an unspecified length, indicated they would welcome the opportunity for additional professional supervision from within their parent organisation.

A number of barriers appear to prevent secondees from benefiting from the additional support they need. The views of managers were contradictory. Although they agreed that secondees should be able to continue to attend meetings and training in their parent organisation (D78C), managers also indicated anxiety that the maintenance of strong links outside the YOT risked undermining line management arrangements within the team (D75C). It was suggested that partner organisations should maintain an interest in their staff throughout the period of secondment through the provision of a "*link manager*" whose role was to ensure that secondees did not drift from their roots in their professional organisation (D154C, D77C). Managers were concerned however that seconded staff risked being diverted from their YOT tasks to meet the aims and objectives of the parent organisation if links were too strong (D99C). It appears that partner organisations often hold different views of the work their representative should be undertaking in a YOT (D102C), which may reinforce management reluctance to promote access to external supports and may contribute to the uncertainty some secondees identified regarding their accountability.

It is a concern that, without careful management, secondees risk being held hostage to competing demands while undertaking an extremely difficult and demanding role in isolation. Managers agreed it was essential for detailed secondment arrangements, job specifications and arrangements for support to be clarified and agreed in advance of a secondee taking up a post in a YOT (D281C, D220C, D219C). The findings however suggested that YOT managers were less aware of the impact of secondment on individual team members than it could be argued they should be. Some loss of control over seconded team members might have to be accepted in return for strengthening the ability of secondees to contribute fully to a YOT with the additional support of their own professional organisation.

### **Career and professional development beyond YOT employment**

When the YOT model was designed it was anticipated that there would be a high proportion of seconded practitioners to permanent workers and this arrangement was exemplified by the YOTs represented in the study. A steady rotation of skills and knowledge might be anticipated as secondees enter and leave YOTs. All but two of the practitioners on secondment (N43) indicated that they had applied specifically to work in a YOT.

If a recruitment strategy based on secondment is to be successful it is essential that there are sufficient numbers of skilled and experienced professional practitioners willing to take on the challenge of secondment. Future applications to fill YOT vacancies are highly likely to be strongly influenced by the experience of those returning to their parent organisations. The negative experiences of secondment that were reported during the study are unlikely to encourage the colleagues of secondees to put themselves forward to replace them. Individuals are even less likely to apply to be seconded to a YOT if there is a risk that such a move might compromise their professional career. The findings suggested that some practitioners, many of these on secondment, had concerns for the future beyond their tenure in a YOT and there were again differences between the views of managers and practitioners.

The majority of YOT managers were optimistic about how the experience of managing a YOT was likely to influence their future career prospects. The consensus view was that leading a YOT widened professional skills (D204C),

enhanced professional development (D191C 100% agreement) and developed careers (D192C). None of the managers disagreed, 69% (N16) agreed, that their promotion prospects were likely to be improved through management experience gained in a YOT (D190). In stark contrast however less than a quarter of practitioners considered that their promotion prospects were improved by their experience of YOT work, almost half of the full sample was unsure (T75 N92). More than a third of social workers (40% N25) did not agree that promotion prospects were likely to be enhanced. There was a high level of uncertainty about future career prospects indicated by each professional group represented in the study sample. Probation officers indicated the greatest level of uncertainty about their promotion prospects, three-quarters of this group were unsure.

Perceptions of career enhancement might to an extent be influenced by individual aspiration. YOT managers appear more likely to progress their careers beyond operational YOT work, many promoted to posts in the ever-expanding Youth Justice Board. Each of the YOT managers in the monitoring group advanced their careers within three years of YOT formation, one of these to a senior post in the Youth Justice Board. At the time of writing only two of the YOTs that took part in the study retain the same manager. In contrast, the majority of practitioners indicated that they would prefer to stay in an interprofessional practice environment in the future and for many of these, whose skills and experience lie in the field of youth justice, employment is likely to be in a YOT. There was strong support for a view that the youth offending service needed to develop and maintain a distinct and dynamic career structure to encourage practitioners to remain in YOTs (D205C, T13). For those whose tenure in a YOT is temporary it is essential that YOT experience adds value to professional development and does not disadvantage future prospects.

### **YOTs and teamwork**

The findings cast some doubt about the capability of YOTs to function effectively as teams. The literature reviewed suggested that teams with more than 20 members become increasingly susceptible to fragmentation, inter-group rivalry and communication difficulties (Hackman 1990; Katzenbach and Smith, 1994, West, 1994). Only seven members of the survey panel (37% N19) managed teams of a



size that the literature suggests is capable of supporting effective teamwork, 10 YOTs contained more than 20 members, three of these included up to 90 members (see *Table 5*, p.140). The findings suggested that the size and complexity of YOTs was a source of anxiety for practitioners. Three-quarters of managers agreed that some YOTs might be too big for one person to manage (D86 N16).

Many practitioners were uncertain when asked to indicate how many team colleagues they had. Estimations ranged from 9 to 40 members, even from practitioners belonging to the same YOT. It might be difficult to identify the parameters of a work structure as complex as a YOT or the place of individual members within it. Some practitioners however considered their “team” to be a sub-group within a large YOT: *“I feel I am part of the mentoring scheme not the youth offending team”*. It can be argued that, at a most basic level, YOT members need to be able to identify who their team colleagues are and understand what constitutes the boundaries of their team if they are to fully contribute to it, and benefit from team membership. Feelings of isolation and marginalisation are likely to be exacerbated if practitioners perceive themselves lost within a complex workgroup structure. Managers are less likely to identify, or be able to address, the problems encountered by their staff if the scope of their management task is untenable. It appears highly likely that the size of the some of the YOTs in the study and practitioner uncertainty about team characteristics exacerbated the communication difficulties reported by respondents.

All of the managers and almost all of the practitioners consulted supported the view that: *“The development of a new practice culture needs to be nurtured and worked at over time”* (D224C, T22). As one manager observed: *“it is not like turning on a light switch”*. Building a team identity does not however appear to have been an easy task for YOTs. Almost half of the practitioners consulted, particularly the practitioners on secondment, agreed that the internal group dynamics were more difficult to handle in YOTs than in previous teams they had work in (T21). All of the managers and a large majority of practitioners considered the achievement of effective teamwork in YOTs required careful attention and opportunities for team building were essential (D203C, T57). It was also asserted however that teambuilding was more of a challenge for an interprofessional team and training had to take place on a regular basis (D199C).

Practitioners were asked how many teambuilding training days they had attended. Responses ranged from “*none*” to “*too many to count*” (T57). Some YOTs appeared to undertake very little team training; responses ranging from “*none*” to “*one day*”, while others were offered team training on a regular basis. In one YOT for example practitioners claimed to have attended seven teambuilding training days. Further investigation would however have to be undertaken to clarify how teambuilding was defined and what the training involved in order to determine how seriously training for teamwork was taken in a larger sample of YOTs. It was interesting to note that while managers considered they needed additional training to equip them to lead an interprofessional team, the majority indicated that their training was largely limited to a two-day course offered by the Youth Justice Board.

In spite of the challenges reported during the study there was strong support from managers that a YOT was significantly greater than the sum of its parts (D223C). It is perhaps unsurprising that YOT managers largely subscribed to the myth of teams and were optimistic about the possibility of achieving high performance teamwork. In pursuit of this goal managers sought strong team members that were “*motivated*” (D163C), “*energetic*” (D165C), “*free thinking*” (D166C), with a “*can do*” attitude (D201C) and “*an openness to learning*” (D202C). Almost all of the managers and three-quarters of the practitioners supported the need for positive recruitment to YOTs, to ensure for example that membership was representative of culture, gender and disability in the communities they serve (D167C, T44). It can be argued however that it would be almost impossible to positively recruit team members with the range of individual attributes sought by YOTs. It appears that the teams find it difficult enough to recruit individuals with the specialist professional skills and knowledge that are needed. The task of seeking candidates who additionally have a strong integrative philosophical approach to professional team practice (Dalley, 1993), and are capable of filling essential team roles (Belbin, 1996), and are also demographically representative of the local community appears too great a challenge.

### **The changing shape of YOTs**

It is difficult to predict how the changing shape of YOTs, created by fluid boundaries and the constant movement of members, is likely to influence team

climates. The majority of managers and 40% (N92) of practitioners were uncertain if the constant change of membership generated by secondment and temporary contracts, would ultimately be a benefit or disadvantage (D82, T45). The majority of managers did not support a view that the additional pressures brought by interprofessional team practice was likely to stimulate a further high turnover of staff. In contrast more than half of the practitioners disagreed with them, with a further third unsure (D81 N19, T65, N92). More than half the representatives of one large YOT (N20) for example considered that the additional pressures of interprofessional teamwork had already generated a high turnover of staff in their team.

YOT practitioners were asked which organisation held most power in their teams and why (T77). Responses indicated some interesting perspectives about how power in YOTs was perceived and the basis on which it was held. In spite of the intention that the teams remain outside the patronage of any one organisation the findings suggest that social services, the organisation that previously employed youth justice teams, retains the strongest influence in youth offending services. Social services was identified as the organisation with most power in YOTs by 50 practitioners, more than half of the study sample, for a wide range of reasons:

*“Because it is the background of the service manager”. (Police Officer)*

*“Most staff in the team and all of them worked in youth justice”. (Housing Officer)*

*“Because of the number of people seconded and the fact that we are seen as a branch of social services”. (Education Worker)*

*“Administration/management/culture of ‘qualified’ staff i.e. social workers still regarded as mainstream staff. Parent agencies less powerful – regarded as unqualified”. (Probation Officer)*

*“1 manager, 2 operational managers and over 60% of team are from SS (Social Services). Noticeably all money from SS. Premises too, funding initiatives, away days, working with YPs. (Young People). Identity. Its rubbish, yet I can feel safe as I’m a SW – I know the job and the others have to fit in around me. It’s a bad system”. (Social Worker)*

Power holding in YOTs was most strongly related to the strength of numbers. The professional background of the YOT manager was also a contributory factor. Although managers proposed their professional background did not affect their working relationships with staff (D58C), practitioners considered the more powerful position of managers to a great extent defined their team culture.

## **A frontline view of joined up youth justice**

It is suggested that many of the difficulties that can be encountered in workgroups are more likely to be addressed if members share a strong sense of common purpose (Hogg and Abrams, 1998). Managers considered that the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* had provided everyone involved in youth offending with a clearly defined purpose and almost three-quarters of practitioners identified a common sense of purpose in their teams (D5C, T49). Half of the practitioners and almost all of the managers agreed that the desire to succeed in achieving their common purpose tended to overcome the problems they were facing (D94C, T51).

It is of particular note however that, although managers agreed it essential that interprofessional teams were formed with a clear underpinning philosophy (D93C), the inquiry did not illuminate what youth justice professionals thought about the philosophy of youth justice that underpin the reforms. It may be that the inquiry did not offer sufficient scope for practitioners to explore the philosophical and moral foundations of the new youth justice system. Alternatively, at this early stage in YOT development, the main focus of attention may have understandably been towards implementing a formidable change agenda in a short period of time, and making it work. The majority of respondents appeared to consider that the Government's overall vision for joined up youth justice was more of an aspiration than a reality. While the consensus view of the managers, and just over half of the practitioners, was that the YOT model demonstrated joined up thinking (D13C, T3), less than half of practitioners and managers supported a view that youth offending services were effectively joined up nationally (D6, T1). Managers were concerned that the Government had largely failed to understand the complexity of the task that had been presented to YOTs (D19C).

Many aspects of the new youth justice system evolved from joined up initiatives developed during the 1980s. Early models of integrated practice in youth justice aimed to forge links between the constituent parts of the public services and to emphasise the interdependence of these to achieve common goals (see for example Northamptonshire Diversion Unit, 1998). Almost all of the managers and the majority of YOT practitioners considered that the YOT model had broadened their understanding of interdependency within the wider public sector (D21C, T5).

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* intended that responsibility for addressing community safety and crime prevention, and for developing a coherent approach to the many facets of youth crime should extend beyond the confines of a YOT to a broad corporate body, a strategy that YOT managers welcomed (D16C, D9C, D12C). All but one of the managers however considered that partner organisations were not equally committed to interdependency, often failing to recognise the wide remit of the new youth justice agenda as relevant to their core business (D171C). It was of concern to managers that YOTs might still in effect be left to shoulder most of the responsibility for the reduction of youth crime (D104C) and were largely left to “*fight their own battles*” in the absence of the patronage of any one organisation. (D89C).

The view of managers was that the principle of joining up was generally understood but was not regularly put into operation beyond the practice of the teams (D186C). A comment offered by one practitioner appeared to encapsulate the view from the frontline of practice: “*there may be joined up thinking at team level but I am not convinced that the head of the partnership agencies are any more committed than before*”. The muddled language of joining up does little to help those involved with the new youth offending service to understand what is required of them. Managers proposed that active partnership was a different concept than commissioning: the purchasing of services between one organisation and another through formal contracts, which appeared to be the extent of many partnerships in the public sector (D214C). It is suggested that successful partnerships are built on recognition of the additional benefits that might accrue in return for the extra effort and resources required from partners (Moss Kanter, 1994; Loxley, 1997; Leathard, 2003). The findings suggest that some of the organisations may be unwilling participants in youth offending partnerships from which they perceive limited return.

The pressure on all partners for improved performance severely tests joined up effort. In the absence of performance targets that join up nationally public service organisations often have to choose between supporting youth offending services or meeting their own performance objectives. Managers were concerned that joined up youth justice might only be realised if YOTs were able to assist partner organisations to meet their own performance targets, and crucially could evidence to partners that YOTs were both effective and value for money (D108C, D115C).

Although 50% of managers agreed, 38% were unsure if the YOT model was cost effective (D141, N16). Just over a third of managers (38% N16) assessed the model as time efficient while 50% were unsure (D139).

The difficulties YOTs have encountered with local partnerships led managers to propose that the only way to ensure participation might be through further enforced legislation (D7C, D8C). The difficulty with this approach however is that the concepts of “*cooperation*” and “*coordination*” would then become subsumed by “*coercion*” and the central tenets of joined up government, those of “*participation*” and “*interdependency*” would be largely lost. The interorganisational environment intended to support YOTs appeared to be as complex and fraught with tension as the internal climate of the teams themselves.

### **A frontline view of interorganisational practice**

Slow and “*over bureaucratic*” local government processes and disputes about funding contributions emerged from the findings as key barriers to the development of effective interorganisational practice (D173C, D176C). YOT managers, who considered themselves to be pioneers of a new and exciting way of working, were frustrated by what they claimed was “*conservatism*”, described by one manager as a tendency to consider: “*that’s how we do things around here*” (D175C). The development of interorganisational practice, at least in the initial planning stages, relies as heavily on the skills and commitment of individuals as it does at practice level. Managers considered that some of their senior colleagues in partner organisations tended towards a defeatist attitude to the challenges of joined up youth justice, and were reluctant to take risks in an overtly blame orientated public sector culture (D172C, D170C, D174C).

YOT managers considered it essential that the ground was prepared well in advance of any initiative involving multiple organisations to ensure that cross boundary protocols and written guidelines were prepared to clarify the basis on which relationships could be built, and sustained (D155C, D158C, D160C, D222C). The majority of managers agreed that the launch of YOTs could be held “*as a reference classic*” about how new initiatives should, as well as should not, be organised. They hoped that lessons might be learned from the YOT experience to smooth the way for other teams set up in similar ways in the future (D211C, D227).

Managers emphasised the importance of partners sharing a belief in, and a commitment to, the concept of joining up (D151C). Strong support was needed from the most senior managers in partner organisations to take the role of “*champion*” to drive change (D93C, D147C) and from key individuals in functions such as human resources, finance, health and safety, and legal services that “*owned*” the joined up agenda (D149C).

The findings suggested that too much management time was spent negotiating budgets with organisations holding disparate agendas (D178). The consensus view was that “*fighting for*” funding was a “*continuing nightmare*” for small YOTS (D98C), although one manager observed that funding battles were a nightmare for all YOTs whatever their size. To function effectively it was proposed that YOTs should have access to a pooled budget, constructed from agreed proportional contributions to the full cost of the operation of the YOT from each partner organisation (D161C). YOT managers, perhaps unsurprisingly, sought sole control of a delegated budget, which was not “*dipped into*” when partners had to find savings to fulfil other obligations (D150, D120C). Within a partnership it might be unrealistic for any one partner to have preferential access to funding. However it was the experience of YOT managers that without a pooled budget YOTs were in the position of having to constantly renegotiate objectives and priorities with multiple partners (D199C), which was a time-consuming and frustrating task.

Moss Kanter (1994) proposed that business managers often devoted so much of their time to managing the financial aspects of collaborative projects that they were unable to manage the human aspects of them. The task of ensuring the financial security of YOTs in their isolated and highly dependent territory in the public sector appears to present a considerable challenge for YOT managers, which may contribute to their lack of insight into the problems encountered by some key members of their teams. It is however a central task of local authority steering groups to find solutions to the problems of joining up policy, strategic planning and funding that the findings suggested severely exercised YOTs and impeded development.

## Local authority steering groups and YOTs

Local steering groups are pivotal to the survival of YOTs. It is difficult to imagine how YOT managers could otherwise access the most senior levels of large, powerful and diverse public service organisations such as the Police, Probation and Health Authorities, or the disparate branches of local authority administration such as social services, housing or education (D110C). The findings however suggest that access does not guarantee commitment or the provision of services and support. Some of the barriers to the development of a dynamic joined up, interorganisational response to youth offending, identified by managers during the study appeared to emanate from a lack of support from poorly constituted steering groups.

The model proposed for steering groups in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was one chaired by a local authority chief executive and comprised of the chief officers of all of the organisations required to form youth offending partnerships. The consensus view of managers was that it was essential for steering groups to involve and retain managers with sufficient seniority and power to make strategic decisions and to commit resources to a YOT (D105C, D156C). However 68% (N19) of the managers proposed that such senior representation was not provided to their steering groups (D187). The experience of the researcher while the independent chair of a local authority steering group was that strategic planning was almost impossible when partner organisation representatives had insufficient authority to make decisions, commit resources or have power of influence in their organisation. The decision-making and planning mechanisms of large public service organisations are neither synchronised nor swift when collective agreement must to be sought to support new initiatives or fulfil newly introduced statutory obligations with demanding timescales for implementation.

The findings suggested that the effectiveness of steering groups was limited and varied in different locations depending on how they were constituted and led. Less than a fifth of practitioner respondents considered their YOTs maintained an active relationship with their local steering group (T10). Managers had little positive to say about them. It is possible that some steering groups do not play the pivotal role in supporting YOTs that was envisaged and unfortunately YOT managers have limited power to influence the interorganisational response at chief officer level.



## **The Youth Justice Board and YOTs**

It is a daunting undertaking to seek to join up the organisational systems and policy streams of the public sector in the United Kingdom. In recognition of this the Youth Justice Board was formed to function at the cusp of joined up government, policy and practice with a major role in seeking to join up youth justice based on the principles of new public managerialism. YOT managers considered one of the Board's key functions was to define the Government's vision for youth justice (D18C). In contrast less than a third of practitioners considered the Youth Justice Board provided vision and coordination to join up youth justice, almost half of the sample (N92) was unsure how the Board contributed to the work of YOTs (T11).

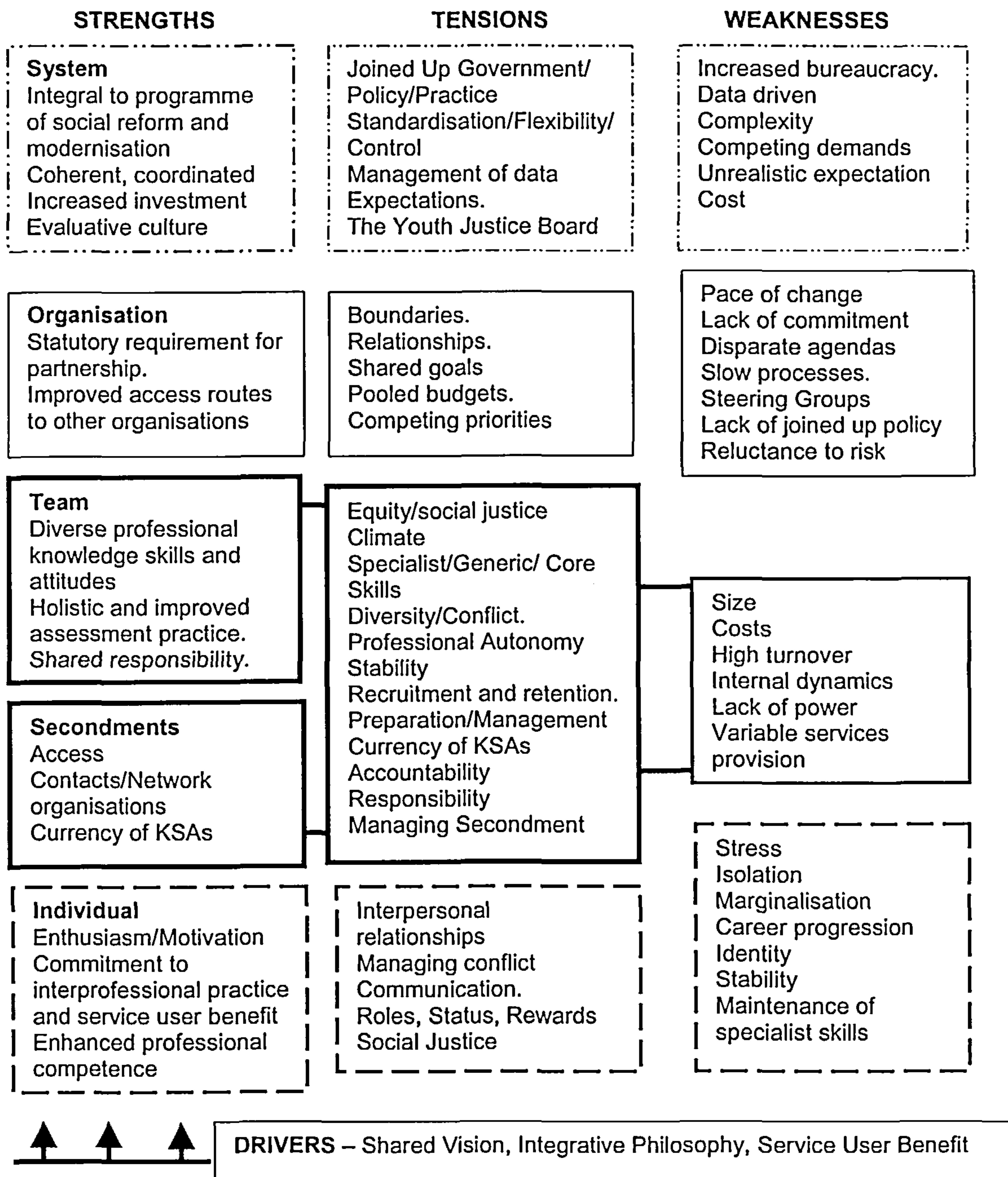
There was little from the findings that suggested the Youth Justice Board held any particular relevance for many practitioners. Even though the Youth Justice Board website offers a national resource bank of information for the public, practitioners and managers about the new youth justice system, almost half of the practitioners indicated through the questionnaire that they had not accessed the site. Managers only referred to the Youth Justice Board during the survey in relation to the provision of short-term development funds and the monitoring of performance. It may be that the Youth Justice Board has been less successful in including YOT personnel in the joined up initiative than it has been in promoting the new youth justice agenda to a wider audience.

## **Chapter summary**

A rich and candid picture of YOTs, and of effort to build a joined up response to youth offending, was developed through analysis of the survey and questionnaire data that might have been difficult to develop from the burgeoning volumes of reports about performance, polemic accounts of the state of youth justice in England and Wales from the academic community, or the glossy publications of the Youth Justice Board. YOTs present an interesting conundrum. Great strengths are balanced against significant weaknesses and daily practice, for both managers and practitioners, appears to be dominated by the tensions that result. There appeared little doubt that the majority of study respondents actively supported the YOT model, even though many suspected that the joined up youth justice initiative could simply be part of a "*great social experiment*". They were however cognisant of how

daunting the task was to join up frontline practice largely in the absence of joined up government and policy, and against the resistance of some large and powerful organisations. The strengths, weaknesses and tensions of YOTs and the forces that drive joined up youth justice from the frontline of practice are summarised in *Figure 13* below.

*Figure 13 - Strengths, weaknesses and tensions of YOTs*



The enthusiasm of managers and practitioners for the vision of joined up youth justice outlined in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was palpable during the study. Respondents celebrated the opportunities that were available to YOTs that had been denied youth offending services in the past. Managers considered that the YOT model was “*the right way*” and crucially was an organisational model with the potential to reduce offending by children and young people. Joined up professional practice appeared to have accrued primarily from the opportunity to work closely with, and get to know, other professionals who shared a vision of making a difference to the lives of young offenders, and who crucially held specific roles dedicated to that common goal. The development of interprofessional practice did not appear to have presented the teams with the difficulties that might have been expected. The majority of respondents welcomed the expansion of skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives that diversity and difference had brought to their work. Diversity and difference however, a defining feature of YOT membership, had created interpersonal relationship conflicts that might be difficult, but not impossible, to manage.

Secondments aggravate feelings of social injustice, which has implications for the experience of secondees within a team, and the internal team climate. Paradoxically secondments are essential to opening up the boundaries around YOTs and improving access to other services. The YOT model risks the loss of what can be argued is its key strength if it moves away from utilising seconded posts but there may be limits to how successfully interprofessional teamwork can develop if the secondment strategy remains poorly organised and managed.

Practitioner effort, commitment and motivation are central to the success or failure of joined up youth justice. A full exploration of their views and experience should be central to analyses of the organisation and administration of the system, the impact of reform on service users and the development of interprofessional team practice in the future. The findings suggested there are weaknesses in the YOT model that have yet to be addressed if the promising signs of success reported are to be optimised. There are limitations, and infinite variations, in the capability of individuals, limitations to what combined effort can achieve, and crucially, limitations to what YOTs might be capable of achieving in the absence of joined up, dedicated support from partner organisations, local steering groups and the Youth Justice

Board. YOTs may be pursuing, with commendable energy, an ideal that is more of a political aspiration than realistic possibility.

It is unlikely that the full extent of the difficulties created by the YOT model, and its impact on individual professionals, had fully surfaced when the fieldwork was undertaken. An unshakeable belief in the potential of teamwork as the solution to inherently difficult organisational problems is implicit in how YOTs have been operationalised and how they are perceived, both internally and externally. The structure, organisation and management of the model itself exacerbated the majority of the difficulties encountered by the YOTs that took part in the study.

It is also unlikely that the implications for young service users, of the reforms introduced by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, were fully appreciated during the inquiry. The first few years following the 1998 Act were a time of cautious optimism, which may have been misplaced. While research may not have fully explored the power of shared vision in stimulating changes to professional practice, further work is also needed to explore with youth justice professionals how they understand youth justice policy and how much they support, or challenge, the changes brought about by the New Labour Government. If YOTs are enabled to build on their strengths they may have the opportunity to demonstrate that teams of professionals are capable of managing the formidable tensions identified during the study in pursuit of benefit for service users. A central task for government is to ensure that children and young people in England and Wales are benefited by youth justice reform, and that frontline staff are included as valuable stakeholders in the change agenda.

## Chapter Ten

### The YOT Conundrum

#### Introduction

This thesis has explored the structure, organisation and function of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the new youth justice system that they serve. From the wide range of literature reviewed, and the narrative developed from the frontline practice perspective of YOTs from more than 100 managers and practitioners, a complex picture has developed of teams beset by tensions at every level of their work. Tensions surround the moral principles that shape the new youth justice system, the language that describes it, the practice methods adopted for the delivery of youth offending services and the way these are organised. Youth Offending Teams present a very interesting conundrum.

The final thesis chapter considers what has enabled YOTs to thrive when the weight of literature reviewed for this thesis suggested success was unlikely. The influences that might shape the YOT model, and interprofessional teamwork in the future are discussed. Chapter Ten begins by bringing together the findings from the fieldwork research and the literature review to illustrate the competing pressures that are brought to bear on YOTs, resulting in tensions that coalesce around professional practitioners and managers in their daily practice. Paradoxically, in spite of the tensions, YOTs have successfully met many of the high expectations placed upon them by government. Study respondents were remarkably enthusiastic about the potential of the new service to make a difference to the lives of young offenders. It will be strongly argued that it has been the strength of practitioner commitment to joined up youth justice and its potential to benefit service users that is the defining feature of YOT success so far.

The main socio-political influences that stand in the way of further development of the YOT model are multifaceted. The amorphous political context of the work of YOTs, which has stimulated radical, but often confusing and competing policy strategies, is central to understanding why so much of the concept of a multi-agency youth offending team can be difficult to define. Each descriptive element of a

YOT: multi-agency, youth offending and team, has entrenched political and social dimensions that create something of a 'smoke and mirror' effect. A distorted image is created of what YOTs should be and do, which differs in many aspects from actuality.

The chapter reviews the reasons why the youth justice system was restructured and examines how the changes have impacted on the minority of young people whose persistent and serious offending behaviour prompted the majority of the reforms launched by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. Published evidence of effective prevention of youth crime is reviewed and compared to the approach taken by the Audit Commission and the Youth Justice Board towards the assessment and presentation of evidence of effectiveness.

The final part of the chapter focuses on three key questions that it will be argued have yet to be addressed if the policy intentions of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* are to be realised. It is unclear if the policy intention to bring together the skills, experience and knowledge of different professionals and organisations to seek joined up solutions to the joined up problem of youth offending has been sufficiently elaborated to support the further development of interprofessional team practice. Interprofessional team practice was strongly embraced by the YOTs that took part in the study. The potential of the approach however risks being wasted in favour of recruiting a generic transprofessional workforce capable of providing a standardised, more flexible, and perhaps cheaper, service.

The role and purpose of YOTs has grown increasingly indistinct since they were formed. The teams sit at the cusp of the two radically redirected policy agendas of social welfare and criminal justice and have increasingly been refocused to encompass breath at the expense of a focused response to serious and persistent offenders who are their primary service users. Furthermore it is a concern that association with the criminal justice system, through YOTs, may act to separate increasing numbers of children and young people from the rights to care and protection afforded the included majority of the under-18 population of England and Wales.

A final question concerns the organisational structure of the teams. It will be proposed that YOTs might be in a stronger position to address the uncertainties that

surround their practice and role if they were enabled to occupy a more autonomous and prominent place in the public services arena. The chapter and the thesis concludes with an illustration of how a dynamic interprofessional youth offending service might be enabled to focus on reducing youth crime if they functioned as small organisations within a public sector shaped by tangible and interconnected joined up government, policy and practice.

### **Understanding joined up youth justice**

Uncertainty about the language of joined up government, policy and practice demonstrates how difficult it is to transform headline statements into policies that are capable of being implemented in an organisational system as complex as the public sector, and as emotive as the field of youth justice. The use and understanding of the language of joined up youth justice was explored in Chapter Four.

The broad aim of joining up government, policy and practice is to achieve joint aims through the integration of effort, resources and skills. The language of joining up is that of cooperation, coordination, partnership and integration and is synonymous with the notion of increasing social capital. Effort to increase social capital tends to focus on the development of mutual respect and trusting relationships that enable people to collectively pursue shared goals more effectively than might otherwise be possible (Szreter, 1998). A defining feature of cooperation and partnership, both from the perspective of increasing social capital and of joining up is that relationships are people-centred and are not coerced (Mohrman et al., 1995; Szreter 1998).

In stark contrast, the language of new public management in the *third way* tends to be that of compulsion. The broad aim of managerialism is to minimise the unpredictability of human relationships on the delivery of public services. Layers of sophisticated systems of central control and standardisation have been implemented to improve the quality of public services, reduce geographic variations and retain a tight control of public spending. However, while nationally set performance targets focus effort on the achievement of specific policy goals, they also promote an insidious culture of competition and rivalry amongst organisations in competition for resources and status. Managerialism to the extent it has been developed by the present government works directly against the development of the interdependent

and trusting cooperative relationships that generate dynamic partnerships and enable joining up.

Organisations, teams and practitioners involved in the new youth justice system are required to be flexible, cooperative, creative and integrative, which are essentially human-centred activities. Conversely they are pressured to conform to the demands of numerous bureaucratic systems of central control, which seek to impose a standardised and measurable response to the complex life problems experienced by service users.

### **Competing pressures: resulting tensions**

Chapter Two outlined the structure and organisation of the new youth justice system and the place, and function, of YOTs within it. The territory inhabited by YOTs is unique. It is heavily dependent upon, and is shaped by, the strength of relationships the teams are able to build with a range of other organisations: most of which are public agencies in a state of perpetual fluctuation in response to changing national and local socio-political demands (see *Figure 4*, p.13). The policy intention of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was to include victims; children, young people and their families, private and voluntary organisations in the joined up approach to youth offending, an aspiration that appears difficult to realise within the current model. Many of stakeholder groups risk being squeezed out of the boundary relationships of YOTs by the demands of other larger and more powerful bodies. YOTs are highly vulnerable to external influences and are in the unenviable position of having neither direct organisational patronage nor the autonomy to determine their own functioning. The maintenance of such an inherently complex working environment presents a formidable challenge for YOT management, and local partnerships, that has been seriously underestimated by policy makers.

Chapter Six of the thesis considered the working environment and internal processes of YOTs in more detail. The literature reviewed for this chapter suggested a wide range of influences that were likely to impact upon the potential of YOTs to be effective teams. The fieldwork research found that all of the YOTs that took part in the study were considerably challenged by almost all of them, which were illustrated in *Figure 10* (p. 110).



The processes of effective teamwork proposed by Tannenbaum et al. (1996): coordination, communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, boundary crossing and interdependency, are also the processes of effective interprofessional team practice. Each of these processes was impeded in various ways in the YOTs that took part in the study by the organisation and management of the model. The diversity of team member characteristics generated challenging group dynamics that were difficult to manage on both a group and individual basis. Task characteristics accrued different levels of status and reward and these were distributed in different ways in different teams. The structure of work was a concern for many of the practitioners, contributing to communication difficulties, professional identity confusion and a challenge for leadership. Secondments appeared to be poorly managed, generating uncertainty and isolation for some key team members and further divisions within the teams. Training is unlikely to be a sufficient single intervention to soften the impact of the wide range of administrative and weaknesses of YOTs that were identified through the fieldwork. Neither team nor individual training is likely to significantly alter the individual philosophies of YOT members, who may not be suited to joined up practices or teamwork.

The interrelationship of input, process and output factors and the defining influence of the working environment appeared to have been largely overlooked when YOTs were created. A widespread belief in the potential of teams as superorganisms, capable of solving highly complex multi-layered organisational problems, continues to be strong. One of the dangers of subscribing too enthusiastically to the myth of teams however is that blame for poor performance tends to be deflected away from power holders towards frontline workers who have little influence over the organisation, management and support of YOTs.

The magnitude of organisational change that is required to invest in teamwork is daunting and there is reluctance to attend to research which attempts to re-establish concern for providing groups of workers with the conditions that might enable them to maximise their potential. Single autonomous organisations rarely meet the challenge of adopting the principles of organisational learning that might enable strong, effective teamwork. There is little from existing research literature to suggest that multiple organisations in concord are capable of supporting joined up teamwork in YOTs. Public sector organisations, under intense public pressure to

find new ways of meeting the increasing demands placed upon them, are possibly the most in need of dynamic and effective team performance but the least capable of supporting teams and teambased organisational approaches. YOTs do not appear to be placed in a position in the public sector that is capable of supporting teamwork to the extent that was desired by the constitution of the model.

The strengths, weaknesses and tensions of YOTs that were identified through the fieldwork were discussed in Chapter Nine and illustrated in *Figure 13* (p.194). It was proposed that the main driver of YOT success from the frontline of practice was the fervent vision of the potential benefits of joined up youth justice that is shared by practitioners and managers. The pressure on YOTs from multiple organisational and situational characteristics is however potentially overwhelming. Tensions are further intensified by key policy concepts that can be ambiguous, difficult to implement and are often in direct competition with one another. It can be argued that the overarching policy imperatives of joined up government, new public management and social exclusion add a pervasive layer of influence additional to that experienced by most teams, impacting upon YOTs and all of the members of local youth offending partnerships in many powerful ways. The influence of New Labour's big ideas may have the greatest potential to affect the effectiveness of the YOT model because of their interrelated influence over almost every aspect of the teams' potential to be effective.

### **YOTs cast adrift in the *third way***

Chapter Three outlined the political context of the new youth justice system and developed the proposition that the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was a showcase for the New Labour Government's key themes and policy goals, in many ways epitomising *third way* reform. It can be argued that the *third way* has largely created the dichotomy between joined up government and managerialism, and between crime and social exclusion, that generate many of the tensions in YOTs.

In many ways the New Labour Government and its bewildering mixture of policy positions presents as much of a conundrum as YOTs. The *third way* is often characterised as being beyond the influence of left or right wing political ideology (Driver and Martell, 1998; Szreter, 1998; Lavalette and Mooney, 1999). It is unclear however if the *third way* is an emerging political ideology in its own right or a strategy

of governing through pragmatic realism, rejecting both ideology and philosophy in favour of valuing only managerial approaches that appear to work. There appears a reluctance to elaborate either position and in the absence of debate or elaboration it becomes a central weakness of the new youth justice agenda that what counts, or what works, is subject to shifting interpretation by stakeholder groups.

*Third way* managerialism is not value-free and it is highly vulnerable to manipulation by power holders. Young offenders and the socially excluded communities and families from which they often emerge are powerless minority groups. The Government, and the many unelected bodies they have appointed since 1997, choose what must be counted, the methods of counting and the value that is placed on the results. It can be argued that, in the absence of agreement on meaning and purpose, governance by pragmatic realism is as open to dispute and manipulation as approaches based on political ideology. Priorities and positions can be adjusted without the need for moral justification behind a valueless façade. The presentation of the mixture of positions represented by New Labour's *third way* requires skilful management to engage the support of the electorate. Wide sweeping policies of change tend to be reduced to prosaic banner headlines that act to obscure weak or poorly developed connections between policy aims, strategies and implementation. Simple headline statements are easier to reconfigure or reinterpret for political expedience than elaborated ideological goals or moral principles.

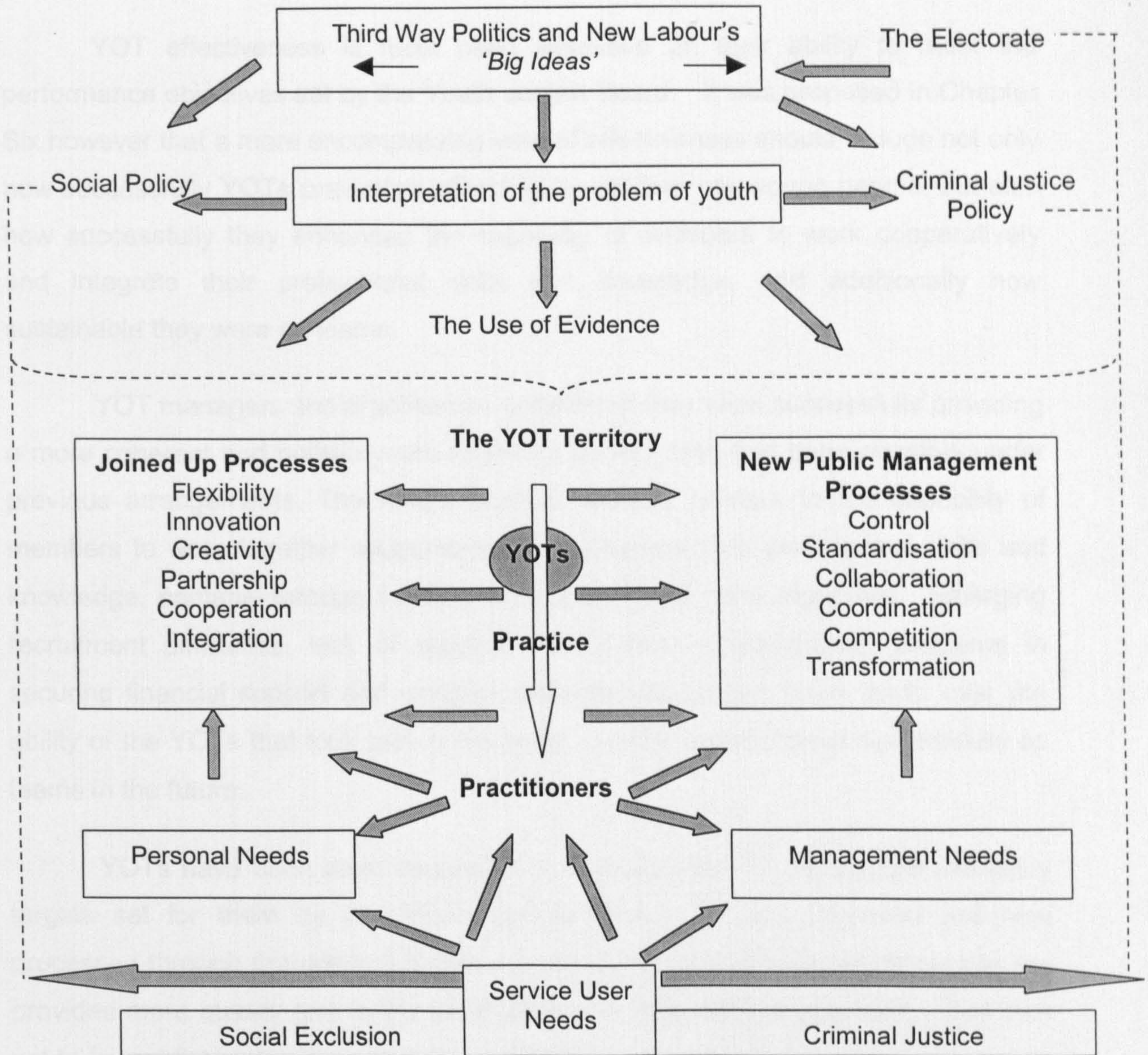
### **Competing demands**

It can be argued that the fundamental changes brought to bear on the youth justice system in the United Kingdom have been weakened by the absence of a strong ideological map to guide them. The study findings suggested that the energy, motivation and commitment of frontline staff had driven YOTs forwards in difficult circumstances.

A buoyant enthusiasm for joined up youth justice has enabled the new youth justice system to be operationalised while the big ideas that shaped the reforms are still in development at national level. YOTs have been remarkably successful in embracing concepts that were not, and are still not, clearly articulated, defined or modelled elsewhere in the public sector. YOTs may however be subject to

competing pressures beyond that which might be manageable in the longer term. Pressure to meet competing demands pervade every level of youth justice and coalesce around YOTs, professional practitioners and their daily practices, and this is illustrated in the figure below (Figure 14).

Figure 14 - Competing demands on YOTs and the youth justice system



A critical finding from the fieldwork was that respondents were confident that the problems they were experiencing would be addressed in time and that the difficulties encountered by many key members of the teams, primarily but not

exclusively those on secondment, were generally of secondary importance to the potential of benefit to service users. It can be argued that strong evidence that the reforms are benefiting service users is crucial to maintaining practitioner commitment to managing the difficult working conditions presented by the YOT model and the tensions of the new youth justice system.

### **Are YOTs effective?**

YOT effectiveness is most often assessed on their ability to meet the performance objectives set by the Youth Justice Board. It was proposed in Chapter Six however that a more encompassing view of effectiveness should include not only how successfully YOTs prevented offending by children and young people, but also how successfully they enhanced the capability of members to work cooperatively and integrate their professional skills and knowledge, and additionally how sustainable they were as teams.

YOT managers and practitioners considered they were successfully providing a more coherent and holistic youth offending service than had been possible under previous arrangements. The model however creates barriers to the capability of members to work together cooperatively and integrate their professional skills and knowledge, primarily through the way work is structured and organised. Emerging recruitment difficulties, lack of support from partner organisations, problems in securing financial support and complex team dynamics cast some doubt over the ability of the YOTs that took part in the study to sustain themselves successfully as teams in the future.

YOTs have been most successful in meeting many of the system efficiency targets set for them by the Youth Justice Board. Young offenders are now processed through the criminal justice system more efficiently and court reports are provided more quickly and to the satisfaction of magistrates for example. Work has yet to be published however that assesses if the mechanisms put in place to ensure system efficiency contributes to either effective outcomes for key stakeholders or delivers cost effectiveness. While it is extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of the multiple layers of bureaucracy put in place to control public spending and to monitor the delivery of frontline services, there is information available in the public domain about what these cost.

According to the National Audit Office (2004) the combined employment and operating costs of staffing the Youth Justice Board for the year 2003/2004 was £12,527,000. This not inconsiderable figure represented more than a quarter of the funds provided by the Youth Justice Board directly to YOTs in England and was almost half the cost of funding Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes during the same accounting period. While funding from the Youth Justice Board to YOTs is conditional on evidence of performance achievement, the costs of the Board and the National Joint YOT Inspection Team tend to be separated both from value for money judgements and from assessments of effectiveness. It is something of a paradox that the mechanisms of managerialist control appear to safely reside outside the scope of their own central processes of monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence of successful prevention of youth crime was not available when the fieldwork was undertaken and the opinion of the majority of respondents that youth offending services were improving, and were capable of continuing to improve, could not be supported. It was not clear if improvement was considered by respondents to be improved reduction and prevention of offending, or improved system functioning. Although it might be that respondents considered the two synonymous there is little to suggest that system efficiency necessarily ensures effective outcomes for service users or the prevention of crime. It is necessary to review who the users of youth offending services are before undertaking an assessment of how effective YOTs have been in contributing to the reduction of youth crime: the aim of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, rather than simply how successfully the teams meet the performance targets of the Youth Justice Board.

YOTs are charged with working with all children and young people in a locality who commit crime, are disorderly, are considered at risk of first time offending or disorder, are assessed at risk of future or further offending *as well as* working with families assessed broadly as dysfunctional and entire communities considered socially excluded, where it is predicted crime and disorder most likely to thrive. A central problem is that the profile of YOT service users is much broader than that of their Youth Justice Team predecessors and it would be impossible to assess effectiveness across such a broad spectrum. YOTs were however launched in 1998 with a considerably clearer focus for their work within the criminal justice system.

## What happened to persistent young offenders?

The report *Misspent Youth: young people and crime* (Audit Commission, 1996) was pivotal in setting out the case for a radical rethink about youth justice in England and Wales. While it is possible that the Audit Commission's assessment of the cost and seriousness of youth crime was flawed (see Jones, 2001), the report presented a compelling argument that the youth justice system in England and Wales was largely inefficient. One of the main groups targeted for intervention were the small group of 14 – 17 year old persistent and prolific offenders, unrepresentative of the majority of young people, whose behaviour appeared to have the most significant effect on the overall level of youth crime at that time. It was reported that as few as 5% of young offenders aged 14 -17 admitted to committing 68% of self-reported offences (Audit Commission, 1996, p.8, Exhibit 5).

The Government White Paper *No More Excuses – a new approach to tackling youth crime in England and Wales* (Home Office, 1997) outlined the Government's strategy for constructing a new youth justice system based on the Audit Commission's recommendations and the strategy was set in statute by *the Crime and Disorder Act* in 1998. Significantly, although the 1997 White Paper located the youth justice system as a *component* of the Government's wider plans to tackle social exclusion, the policy intention was for YOTs to reside within the criminal justice arena to bring together the experience and skills of:

*of relevant local agencies to address causes of a young person's offending – whether that may be difficulties at home or school, peer group pressure, behavioural difficulties, mental health problems or drug or alcohol misuse – and so reduce the risk of re-offending.* (Home Office, 1997, p.27)

It was persistent young offenders who were identified as imposing a disproportionately large financial burden on the public purse and were most likely to continue to present a significant financial and social burden to the country if joined up solutions to the complexity of the circumstances of their offending were not pursued (Audit Commission, 1996). The strategy devised for speeding up the time between arrest and sentence was aimed specifically at young people who were prolific and persistent in their criminal behaviour, being those most likely to continue to accrue offences while their cases were being slowly processed through the criminal justice system. The escalating tariffs of longer and more severe custodial

sentences introduced by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* were targeted at persistent offenders, as were intensive programmes of bail supervision and surveillance.

Perhaps one of the most important aims of the YOT model when it was launched was to draw on a wide range of professional skills, knowledge and experience and the resources of multiple organisations to address the multi-faceted problems encountered and presented by a small and unrepresentative group of young people in the 14-17 age range, persistent and serious in their offending behaviour, and at risk of embarking on a life of crime as adults.

### **Has prolific, serious or persistent offending been reduced through reform?**

At the time of writing the new youth justice system has been in full operation for more than five years and it might have been expected that one advantage of the strong performance monitoring culture developed through new public managerialism would be ease of access to evidence of the prevention of youth crime. Since the new youth justice system was launched however interpretations of crime and disorder, and definitions of young offenders, have gradually widened and methods of counting and recording system outputs have changed. The pace and extent of changes to sentencing can make meaningful comparisons between sets of data difficult. Stakeholder groups tend to use what data are available to support different interpretations of success or failure. A balanced assessment of the effectiveness of the reforms introduced by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* can be difficult to locate.

The Audit Commission published a detailed review of the reformed youth justice system in 2004 (Audit Commission, 2004). It was notable that a reduction in persistent or serious youth crime did not feature among the modest successes reported. The improvements brought by changes to the youth justice system included that young offenders were more likely to receive some form of intervention once caught. Early indications however suggested that programmes of intervention had led to improvements in only two out of the 13 aspects of the young offender's life recorded in the ASSET document (Audit Commission, 2004, p.14, Exhibit 5). While it was reported that the target for 80% of all Final Warnings to be accompanied by a programme of intervention had been largely achieved, research evidence strongly suggests that interventions must be tailored to the needs of the individual and the



seriousness of the offence. Too invasive an intervention can be as damaging for a young person as too little (Rutherford, 1994; Rutter et al., 1998). While there was some evidence that new disposals such as Final Warnings and Action Plan Orders had generated some small improvements against predicted reconviction rates, comparisons to older community penalties suggested that reconviction rates had not fallen. Furthermore reconviction in respect of more substantive court orders such as Attendance Centre, Community Punishment, Supervision and Community Rehabilitation Orders had increased (Audit Commission, 2004, p.29, Exhibit 18).

Most of the small signs of promise reported by the Audit Commission in 2004 involved children and young people who it can be argued should not have been subjected to contact with the criminal justice system at all. It appeared that little progress had been made to address persistent or serious offending while minor offences were taking up too much valuable court time. The criminalisation of increasing numbers of children and young people can hardly be considered a success from a social welfare perspective. The lack of impact upon serious and prolific youth crime is a failure from both criminal justice and social welfare perspectives.

### **Prevention of offending**

The YOT national joint inspection team published its first annual report in 2004. The section reproduced below is the only part of the 21 page report that concerned the outcome of prevention of offending (HMIP, 2004, p.19):

#### **Outcomes**

Although still relatively new, we found much evidence to suggest that the YOTs were developing into strong organisations and were fulfilling their role in preventing offending. Resources were being used effectively to address reoffending and the child or young person had complied with the conditions of their order or licence in the majority of cases. Action had been taken to address criminogenic needs and the initial ASSET score had reduced in over half of the cases examined. Only 26% of the cases examined had reoffended during the course of their contact with the YOT and 61% of the children and young people consulted during the inspection said they had 'definitely' stopped offending. When asked to say how the YOT had helped them 12% of the children and young people said they felt better about themselves, 24% said they felt differently about offending, 10% said they got on better with others, 14% said that their relations with their family had improved, only two of the 105 to respond did not feel they had received any help. While the inspection revealed areas where the YOTs could clearly improve, given the nature of the problems faced, and presented, by many of these children and young people, these results have to be seen as an achievement.

The focus of the HMIP report at an early stage in the development of a new service was perhaps understandably towards the celebration of achievement. The approach of the Inspection Team towards evidence-based practice, central to the new youth justice system and the work of YOTs (Holdaway et al., 2001), was however surprising. Comparative data was not offered to indicate if a 26% reoffending rate was an improvement for the cohort of young people identified. No information was offered about the seriousness of offending in which the young people had been involved, or their ages. It was left open to speculation how many of the 61% of the children and young people consulted, who claimed to have definitely stopped offending, were unlikely to have offended again having been once caught. Further work would be required to determine if an intention to stop offending was followed through. Although the inspection team noted that the initial ASSET score had reduced in over half the cases examined, it was reported earlier in the document that the completion and accuracy of the ASSET forms reviewed had been "*mediocre*" and that the conclusions reached on the ASSET form were often illogical and bore little resemblance to the circumstances of the offender (HMIP, 2004, p.9).

Evidence of effective prevention of anything other than relatively minor and fleeting youth nuisance is elusive. There is however strong evidence that fewer children and young people have been diverted from formal proceedings since the new system was inaugurated in 1998 and increasing numbers, especially those of black or mixed race, have been subjected to the harsher punishments initially intended for the most recidivist youth. The Audit Commission reported that 3000 young people were imprisoned in 2003, half as many again as in 1997 (Audit Commission, 2004). However in an interesting example of the confusion of data available, the Youth Justice Board Annual Account 2002-2003 prepared by the National Audit Office (2004) reported that 7500 young people had been held in secure accommodation during 2002-3. In three years, between March 2000 and May 2003 the number of girls imprisoned had risen by 75% (Audit Commission, 2004, p.26). The likelihood of custody for 10-14 year olds had increased, from less than 2% in 1996 to more than 6% in 2001 (Audit Commission, 2004, p.26, Exhibit 14). The proportion of young people receiving higher tariff community sentences almost doubled between 1996 and 2001 (Audit Commission 2004, p.25, Exhibit 12). Overall the available evidence suggests a bleak picture of outcomes for many

children and young people in England and Wales since the *Crime and Disorder Act* 1998.

It is doubtful if the impact of youth justice reform in England and Wales has been what was intended. The response of the Government and Youth Justice Board to the growing gulf between policy intention and practice outcome is however a concern and offers an illustration of how skilfully the public face of youth justice is now managed. Evidence that the new youth justice system, with YOTs at its core, may not be effectively achieving the aims that launched them tends to be camouflaged. It can be argued that the pragmatic realism of the *third way* is a strategy of only valuing what works to support what is politically expedient. In the absence of strong philosophical foundations, responses to youth offending are capable of being continually reshaped and redefined, with the Youth Justice Board as a conduit of misinformation.

### **The Youth Justice Board: overzealous or misleading?**

The Youth Justice Board can be worryingly overzealous in its promotion of the new youth justice system, often through the Youth Justice Board News: a monthly publication distributed free of charge to publicise the work of YOTs, the Board and the youth justice system.

The first annual report of the YOT national joint inspection team (HMIP, 2004), discussed above, offered a constructive and optimistic view of the valuable work YOTs do to contribute to wider crime prevention initiatives. There was however little to support the Youth Justice Board News (September 2004) front-page headline: "*Strong Youth Offending Teams Prevent Crime*" that introduced the inspection team's findings. In February 2004, under the headline: "*YJB provides clear national framework*" the Youth Justice Board News offered a similarly skilful and selective interpretation of the Audit Commission Report (2004) also discussed above. Although the Audit Commission proposed the new youth justice system was "*a considerable improvement on the old one*" (Audit Commission, 2004, p.1), they also reported that reconviction rates for all but the lowest tariff disposals had increased, suggesting that the new youth justice system, led by the Youth Justice Board, had largely failed to address the main aim of the *Crime and Disorder Act* 1998.

Skilful manipulation of research evidence in support of the new youth justice agenda can be considered from two opposing perspectives. One view might be that the Youth Justice Board is simply fulfilling its function to remain publicly positive while unexpected problems that have accrued from rapid and radical reform are addressed. The new youth justice system may need many years to demonstrate that it is capable of achieving the ambitious goals set out in the *Crime and Disorder Act* 1998. YOTs are involved in a plethora of new community initiatives bearing a bewildering array of acronyms such as PAYP - Positive Activities for Young People; YES - Youth Engagement Service; COSIP - Coordination of Social Inclusion Programme (all in one short article Youth Justice Board News September 2004, p.4), all of which merit celebration. In some cases the Board simply reported on data provided to them by the Home Office, which was subsequently found to be flawed. For example the Youth Justice Board News headlined the achievement of a 22.5% drop of reconviction rates among juveniles on non-custodial sentences in 2001 (Youth Justice Board News, April 2003, p.1). This figure was revised to a significantly lower 7% following a Home Office review of methodology (Youth Justice Board News, February 2005, p.1).

An alternative view of what can appear an excessive level of selectivity applied to the presentation of evidence is that there is a concerted effort by the Government and the body appointed by them to lead the youth justice system to disguise the muddle and confusion that has resulted from attempting to undertake a massive programme of reform in a conceptual vacuum. The reform of youth justice may not only have failed to put an end to the conflict and confusion that has been a feature of youth justice policy in England and Wales for decades, but may have intensified them. From this perspective there can appear to be reluctance to delve too deeply into what is going wrong and why.

Whichever assessment of motive is taken, reluctance to acknowledge weaknesses between policy intention and practice outcome creates considerable difficulties for practitioners and the organisation of work in the public sector as a whole. Perceptions of confusion or deception tend to polarise views in largely unhelpful ways, detracting attention from issues that must be addressed if bold and imaginative new ways are to be found to meet the needs of service users.

There are fundamental aspects of the YOT model and joined up youth justice that remain unresolved. The questions of YOT practice, purpose and structure will be considered in turn below.

### **The question of YOT practice**

YOTs have invested considerable effort and energy into developing as interprofessional teams. The teams that took part in the study approached the task in different ways in response to local circumstances, each however had broadly endeavoured to adhere to the model outlined in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and the guidance offered by the Youth Justice Board. Almost half of the professional practitioners were seconded to the teams from other organisations, offering new youth offending services the broad spectrum of professional perspectives sought by the 1998 Act.

Although the study findings suggested that the development of interprofessional team practice presented a range of personal and professional challenges, respondents strongly supported the concept and the majority claimed to have adapted to it without too much difficulty. Almost all respondents had specifically chosen to work in a YOT and the majority indicated that would prefer to stay in a similar interprofessional team environment in the future. Most respondents considered that working closely with colleagues from other disciplines enhanced professional competence. The diversity of skills, knowledge and experience brought to the teams, primarily but not exclusively by seconded practitioners, was greatly valued. Study respondents considered themselves to be pathfinders, in effect role modelling a new method of integrated service delivery that they hoped, and social policy appeared to suggest, was likely be extended further into the field of social welfare. It can be strongly argued that interprofessional team practice, defined as the integration of diverse professional skills, knowledge and approaches towards a common service user focused goal, is the central feature of the YOT model and has been overwhelmingly successful. On the basis of 'what works' principles it might be expected that the practice would be further developed and extended unless there were barriers to development that were found to be insurmountable.

The study findings suggested that generally strong interprofessional relationships had been formed in YOTs. The dynamics of interpersonal relationships

appeared no more unpredictable than in most workgroups although the highly diverse characteristics of team membership demand highly skilled management and careful attention. Individuals whose personal philosophy clashed with the interprofessional team ethos of YOTs appeared to recognise that they would be better suited to a different team environment and had either chosen to move on or were considering doing so. It is possible that more care taken to select candidates might be capable of minimising inappropriate recruitment to YOTs. It can be strongly argued that the main barriers to interprofessional team practice encountered in the YOTs that took part in the study were not primarily on a personal or professional level, they concerned policy and management, and they are capable of being addressed.

Secondments could be managed more effectively by partner organisations to offer a greater sense of security and stability, enable secondees to maintain their professional networks and identity, and provide the additional professional supervision that might assist them to manage isolation from their professional organisation. Status and reward inequity could be addressed by carefully managing the deployment of tasks to support and celebrate specialist skills while also promoting the value of common skills and team tasks. An alternative, and perhaps more radical, strategy to promote social justice might be to actively support team effort by rewarding all contributions to an interprofessional team equally.

Crucially however, if barriers to interprofessional team practice are to be dismantled, a clearly articulated national understanding is required about what interprofessional practice is and how it should be valued and organised. In this respect policy makers and organisations are challenged to undergo "*metanoia*", the mind shift that Senge (1990) suggested was essential to the process of learning to change and the challenge that the professional practitioners who took part in the study appeared most willing to embrace.

The strategy developed to address barriers to interprofessional practice in YOTs has however been disappointing. The central issues appear to have been circumnavigated rather than ways found to address them. An interview with a practice manager from a large county YOT was conducted on completion of the fieldwork to further explore the diversity of YOT pay and conditions of service. While

an interview with a manager of one YOT is not capable of being generalised, the approach taken in this locality towards recruitment was nevertheless interesting. Secondments were avoided wherever possible and qualified professional practitioners not always sought to fill specialist vacancies. It was not possible at that time to determine if this strategy was part of an emerging trend or if it was limited to local circumstances. A year later however an article in the Youth Justice Board News (November 2004, p. 5), reported concern from the national YOT inspection team about the increase of generic youth justice workers employed in YOTs in preference to professional secondees. It appeared that a new pattern of recruitment was developing.

By January 2005 the Youth Justice Board claimed to be responding to a “*shift in the workforce*” by developing a framework of training for the emerging new youth justice practitioner role, claiming: “*Youth Offending Teams have come a long way since their launch in 2000. YOTs were initially made up of staff seconded from various agencies ..... but now a good third of staff are uniquely youth justice staff...*” (Youth Justice Board News, January 2005, p. 6). Within the space of five years the constitution of YOTs has quietly undergone a significant change that has implications for the model and for the further development of the concept of interprofessional practice. Fundamentally a team of generic workers however enthusiastic and well trained ceases to be an interprofessional team.

The secondment of qualified and experienced professional practitioners, who bring the currency of their skills, knowledge and networks, to their teams on a time-limited basis is the cornerstone of the YOT model. The Youth Justice Board's position, that it simply responded to a changing pattern of recruitment, suggests that either it has failed to provide strong leadership for a joined up youth justice system built upon the concept of interprofessional practice, or that the concept has, like so many others, been pragmatically adapted to meet system needs.

The conundrum posed by the question of YOT practice is that from the perspective of pragmatic realism there are many advantages of moving away from the goal of interprofessional practice towards one of genericism. It is cheaper to employ youth justice workers, with lower salary scales and less favourable conditions of service, than professional specialists (see *Table 14*, p.173). Training

programmes led and sponsored by the Youth Justice Board are more likely to produce a workforce groomed specifically to practise in the new climate of standardisation and managerialism. A new transprofessional youth justice workforce is likely to be more flexible than professional groups who tend to demand a high level of autonomy and it should be possible to minimise the conflicts of position that inevitably have to be managed to successfully integrate diverse professional perspectives.

The disadvantages of abandoning the vision of dynamic joined up interprofessional practice are less easy to quantify, involving values and principles that tend to be anathematic in a climate of pragmatic realism. The basic principle of seeking joined up solutions to joined up problems is that the multi-faceted issues affecting individual service users rarely fit pre-defined packages of intervention or are capable of being addressed by single strategies. Research evidence of effectiveness is rarely directly applicable across a population and requires skilled evaluation and adaptation to specific need. Risk assessment tends to be an art rather than a science and meeting welfare need in youth justice has always been difficult to balance against punishment and protection. One of the few ways of ensuring that a nation's response to children who cause trouble is not dominated by populist politics is to retain a youth justice system where professional positions, organisational priorities and statutory duties have to be actively negotiated to build packages of intervention for one of the most complex of service user groups. It can be argued that formulaic and centrally controlled service management is less likely to provide the checks and balances needed to protect young and vulnerable members of society from the excesses of a largely directionless and punishment orientated youth justice system in England and Wales.

The trend towards genericism might also have wider implications for recruitment to the caring professions that have not been considered. Individuals seeking a career in the professions that should be strongly represented in YOTs tend to be drawn to professional organisations that represent their personal philosophies and values. Professionals often seek the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of service users from a particular personal as well as professional perspective. Individuals, who seek the new transprofessional youth justice role, although likely to be equally committed and enthusiastic about their career choice, are unlikely to



approach their generic role in the same way as the workforce that has enabled the YOT model to succeed in the first years of its operation. While it is impossible to predict how, or if, the changing dynamics of the frontline of practice will influence youth justice services or specific groups of service users, the constitution of youth justice practice will be irrevocably changed if the broad base of skilled professional knowledge and experience, initially available to YOTs, is lost.

Uncertainty about what interprofessional team practice is, and the methods through which it might be pursued, is closely related to the uncertainty that surrounds the purpose and role of YOTs. As the constitution of the teams has altered so the focus on their function appears to have become increasingly blurred.

### **The question of YOT purpose and role**

The overall aim of the new youth justice system was to reduce offending through six key objectives identified in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*: speeding up the processing of offenders; confronting offenders with the consequences of their behaviour; attending to the factors that may contribute to proclivity to offend; punishment proportionate to the seriousness of the crime; reparation; and reinforcing the responsibilities of parents. These objectives represent a mixture of criminal justice system functions and social welfare system functions, underpinning to an extent New Labour's electoral promise to be tough on crime and also tough on the causes of crime.

There is little correlation between the public's perception of risk of youth crime and the data available to inform the criminal justice system. The elevation of the behaviour of children and young people to a state of perceived crisis is largely prompted by changes in social organisation, stimulating interrelated political and cultural adaptations to how governments and citizens perceive and respond to crime (Garland, 2001; McCahill, 2002). Fear of children is further fuelled by media sensationalism and manipulated as a political gambit (Muncie, 1999; Pitts, 2003). However, while the nature of youth crime is changing as the society in which they live itself changes, as far as can be determined from national crime statistics and studies of self reported crime, the overall level of juvenile criminal activity has not risen for more than a decade (Home Office, 2001).

The fusion of social welfare and criminal justice agendas is a policy strategy that broadly acknowledges that multiple, and usually interrelated, social and psychological factors lead to the onset, persistence and desistance of offending by children and young people (Rutter et al., 1996). Although attention to both agendas in concord should contribute to preventing offending, the precise role of YOTs in achieving this aim can appear ambiguous. It is unclear from current policy positions if the primary purpose of a YOT is to *attend* to criminal justice objectives and *contribute* to social welfare objectives, or vice versa. Clarification is essential. It is highly unlikely that any team is capable of spanning two complex, demanding and sometimes competing agendas with equal competence. The central difficulty in determining YOT role and purpose is that the status of young offenders in relation to their non-offending peers is subject to shifting interpretation from different policy positions.

New Labour's social exclusion agenda appears to embrace the principles of social welfarism, integrally identifying the troubled child, the child in trouble and the child who causes trouble as inseparable. A wide range of public sector reforms and considerable financial investment have been devoted to raising the living standards and opportunities of all children and young people in the United Kingdom, aiming to ensure they are kept safe and healthy. The provisions for keeping all children safe and healthy were outlined in the Government Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (Department of Education and Skills, 2003) and enacted in the *Children Act 2004*. The policy intention appears to be for all children and young people to be equal beneficiaries of social reform. The policy intention of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was for children who cause trouble to receive additional, focused and specialist support through YOTs because of their criminal activities.

There is a paradox to consider however. The increasing numbers of children and young people who have been drawn into the criminal justice system since the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* are dealt with separately from the general provisions outlined in *Every Child Matters 2003*. Provisions for children who cause trouble were set out in a companion paper from the Home Office *Youth Justice: Next Steps* (Home Office, 2003). From this perspective the policy position appears to be that all children matter until their behaviour is a cause for concern, at which point they either

matter in a different way or they matter less. The confusion for service providers that this anomaly can generate is illustrated in the 2004 Audit Commission report on the operation of new youth justice system since it was reformed.

The Audit Commission (2004) reported on the way local authorities had experimented with various initiatives to overcome the burden of demands to join up crime reduction strategies. Best Value Reviews are a mechanism launched by government to assist local authorities to evaluate the range of services they offer in terms of value for money and impact, and to make strategic plans to improve them. After undertaking Best Value Reviews some local authorities, demonstrating effective joined up thinking, proposed a strategy of merging their YOT or YOTs with local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Drug Action Teams (DATs) to form a single crime reduction service. The response of the Audit Commission to these initiatives was however:

*while such unification provides potential economies of scale, it risks losing YOTs specific focus on youth offending and compromising their links with the new arrangements for children's services ... For the same reasons, YOTs should probably remain outside of the management structure of the new children's trusts. While integration with children's' trusts could increase the importance of youth crime performance indicators (PIs) for other agencies, this has to be balanced against the need for YOTs to retain the confidence of the courts. YOTs are currently well placed to meet their core remit of youth crime reduction and the temptation should be resisted to widen their scope of operations unduly. (Audit Commission, 2004, p.108)*

The above response is perplexing. Central to a unified and integrated response to meeting the health and welfare needs of all children, and keeping them safe, is a strategy of joining up of services for children under interorganisational children's trusts. The trusts are comprised of the same organisations required by government to work together to address social exclusion *and* to prevent offending. The national policy strategy for local children's trusts, outlined in the *Children Act* 2004, is to improve partnership working through pursuing the shared vision that all children matter, and provide a means of achieving common performance targets. The strategy however excludes YOTs, who are at the core of the joined up imperative, who have consistently encountered difficulty in engaging mainstream services for young offenders and whose local partnerships are burdened by the competing performance targets of partner organisations. The burgeoning numbers of children and young people associated with the criminal justice system through

their contact with YOTs risk marginalisation while offenders in need specialist, and crucially additional, intervention appear to face further exclusion.

It is perhaps not surprising that many organisations are difficult to engage in youth offending partnerships in the absence of policy that clearly articulates in what way young offenders matter. Little has essentially changed in how organisations perceive their responsibility towards what still remains a small minority of children and young people who commit crime. The majority of the agencies involved in youth offending partnerships held statutory responsibilities for specific groups of children and young people in need long before the new youth justice system was created. The central aim of public service organisations has always been towards reducing societal disadvantage and dysfunction, now reframed as social exclusion. These organisations are unlikely to consider young offenders any more of a priority than other young service users while their status in relation to the rest of the children who matter in England and Wales remains ambiguous, and national policy fails to join up.

In the absence of a strong case that elevates the needs of young offenders beyond that of primary organisational goals there is little to justify the diversion of resources and energies from other essential public services. Policies that separate YOT service users from the general population, in terms of their universal rights to care and protection, weakens the case that troubled children, children in trouble and children who cause trouble have common needs. YOTs can appear isolated in the public sector, unable to consolidate a strong position in either criminal justice or social welfare arenas. Crucially they are required to encompass breadth at the expense of depth, unable to focus their resources on the minority of young people who present the greatest risk to themselves, and society as a whole.

### **The question of YOT organisation**

The study findings suggest that the many of the barriers to the effective management and administration of YOTs might be capable of being addressed if they had the power to direct their own work. Many YOTs may be too large to function as effective teams and are limited by a lack of dedicated support from an overarching organisation. While the first report of the YOT national joint inspection team claimed that YOTs were developing as strong organisations (HMIP, 2004),

YOTs do not have the status, the power or the autonomy to develop as organisations in their own right as they are currently organised.

At the level of organisational functioning in the YOT territory there are many practical difficulties that were overlooked when a structural framework for the youth offending system was devised. The physical administrative geography of partner organisations varies considerably (Audit Commission, 2004). A key element of the success of the Northamptonshire Juvenile Liaison Bureaux and their senior management group was the existence of coterminous administrative boundaries (Northamptonshire Diversion Unit, 1998). In localities where partner organisations operate within the same geographic boundaries, decision-making processes are simplified. In many localities however the administrative areas of police authorities, probation services, local authorities, courts, crown prosecution service, and health trusts are not coterminous with that of a YOT, or indeed with one another. The administrative area of an organisation may span two or more YOTs, in others one YOT may be served by more than one organisation in the same sector. It can be therefore difficult to assess the basis of steering group representation. There is the risk of duplication or division of effort and additional problems created by the significantly different planning and reporting cycles to which each organisation is committed. There are numerous partnerships, boards, committees and planning bodies to which the majority of public agencies are required to contribute executive representation: Local Criminal Justice Boards; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships; Drug Action Teams; and Local Strategic Partnerships to name but a few. There must be a limit to how effective strategic planning can be if continually diluted and dispersed and not a surprise that some steering groups are not as effective as the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* intended.

### **Strengthening youth offending services**

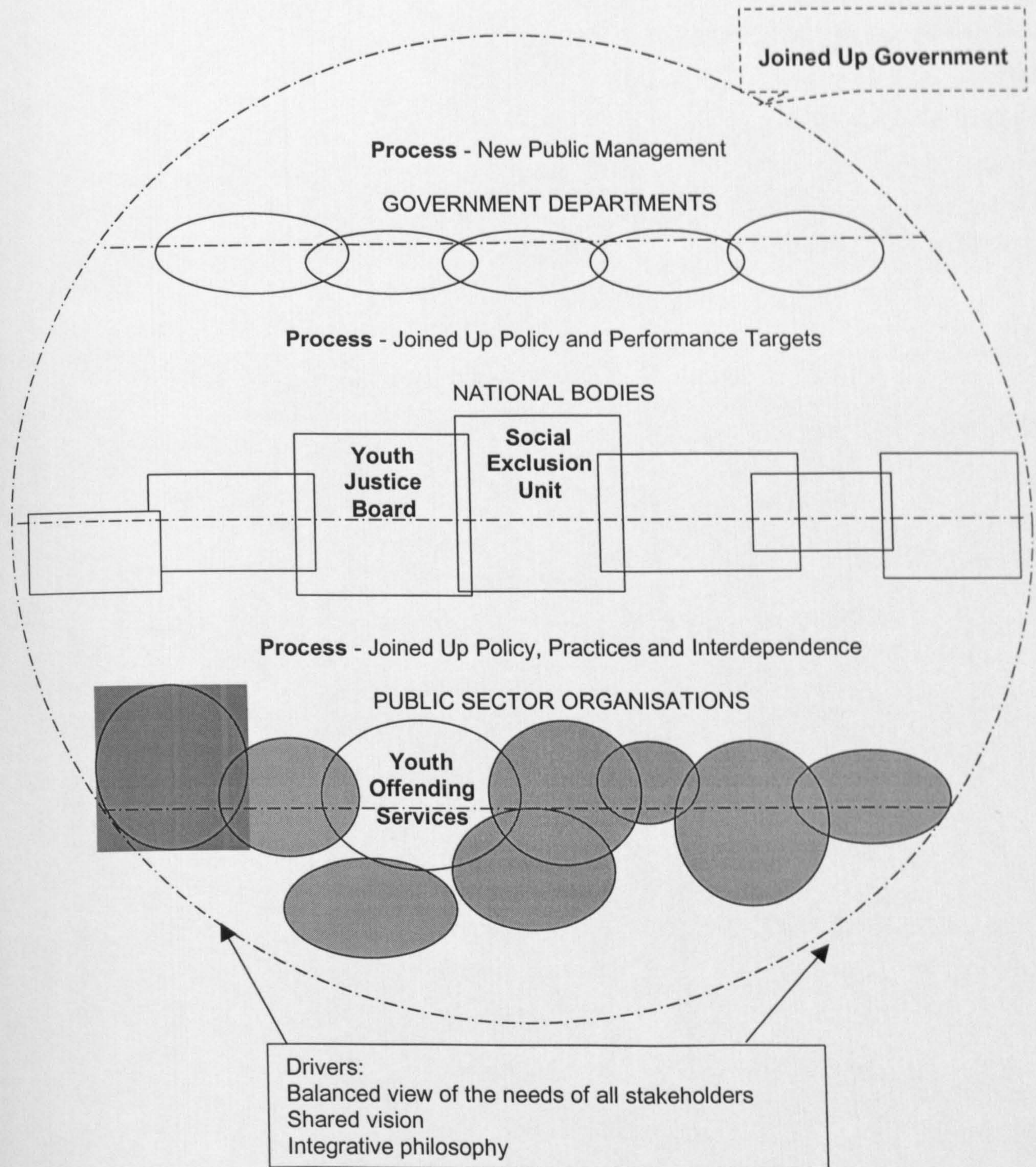
It can be argued that, if YOTs are to be enabled to develop integrated, innovative and effective ways of preventing serious youth crime *and* take active roles in a partnership approach to crime prevention *and* social exclusion, *and* fulfil their primary function as agents of the state in the criminal justice system, they need more power and autonomy than they currently enjoy.

YOTs offered the opportunity to develop, as small autonomous organisations within the public sector, are more likely to have a power base from which to negotiate with partners. A youth offending organisation would be less vulnerable to the multiple organisational and environmental pressures that strongly influence YOTs in their current form and it would be in a stronger position to raise the profile of primary service user groups. Interprofessional teamwork is more likely to be supported, and further developed, by a single learning organisation dedicated to youth offending and led by staff enthused by interprofessional practice as an effective method of seeking joined up solutions to the joined up problem of serious and persistent youth crime.

If joined up work is to be facilitated in the public sector however a substantial amount of work is required to define what levels of cooperation, collaboration and partnership are sought from organisations in the public sector and the methods by which these can be achieved. Crucially a clearly defined national framework of policy and guidance is required within which the powerful bodies appointed by government, such as the Youth Justice Board and the Social Exclusion Unit, can work effectively in concord with one another. Performance targets should promote the interdependency of separate policy themes, rather than generate competition and division. In the current climate of increased and changing demands the tasks facing public sector partnerships are sufficiently challenging without the additional burden of having to interpret the meaning of the plethora of confusing language, and indistinct policy agendas, that direct them.

A model is proposed in *Figure 15* below to illustrate how youth offending services, empowered as small autonomous learning organisations might reside within a public system where the goals of joined up government; policy and practice have been elaborated and enacted. Tangible evidence of joined up government would both encircle the public sector and dissect it at all levels. Within this model the interdependence of organisations in their efforts to meet joined up social policy goals might be strengthened and youth offending services enabled to contribute to the wider social exclusion agenda while maintaining their key role in the criminal justice system.

Figure 15 - Joined up Youth Offending Services in a joined up system



The model proposed above for a joined up youth offending service supported by a joined up system of governance assumes that management of the economy through robust systems of central control is likely to continue to be a priority for United Kingdom governments. Central to this proposal however is that governments that choose a high level of central control over how policy is presented, interpreted and implemented also hold responsibility for elaborating the moral principles that shape it. A strong shared vision of joined up youth justice in England and Wales is less sustainable without a balanced assessment of the seriousness and prevalence of crime committed by children and young people, and a way found of distinguishing responses to crime from those responding to wider societal dysfunction and deprivation.

### **Thesis conclusion**

This thesis has developed into what might appear a largely pessimistic overview of the multiple faces of joined up youth justice. The initiative launched by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, was however a major undertaking. Joining up government, policy and practice is genuinely difficult and most likely to be a continuous journey of trial and error. There are few empirically grounded signposts to follow.

Governments, organisational systems and teams are perhaps best viewed as manifestations of imperfect human beings who largely endeavour to do the best they can to make sense of the chaos of an imperfect and rapidly changing world. It can however be easier sometimes to be swept away in the seas of change and compound mistakes rather than take the time to learn from them. There is much that can be learned from youth justice professionals about the power of collective effort and shared aspirations and much to learn from the YOT model about the intrinsic tensions of the joined up imperative.

Joining up professional practice might not be as difficult as it might at first appear. The diverse individuals, who have successfully enabled the ideal of interprofessional team practice in youth justice to evolve in the shape of YOTs, have demonstrated that some barriers can be overcome and many problems can be at least managed at the frontline of practice. Joining up government and policy may however be slower to achieve and present a greater challenge than policy makers



may be prepared to accept. YOTs have made considerable progress in the face of uncertainty and against a tide of continual change but it would be a mistake to believe that the continued support of youth justice professionals is guaranteed. There are many aspects of the YOT model and the new youth justice system that work directly against efforts to join up for the benefit of service users.

In some aspects the new youth justice system is a considerable improvement on its predecessors. Substantial investment in addressing social exclusion, which exacerbates many of the root causes of crime, is beginning to show some promising signs of success. Progress has been made towards delivering efficiencies in the criminal justice system, which has also been in receipt of increased investment. The cost of reform in both financial and human terms however has yet to be assessed. The additional layers of management created to control and direct youth justice have yet to be fully evaluated for their impact on outcomes or for cost effectiveness. There may be long-term negative consequences accruing from the reforms for some stakeholders.

The outcomes for some children look bleak. Increasing numbers of children and young people are being drawn into a criminal justice system that remains overtly punitive; ostensibly to facilitate their access to improved and joined up welfare support. More young people are attracting the harsher punishments introduced by the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and subsequent legislation, to target the most recidivist youth. Conversely the young people whose behaviour prompted the majority of the reforms: those involved in persistent and serious crime, appear misplaced within the new system and the least likely to benefit from the joined up imperative. Effort by the Government, and the bodies appointed by them, to disguise what must surely be the unintended, and perhaps unforeseen, consequences of relentless reform creates mistrust and may ultimately demotivate, and alienate, the professionals on whom joined up youth justice relies.

The problems encountered by YOTs and many of the professional practitioners and managers that populate them could have been foreseen. Although dispersed there is a large body of research evidence available to inform the creators of complex new team structures. It is naïve to consider teams outside of the context in which they work and the factors that contribute to their potential to be effective.

There is little from existing literature that supports a view that teams at work have the potential to be more than the sum of their parts. The weight of evidence suggests that teams particularly in the public sector, are rarely enabled to achieve their collective potential, usually lacking the supports and structures that facilitate success. The development of Youth Offending Teams offered a valuable opportunity to take an innovative approach to teamwork, as well as joined up youth justice.

It is a concern that the considerable investment of resources and energy devoted to the development of interprofessional team practice, exemplified in YOTs, risks being compromised. The essence of interprofessional teamwork is the integration of *professional* skills knowledge and experience towards a common service user focused goal. There appears to be a very real risk that the concept, which is logical, imaginative and propitious, might be squandered because of reluctance to address weaknesses between policy intention and outcomes. The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* encapsulated the aspirations of the New Labour Government. Seven years later the ideal of a dynamic joined up approach to youth justice in England and Wales is far from being realised and the policy intentions of the 1998 Act have not always resulted in the outcomes intended.

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## Appendix 1 – Literature Search Methodology

### Location of literature

The University of Sheffield and University of Lincoln libraries provided the main source of books and printed journals for the review of literature for this thesis. The general Internet search engine *Ask Jeeves* was used to locate books, reports and journals not available through university libraries. The Internet was invaluable to locate further work by authors and for access to websites such as the Harvard Business School that offered links to additional resources, particularly regarding organisational management, teams and teamwork.

Government websites kept under review and accessed regularly included:

- Department of Health
- Home Office
- Youth Justice Board
- Crime Prevention Unit
- Police and Reducing Crime Unit
- Central Information Unit

Other websites found to be useful included:

- King's Fund
- National Children's Bureau
- Trust for the Study of Adolescents
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
- Harvard Business School
- The Youth Justice Trust

Printed publications used included:

- The Journal of Interprofessional Care
- British Journal of Criminology
- Youth Justice Board News
- Community Care

Databases searched included:

- Regard
- Web of Science, Social Science Index Years 1989 -1999
- Bids Social Science Index
- Ingenta Journals

Index to Theses:

- B2c - Psychology – Individual and Group Differences
- B5a - Sociology
- B5b - Social Structure
- B5c - Social administration
- B5d - Deviance, Criminology, Penology, Police

Caredata

International social work database

Current Research in Britain  
Harvard Business School Library  
Social Science Information Gateway

Search terms included: Youth Justice, Youth Offending Team, Multi agency Team, Workgroup psychology. As the search progressed however different search areas were combined using boolean logic to incorporate the many different ways that the concepts and processes relevant to the thesis topic were described, for example:

Inter OR multi AND profession\*  
Inter OR multi OR cross AND disciplin\*  
Inter OR multi AND profession AND team OR relations  
Inter OR multi AND agency AND team\*  
Inter OR multi AND disciplin\* AND team\*  
Inter OR multi AND agency OR organisation\* OR organization\*  
Youth OR juvenile AND Offending OR Justice  
Youth OR juvenile AND offending AND team  
Youth AND offending AND team AND multi OR inter AND disciplin\*  
Adolescen\* OR delinquen\* AND justice

The range of terms relevant to the thesis topic and used in the literature search developed, and became more complex, as it emerged that some contemporary terms such as “multi-agency”, did not feature highly in available literature, while others were too generic, for example “teams”. Other search terms such as “alliance” produced a good response but had to be screened carefully because they were mostly specific to the commercial sector. For example, a search of one of the most comprehensive databases for the topic of the thesis, the Web of Science, for “team\*”, brought forth 5689 matches while “multi agency team” and “inter agency team” produced one and three matches respectively out of a possible 18240571 documents. “Profession\* AND collabarat\*” yielded 110 items but only eight matched the criteria of the search.

### **Inclusion criteria**

Literature published in languages other than English language was excluded. It was considered that bias in the literature reviewed would be minimal because YOTs were specific to the youth justice system in England and Wales, and the majority of relevant research available had either been conducted in countries where English is the first language, or had been translated into English for publication.

No date restrictions were placed initially on general area searches for literature about the youth justice system, workgroups or teams because the historical development of these was considered to be relevant to the research topic. As the search progressed to include complex workgroup structures and cooperative ventures in the public sector, publications were restricted to the period 1979 -1999 was imposed, as these innovations rarely predated 1979. The main literature search was completed by August 2001 although all key publications, libraries and websites were revisited regularly until the first full draft of the thesis was completed. It was considered that a potential weakness of the thesis might be a lack of comparative contemporary writing due to the infancy of YOTs and the evolving nature of the youth justice system. By extending the literature search throughout the life of the thesis it was possible to include a selection of reviews, evaluations and case studies that were inevitably slow in emerging.

It was not possible to construct quality assessment criteria that were applicable to all four main areas of interest and these were approached separately. Advice was sought from the Department of Workgroup Psychology, Sheffield University about literature relevant to the thesis topic because of the volume of specialist literature available and concern that assessing the quality of the literature in this field might be beyond the skills of the researcher. On the basis of advice received reading on this subject was restricted to three recommended peer reviewed handbooks of workgroup psychology, which offered quality assured overviews of the main topics of interest. A selection of work by authors from the handbooks who had specialised in complex workgroup structures was pursued further.

Documents, studies and reports available through the Government Stationery Office and as downloads from government websites were accepted as having been quality assured. Literature about the history and development of the youth justice system was accepted if the philosophical position of the author was overt: for example the writings of Andrew Rutherford who is a seasoned campaigner for an end to the imprisonment of children. While Rutherford's work was invaluable as an overview of the machinations of the youth justice system it was important to balance his views with those of writers holding a broader perspective, such as John Muncie. A citation search was undertaken on the few occasions where a cascaded reference was followed up. Literature was only accepted from relatively new academic

contributors if the author had been published in a peer-reviewed journal, for example Tim Clark.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for literature about teams and organisational management was the most difficult to determine. A central argument of the thesis is that unrealistic assumptions and expectations are widely held about what teams at work are and what they are capable of achieving. A widespread belief that the potential of teams is more than the sum of their parts is often promulgated by grey literature produced for profit by individuals and organisations in both academic and commercial communities. The quantity of literature available about teams and organisations is probably immeasurable and within the scope of the thesis could only be sampled. The sample aimed to include any literature about teams at work, and the organisation and management of these, which had a clearly focussed research question and stated methodology, and the results appeared reliable and valid. Other literature based upon case studies, consultancy exercises and discussions on theoretical positions was accepted if the author had been published in more than one peer reviewed journal, if the author was a member of a university faculty or if the materials had been recommended by a reputable source such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which was a valuable resource on the subject of teams and teamwork.

All searches were recorded in a notebook. Where the facility was available searches were downloaded to an Endnote computer software package, which was also used to store all other references until a computer virus wiped the memory 24 months into the inquiry. Fortunately Endnote libraries had also been saved as word documents and hard copies of particularly successful searches were printed and stored.

## Appendix 2 - Data

Appendix 2 offers a full account of the content of the survey, 237 statements generated by a panel of YOT managers. The appendix table illustrates at what stage of the survey a consensus view was reached by the panel and the level of agreement or disagreement. Where consensus was not possible a table of frequencies illustrates the spread of positions taken by the survey panel.

Frequencies S/a = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Unsure, S/d = Strongly Disagree, M = Missing

### Coding Notes:

D + number = Delphi Survey Statement Number

T + number = Questionnaire Statement Number

Some statements were removed from the survey at the end of Round Two. The reasons for their removal are noted. Where a statement generated through the survey was carried forward to the questionnaire for YOT practitioners, sometimes reframed or with an alteration to wording, the findings are listed together to aid a comparison of the views of managers and practitioners. The final section of the appendix table lists the statements that appeared only in the questionnaire, together with frequency of response, and the open questions for practitioners only.

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %											
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M					
D1	The YOT has an increased professional image in the local area	95 AGREE													
D2	The YOT has an increased professional image nationally	79 AGREE													
T6	The YOT has a more positive professional image than youth justice services of the past'			N92	22.8	33.7	31.5	6.5	3.3	2.2					
D3	The team has a greater level of confidence in dealing with the Courts.	Removed Round 2, not clarified													
D4	YOT members command a higher level of professional respect than previous youth justice workers		81 AGREE												
D5	There is a lack of clear national direction in youth offending		86 DISAGREE												
D6	Youth Offending services are not 'joined up' at national level			N19	10.5	36.8	21.1	26.3	5.3	0					
T1				N16	18.8	31.3	18.8	31.3	0	0					
				N92	9.8	32.6	32.6	20.7	0	4.3					
D7	Legislation, which is enforced, is needed to ensure a 'duty' on partner agencies to participate in youth offending services.	84 AGREE													
D8	Agencies will inevitably retreat into their own agency priorities without national direction and sanctions		88 AGREE												
D9	The multi-agency model provides much more opportunity for real strategic development of a coherent approach to youth crime which extends far beyond the confines of the YOT.		100 AGREE												
D10	There should be a standard national YOT model			N19	5.3	15.8	26.3	42.1	10.5	0					
T2	It would be better if there were a standard YOT model (to eliminate variations in service design in different areas)			N16	6.3	6.3	18.8	62.5	6.3	0					
				N92	19.6	39.1	17.4	18.5	3.3	2.2					
D11	The range of anomalies in the operation of YOTs is a cause for concern	Removed Round 2, not clarified													
D12	The YOT model makes a wider corporate model responsible for dealing with youth crime	79 AGREE													
D13	The YOT model is 'joined up' thinking in practice	79 AGREE													
T3				N92	10.9	43.5	21.7	18.5	2.2	3.3					
D14	The way YOTs were set up does not exemplify 'joined up' thinking	Removed Round 2, other similar statements received clarification													
D15	Concurrent major legislative changes puts additional pressure upon the formation of a multi-agency team		81 AGREE												
D16	YOTs have been able to broaden their outlook in terms of community safety and crime prevention	84 AGREE													
D17	YOTs were afforded too short a lead in time			N19	15.8	36.8	10.5	26.3	10.5	0					
				N16	12.5	31.3	18.8	31.3	6.3	0					
D18	The YOT vision should be defined by the YJB but interpreted locally by the YOT manager	79 AGREE													
D19	The government has failed to understand the complexity of the task set for the YOTS.		94 AGREE												
T4				N92	28.3	35.9	21.7	10.9	1.1	2.2					

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %									
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M			
D20	The broader knowledge of a multi-agency team creates an opportunity to change the way youth crime and young offenders are perceived	90 AGREE											
D21 T5	The YOT model broadens team members views of 'the wider picture'	95 AGREE											
D22	Partner agencies are forced to improve their profile in the wider community	Removed Round 2, not clarified											
D23 T15	A multi-agency team provides ease of access to contacts within each partner agency through 'insider' knowledge of team members	95 AGREE											
D24	There is quicker access to contacts and services in partner agencies	90 AGREE											
D25	Established links with other agencies makes working together outside the team easier	84 AGREE											
D26	Seconded staff posts are essential to ease and accelerate access to contacts and services in parent agencies because of their understanding of their agencies' politics and culture	100 AGREE											
T16													
D27	Seconded staff will return to their parent agency with increased understanding of the inter-agency environment and thereby benefit inter-agency cooperation in a wider context	95 AGREE											
T17													
D28	The exchange of information between partner agencies has improved	84 AGREE											
D29	Multi-agency teams have better access to information held by other professionals	Removed Round 2, other similar statements received clarification											
D30	Lines of communication have been shortened	84 AGREE											
D31	Partner agencies generally communicate better with one another because of the YOT												
T7													
D32	Defensiveness about information sharing is due to professional culture												
T47													
D33	The police are defensive about information sharing	79											
T19	Some agencies are more defensive than others about information sharing.	DISAGREE											
D34	Social Services are defensive about information sharing	Removed Round 2 to continue in questionnaire											
D35	The health service is defensive about information sharing	Removed Round 2 to continue in questionnaire											
D36	As YOTs become a distinct service they have lost the spontaneity of access to other agencies and this adds another cog in the wheel	Removed Round 2, not clarified											
D37	Sharing skills and knowledge leads to shared aims	81 AGREE											
D38	Professional pride can be counter productive												
D39	Managing a multi-agency team has required that I do not hold fast to one agency perspective	95 AGREE											

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %									
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M			
D40	Managing a multi-agency team has required me to revise the cultural and value base of my own professional background	Removed Round 2, personal position											
D41	Before joining the YOT I knew little about the culture of other statutory and non-statutory partner agencies other than my own												
T27				N19	5.3	47.4	0	42.1	5.3	0			
				N92	13.0	29.3	7.6	41.3	8.7	0			
D42	Multi-agency teamwork lessens the tensions which may have existed in previous working relationships between professional in partner agencies	79 AGREE											
T28				N92	9.8	46.7	25.0	15.2	2.2	1.1			
D43	In a multi-agency team the baggage which team members carry with them adds tensions which detract from the task of the team and its achievement of outcomes												
T29	Some team members carry with them 'professional baggage' that can add tensions to the team			N19	0	31.6	31.6	36.8	0	0			
				N16	6.3	62.5	18.8	12.5	0	0			
				N92	14.1	40.2	19.6	20.7	1.1	4.3			
D44	Clashes of professional culture can be attacked by only recruiting members who are able to sign up to the multi-agency vision	81 AGREE											
D45	Identity within the YOT is ever changing	Removed Round 2, not clarified, reframed for questionnaire											
D46	Multi-agency teams should aim towards developing a common professional identity			N19	5.3	15.8	26.3	21.1	31.6	0			
T30				N16	0	6.3	18.8	25.0	50.0	0			
				N92	16.3	28.3	22.8	17.4	14.1	1.1			
D47	Staffing problems could cause a re-entrenchment into traditional roles			N19	10.5	36.8	26.3	26.3	0	0			
				N16	12.5	25.0	18.8	43.8	0	0			
D48	A successful team celebrates specialism and professional boundaries to maintain separate professional identities	Removed Round 2, not clarified											
D49	YOTs offer professionals a new working context without changing jobs	84 AGREE											
T31	The YOT has offered me a new working context without changing jobs			N92	19.6	33.7	13.0	19.6	4.3	9.8			
D50	Team moral drops if team roles are not made clear	79 AGREE											
T32				N92	29.3	48.9	12.0	9.8	0	0			
D51	Multi-agency teamwork lessens the impact of stereotypical professional roles	79 AGREE											
T33				N92	19.6	48.9	19.6	9.8	0	2.2			
D52	A specialist approach to responsibilities within the team weights caseload responsibility to social services and probation trained staff												
T34				N19	10.5	26.3	26.3	36.8	0	0			
				N92	25.0	39.1	18.5	12.0	4.3	1.1			
D53	A specialist approach (as above) causes resentment within the team												
T35				N19	5.3	26.3	31.6	31.6	5.3	0			
				N92	9.8	16.3	42.4	23.9	6.58	1.1			



Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %									
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M			
D54	A generic approach to team tasks risks the loss of specialist skills of member practitioners	Removed Round 2, other similar statements clarified and pursued											
D55	A generic approach (as above) causes tensions in the team	Removed Round 2, other similar statements clarified and pursued											
D56 T38	Team members experience a division of loyalties between their parent agency and the YOT			N19	0	36.8	15.8	47.4	0	0			
				N92	9.8	22.8	40.2	23.9	3.3	0			
D57	A case management approach is only successful if case managers do not become precious about their cases	79 AGREE											
D58 T39	Relationships are easier to manage with practitioners from your own originating agency	79 DISAGREE		N92	8.7	17.4	21.7	41.3	8.7	2.2			
D59 T40	Working in a multi-agency team can be perceived as a threat to professional status	79 DISAGREE		N92	7.6	18.5	16.3	50.0	7.6	0			
D60 T41	In the early stage of their membership of a multi-agency team individuals can feel deskilled and insecure	84 AGREE		N92	20.7	45.7	17.4	13.0	3.3	0			
D61	Cultural and professional boundaries can be seen as a lifebelt from being drawn into a new generic organisation	Removed Round 2, not clarified											
D62	Staff who did not choose to enter a multi-agency team but were posted by default find it difficult to be other than precious about their profession	Removed Round 2, reframed for questionnaire											
T43	It has been difficult for staff who were posted to the team to adjust to the new way of working			N19	10.5	21.1	57.9	10.5	0	0			
				N92	14.1	26.1	45.7	5.4	3.3	5.4			
D63	Different conditions of service create tensions for YOTs			N19	0	31.6	10.5	53.6	0	0			
T59	Different conditions of service (pay, leave etc) create tensions in YOTs			N16	6.3	31.3	0	62.5	0	0			
				N92	23.9	28.3	21.7	22.8	2.2	1.1			
D64	Different disciplinary procedures have the potential for creating difficulties			N19	5.3	47.4	15.8	26.3	0	5.3			
				N16	6.3	56.3	12.5	25.0	0	0			
D65	Teams that are 'up front' about celebrating difference do not experience tensions in pay and conditions			N19	21.1	47.4	26.3	0	0	0			
T60	Differences in conditions of service have been used as leverage by some staff to avoid certain areas of youth justice work			N92	6.5	22.8	53.3	13.0	1.1	3.3			
D66	Secondments should be for a minimum of three years	Removed Round 2, not clarified											
D67	Secondments should be for a maximum of five years	81 AGREE											
D68	Seconded staff can become isolated from their parent agency particularly if they are the only seconded member from that agency			N19	10.5	36.8	15.8	15.8	15.8	5.3			
				N16	12.5	43.8	12.5	31.3	0	0			
D69 T61	Some team members have experienced excessive criticism of their parent agency			N19	0	68.4	15.8	10.5	0	5.3			
				N92	20.7	44.6	26.1	8.7	0	0			
D70	Some team members have experienced excessive criticism of their parent agency	Removed Round 2 to check out with team members											

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %						
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M
D71	Team members generally suffer from a lack of professional/peer colleagues			N19	0	5.3	42.1	36.8	5.3	0
T62	Multi-agency team members suffer from a lack of interaction with professional peers and colleagues			N92	13.0	29.3	34.8	20.7	2.2	0
D72	There are no disadvantages for individual members of multi-agency teams (compared to single agency teams)			N19	0	15.8	57.9	21.1	0	5.3
D73	The initial development period of the YOT placed much of the burden on established social services staff		81 AGREE	N16	0	6.3	50.0	43.8	0	0
D74	Diverse professional staff together can engage in territorial and professional boundary making rituals which can hinder effective teamwork		Removed Round 2, not clarified							
D75	It is important for staff to maintain strong links with their parent agency provided this does not undermine line-management arrangements	84 AGREE								
D76	Having to support such a diverse professional group has meant personal re-education and revision of my personal goals	84 AGREE								
D77	Seconded staff need a link manager whose role it is to ensure that the YOT worker does not drift from their roots in that agency	90 AGREE		N92	31.5	47.8	13.0	7.6	0	0
D78	Seconded staff should be able to attend meetings and training in their parent agency to maintain their links	95 AGREE		N92	48.9	42.4	7.6	0	0	1.1
D79	Because of prior consultation with colleagues multi-agency team members have increased confidence in approaching other agencies	95 AGREE								
D80	Staff from non-statutory backgrounds find it most difficult to make the adjustment to working in the YOT	Removed Round 2, not many non-statutory workers								
D81	Multi-agency teamworking causes a higher turnover of staff because of additional pressures.			N19	0	0	26.3	57.9	15.8	0
T65	Multi-agency teamwork will cause a higher turnover of staff because of the additional pressures felt by staff			N92	10.9	26.1	33.7	23.9	4.3	1.1
D82	The constant change of team membership caused by secondments benefits team dynamics			N19	0	21.1	63.2	10.5	0	5.3
T45				N92	3.3	15.2	40.2	29.3	12.0	0
D83	Individuals who cannot subscribe to the multi-agency team ethos will leave and this will ultimately be a benefit to the team	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D84	Tensions between team members are mainly due to personal attitude			N19	10.5	63.2	10.5	15.8	0	0
T46				N92	12.0	47.8	19.6	18.5	2.2	0
D85	Tensions between team members are mainly due to professional culture			N19	0	15.8	26.3	57.9	0	0
T47				N92	2.2	29.3	26.1	40.2	1.1	1.1
D86	Some teams are too big for the control of one team manager			N19	21.1	36.8	31.6	5.3	0	5.3
				N16	18.8	56.3	6.3	18.8	0	0

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %															
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M									
D87	A multi-agency team can feel like an unsafe working environment																		
T67																			
D88	Multi-agency teamwork can cause a confused value system																		
D89	Multi-agency teams are not fully 'owned' by any of the partner agencies and therefore have to fight their own battles		81 AGREE																
D90	Seconded staff members face uncertainty about whether they are accountable to the team or their parent agency																		
D91	A hockey team does not need eleven goalkeepers, the best results are reached through bringing together individuals for specific team roles in a multi-agency team																		
D92	Effective teamwork is enhanced by regular and appropriate supervision	100 AGREE																	
D93	A multi-agency team must have a clear underpinning philosophy from the beginning	95 AGREE																	
D94	A desire by team members for the team to succeed tends to overcome the problems they face	95 AGREE																	
T51																			
D95	Poor communication in the team causes tensions	90 AGREE																	
T52																			
D96	As budget and staffing grows the team maximises leverage to achieve its goals																		
D97	Lack of staff cover from partner agencies (e.g. when a member is long term sick) causes difficulties	84 AGREE																	
T53																			
D98	Fighting for and agreeing budgets is a continuing nightmare for small teams	79 AGREE																	
D99	It is important to ensure that staff are not diverted from their task within the team in order to deliver parent agency priorities	84 AGREE																	
D100	Multi-agency teamworking increases professional respect within the team	100 AGREE																	
T69																			
D101	Multi-agency teams must foster a culture where individual difference (within the team) is valued	100 AGREE																	
D102	Agencies have differing views on what work their representative is to undertake and what work they should do		88 AGREE																
D103	Organisations are unclear about when a YOT member stops being a representative of their parent agency and starts being a YOT member	Removed Round 2, other similar statements received clarification																	
D104	There is a danger that the YOT is seen to hold all of the responsibility for reducing youth crime		88 AGREE																
D105	It is important to ensure that the Steering Group involves and retains the most senior managers who can make strategic decisions	90 AGREE																	

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %						
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M
D106	There is a danger of losing the commitment of social services as youth offending moves away from this agency			N19	15.8	31.6	21.1	26.3	5.3	0
				N16	12.5	50.0	12.5	18.8	6.3	0
D107	Line management arrangements can become confused at organisational level			N19	10.5	36.8	31.6	15.8	5.3	0
				N16	0	75.0	6.3	18.8	0	0
D108	A shared youth crime agenda is only possible as long as the YOTs help partner agencies to deliver their own key targets	90 AGREE								
D109	A multi-agency service can be the highest or lowest common denominator of partner agencies	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D110	Steering Groups make it easier to access high level commitment	84 AGREE								
D111	Steering Groups lessen the tensions that exist between agencies			N19	5.3	52.6	26.3	15.8	0	0
				N16	0	75.0	18.8	6.3	0	0
D112	Multi-agency working is a threat to senior managers set on a career path	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D113	Partner agencies can perceive multi-agency teamwork as a loss of control over their employee			N19	5.3	42.1	21.1	31.6	0	0
				N16	6.3	56.3	18.8	18.8	0	0
D114	The ultimate responsibility for the YOT lies with the YJB rather than the Steering Group			N19	5.3	21.1	21.1	42.1	10.5	0
				N16	0	12.5	25.0	50.0	12.5	0
D115	Partner agencies are mostly concerned that the YOT proves to be value for money	81 AGREE								
D116	There is an unresolved issue about ultimate responsibility if for example the YOT was to be sued (i.e. has a separate identity)	Removed, not clarified								
D117 T74	The Steering Group is a 'virtual team'			N92	10.9	41.3	31.5	0	0	16.3
	Steering Groups are also multi-agency teams			N19	5.3	31.6	52.6	10.5	0	0
D118	The YOT model ensure that best practice is shared across agencies			N16	0	37.5	62.5	0	0	0
D119	Failure to pool resources means that objectives and priorities have to be renegotiated with each partner agency	79 AGREE								
D120	Multi-agency teams need a dedicated budget which is not 'dipped into' because of partner agency savings	90 AGREE								
D121	Pump priming funds are a valuable asset only if continuing funding is made available to successful projects	Removed, not clarified								
D122	The experience of working with other agencies gives an opportunity to compare and contrast different organisational models and styles	95 AGREE								
D123	Multi-agency teamwork takes the best work disciplines from each agency	Removed, not clarified								
D124 T8	The single agency approach to youth crime was a narrow one	79 AGREE		N92	34.8	39.1	17.4	6.5	0	2.2
D125 T79	The preparation of a holistic assessment of the needs of a young person can be achieved more quickly without the barriers of organisational mistrust and professional preciousness	90 AGREE		N92	31.5	46.7	14.1	4.3	1.1	2.2

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %						
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M
D126	The assessment of the needs of a young person takes longer to complete in the new system			N19	15.8	47.4	10.5	15.8	10.5	0
				N16	12.5	62.5	6.3	12.5	6.3	0
D127	Assessments are now undertaken in more depth	90 AGREE								
D128	Assessment practice generally is improving	95 AGREE								
D129	The targets of the YJB would be impossible to meet without the multi-agency team model			N19	15.8	31.6	26.3	21.1	5.3	0
				N16	6.3	56.3	25.0	12.5	0	0
D130	The multi-agency model will provide a more effective youth offending service than could have been achieved by increasing inter-agency cooperation	Removed Round 2, other similar statements clarified								
D131 T82	The multi-agency model provides a better service for the Courts			N19	31.6	42.1	15.8	10.5	0	0
				N92	17.4	39.1	26.1	12.0	2.2	3.3
D132 T83	The multi-agency team model provides a better service to young offenders	95 AGREE		N92	33.7	50.0	10.9	3.3	1.1	1.1
D133 T84	The multi-agency team model provides a better service to the victims of youth crime	79 AGREE		N92	19.6	42.4	29.3	7.6	0	1.1
D134	There are already fewer young offenders excluded from school			N19	10.5	26.3	31.6	26.3	5.3	0
				N16	6.3	25.0	43.8	12.5	12.5	0
D135 T85	Young offenders have better access to health care through the YOT system		81 AGREE	N92	13.0	37.0	23.9	21.7	3.3	1.1
D136	Better support has been offered to offenders remanded to the care of the local authority than in the past			N19	10.5	36.8	21.1	31.6	0	0
				N16	0	50.0	12.5	37.5	0	0
T87				N92	2.2	28.3	33.7	20.7	13.0	2.2
D137	The new perspectives and broader knowledge of the YOT has created an opportunity to change the way that youth crime and young offenders are perceived			N19	10.5	52.6	15.8	15.8	0	5.3
				N16	18.8	56.3	18.8	6.3	0	0
D138	The multi-agency model is more likely to identify a wider range of risk factors in the lives of young offenders	89 AGREE		N92	23.9	57.6	7.6	7.6	2.2	1.1
T88	A multi-agency team is more likely to identify a wider range of risk factors in the lives of young offenders than a professional in any one agency			N19	15.8	15.8	42.1	15.8	5.3	5.3
D139	The multi-agency model is time efficient			N16	12.5	25.0	50.0	12.5	0	0
D140	The multi-agency model is energy efficient	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D141	The multi-agency model is cost effective			N19	10.5	36.8	36.8	5.3	5.3	5.3
				N16	6.3	43.8	37.5	6.3	6.3	0
D142	It is ineffective to train staff who are only seconded for a short period of time before they leave to return to their parent agency	Removed Round 2, other similar statements received clarification								
D143 T78	YOT membership has increased practitioners use of evidence of 'what works'		88 AGREE	N92	5.4	44.6	29.3	14.1	3.3	3.3

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %						
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M
D144 T9	Multi-agency teamworking has led to creative problem solving	95 AGREE		N92	13.0	57.6	18.5	7.6	1.1	2.2
D145	The new service has offered new approaches to age old problems	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D146	The vast wealth of knowledge and the various perspectives of the YOT bring dimensions for development that no one agency could grasp	100 AGREE								
D147	Champions at Chief Officer level to drive change	95 AGREE								
D148	Identified senior officers in support services who understand the multi-agency model	84 AGREE								
D149	Key personnel in each partner agency who 'own' the YOT agenda	90 AGREE								
D150	YOT manager has sole control of a delegated budget	84 AGREE								
D151	Shared belief and commitment from partner agencies	90 AGREE								
D152	Effective and accountable management systems that remain accessible to staff	100 AGREE								
D153	Inclusive planning involving the practitioner, the team and management	95 AGREE								
D154	Agencies maintaining an interest in their seconded staff	95 AGREE								
D155	Common agreements at the creation of a multi-agency team	95 AGREE								
D156	A management committee of managers of sufficient seniority to commit resources	95 AGREE								
D157	Good working relationships that are not procedure driven	95 AGREE								
D158	Production of written guidelines at the outset of the formation of the team to help to provide shared meanings	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D159	The team to establish its own working practices	90 AGREE								
D160	Good inter-agency protocols such as information sharing	100 AGREE								
D161	Pooled budgets	90 AGREE								
D162	Additional management training for multi-agency work	90 AGREE								
D163	Motivated staff	100 AGREE								
D164	Impartial management	100 AGREE								
D165	Energetic committed staff	100 AGREE								
D166	Free thinking staff not constrained by history	90 AGREE								
D167	Staff positively recruited for multi-agency teamwork	90 AGREE								
D168	No professional status hierarchy	90 AGREE								
D169	Development funds to promote new initiatives	90 AGREE								
D170	Agencies subscribing to the 'silo' mentality make it difficult to make progress	80 AGREE								
D171	Not all partner agencies make the same commitment to the YOT and may not see the task as relevant to their core business	95 AGREE								
D172	Defeatist senior managers in partner agencies		81 AGREE							
D173	Over bureaucratic and slow local government processes	84 AGREE								
D174	A resistance to taking risks at senior management level	79 AGREE								

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %											
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M					
D175	Conservatism 'that's how we do things around here'	79 AGREE													
D176	Disputes about funding levels among partner agencies	84 AGREE													
D177	Different perspectives about the causes of crime			N19	0	31.6	21.1	31.6	15.8	0					
				N16	6.3	37.5	12.5	31.3	12.5	0					
D178	Too much time spent negotiating budgets with agencies with very different agendas	Removed Round 2, supported by volume of written observations, locality specific													
D179	The complexity of staffing arrangements			N19	21.1	26.3	15.8	36.8	0	0					
				N16	12.5	62.5	6.3	18.8	0	0					
D180	Recruitment of YOT staff			N19	21.1	36.8	15.8	26.3	0	0					
				N16	25.0	50.0	25.0	0	0	0					
D181	The complex issue of data exchange			N19	21.1	26.3	21.1	31.6	0	0					
				N16	18.8	43.8	6.3	31.3	0	0					
D182	Lack of shared vision at the level of the Steering Group			N19	10.5	52.6	15.8	21.1	0	0					
				N16	18.8	50.0	18.8	12.5	0	0					
D183	Short term bid funding rather than permanent funding		88 AGREE												
D184	Lack of time for consolidation	79 AGREE													
D185	Lack of IT compatibility			N19	21.1	26.3	21.1	21.1	10.5	0					
				N16	31.3	25.0	18.8	25.0	0	0					
D186	The theory of the 'joined up' nature of the YOT is understood but not it is not put into practice across agencies		81 AGREE												
D187	Some agencies are not equally committed to having senior representation on the YOT Steering Group			N19	26.3	42.1	21.1	10.5	0	0					
				N16	18.1	50.0	12.5	18.8	0	0					
D188	Multi-agency membership challenges professional assumptions	100 AGREE													
D189	Working in a multi-agency team stimulates individuals to think in new ways	100 AGREE													
D190	Working in a multi-agency team improves promotion prospects			N19	26.3	36.8	31.6	5.3	0	0					
T75				N16	18.8	50.0	31.3	0	0	0					
				N92	1.1	19.6	43.5	13.0	9.8	13.					
D191	Working in a multi-agency team improves professional development	100 AGREE													
T76				N92	7.6	31.5	34.8	8.7	4.3	13.					
D192	Working in a multi-agency team improves career development	84 AGREE													
D193	Team members are not enabled to maintain their professional skills in a multi-agency team and this limits their career opportunities	Removed Round 2, other similar statements clarified													
D194	Training on an interagency basis enhances its value	100 AGREE													
D195	New staff to the team have access to support in lots of areas and can more quickly find their way around the system	Removed Round 2, not clarified													
D196	Team members gain in confidence, assertiveness and widen their skills base	95 AGREE													

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %						
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M
D197 T36	The lack of common or generic skills reduces flexibility	95 AGREE		N92	8.7	32.6	26.1	28.3	4.3	0
D198	More attention needs to be paid to the induction and training of non-statutory staff	Removed Round 2, not many non statutory staff								
D199 T73	Team building is more of a challenge Managing a multi-agency team is more of a challenge	84 AGREE		N92	21.7	44.6	17.4	2.2	0	14.1
D200	Joint training is essential	95 AGREE								
D201	A 'can do' attitude of staff needs to be fostered	100 AGREE								
D202	An 'openness to learning' is essential for effective multi-agency teamwork to succeed	100 AGREE								
D203 T57	Good team building needs to take place on an on-going basis	100 AGREE		N92	40.2	41.3	6.5	3.3	5.4	3.3
D204	Managers increase their skills in a multi-agency team and increase their professional profile	90 AGREE								
D205 T13	The Youth Offending Service needs to develop and maintain a career structure		81 AGREE	N92	41.3	40.2	13.0	2.2	0	3.3
D206	The YOT practitioner training was unhelpful	Removed Round 2, not clarified and historic								
D207	The YOT practitioner training should have devoted more time to development as a multi-agency team		81 AGREE							
D208	The training video failed to recognise the good work done by youth justice workers before the YOT and didn't help these workers respond positively	Removed Round 2, not clarified and historic								
D209	Selected personnel from the YOT could contribute to the training modules	95 AGREE								
D210	The multi-agency model provides access to valuable training opportunities and personnel in partner agencies	90 AGREE								
D211	It is hoped that the YOT model will provide a benchmark for other multi-agency initiatives in the future	84 AGREE								
D212	The YOT model has yet to be evaluated in terms of outcomes to see if multi-agency teamwork actually achieves the desired results	84 AGREE								
D213	The model could be used more widely in the care sector but needs to battle hard against the 'silo' mentality and parochialness of the agencies involved	84 AGREE								
D214	True partnership is a very different concept than 'commissioning' which is the extent of many existing 'partnerships'	95 AGREE								
D215	There may be a reluctance to celebrate agencies successfully working together in youth offending because it is an unfashionable and unpopular area of welfare work	Removed Round 2, not clarified								
D216	Multi-agency teams will become common place in the public sector in the next five years	84 AGREE								
D217	It is essential that a dedicated budget is committed before a multi-agency team is formed		88 AGREE							





Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %							
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M	
D234	Shadow multi-agency teams should be put into place before any major legislative changes are implemented			N19	21.1	26.3	21.1	21.1	21.1	10.5	0
D235	The broad opinion base regarding the nature of youth offending will stimulate a wider debate on effective interventions	90 AGREE		N16	25.0	43.8	12.5	12.5	12.5	6.3	0
D236	The multi-agency model is transferable to probation services	Removed Round 2, not directly relevant									
D237	The best is yet to come!	90 AGREE									
<b>Questionnaire only:</b>											
T10	The additional level of management provided by the Steering Group is essential to harness cross agency commitment			N92	13.0	34.8	42.4	4.3	1.1	4.3	
T11	The Youth Justice Board provides the essential coordination and vision to drive the youth justice agenda			N92	3.3	30.4	42.4	16.3	5.4	2.2	
T18	I have found it easy to work alongside professionals from other agencies			N92	28.3	50.0	9.8	10.9	1.1.	0	
T20	Some agencies are more reluctant to commit to the YOT than others			N92	16.3	33.7	31.5	15.2	2.2	1.1	
T21	Internal team dynamics are more difficult to handle in a multi-agency team			N92	12.0	31.5	20.7	31.5	2.2	2.2	
T23	There are safe opportunities to air disagreements in my team			N92	14.1	45.7	26.1	7.6	5.4	1.1	
T37	My role is clearly defined within the team			N92	25.0	45.7	10.9	13.0	5.4	0	
T42	You lose your professional identity the longer you stay in a multi-agency team			N92	8.7	19.6	31.5	34.8	5.4	0	
T44	Positive recruitment is needed to make team membership more representative of the community			N92	28.3	44.6	14.1	12.0	0	1.1	
T49	My team has a common sense of purpose			N92	9.8	62.0	18.5	8.7	1.1	0	
T50	I am happy in my work			N92	32.6	45.7	7.6	13.0	1.1	0	
T54	There was a greater sense of team unity in previous generic teams I have worked in			N92	7.6	19.6	30.4	31.5	5.4	5.4	
T55	Sometimes I feel marginalised within this team			N92	6.5	20.7	18.5	33.7	18.5	2.2	
T56	The whole team is involved with planning and evaluation			N92	14.1	33.7	18.5	28.3	4.3	1.1	

Statement Number	Statement	Consensus Round 2 (N19) %	Consensus Round 3 (N16) %	Frequencies %							
				N	S/a	A	U	D	S/d	M	
T66	My team has an active relationship with its Steering Group			N92	2.2	15.2	43.5	23.9	13.0	2.2	
T70	It can be difficult to receive supervision from a manager with a different professional background			N92	15.2	28.3	21.7	18.5	4.3	12.0	
T71	Seconded staff should receive supervision in their parent agency as well as in the YOT			N92	26.1	31.5	16.3	13.0	1.1	12.0	
T72	The YOT is too diverse to enable participative decision making			N92	3.3	8.7	17.4	40.2	16.3	14.1	
T80	There is too much of a focus on paperwork and data collection			N92	35.9	33.7	9.8	19.6	0	1.1	
T81	The ASSET national assessment tool has improved assessment practice			N92	6.5	37.0	32.6	13.0	8.7	2.2	
T86	The new youth justice framework reduces opportunities for professionals to use their own judgement			N92	5.4	19.6	42.4	27.2	1.1	4.3	
T89	I am making the best use of my own professional skills in this team			N92	26.1	44.6	12.0	9.8	5.4	2.2	
<b>Open Questions in Questionnaire</b>											
T14	Please try to describe how it feels to belong to a multi-agency team										
T19	Some agencies are more defensive than others about information sharing. If you agree with this statement could you give an example										
T20	Some agencies are more reluctant to commit to the YOT than others. If you agree with this statement could you give an example										
T26	What has been the biggest adjustment you have had to make to adapt to multi-agency teamwork										
T29	Some team members carry with them 'professional baggage' that can add to tensions in the team. If you agree with this could you give an example										
T48	What is the main cause of disharmony in your team										
T58	What do you think the main difference is between working in a multi-agency team and any other team										
T77	Which agency has the most power in your YOT and why										