PRACTITIONERS IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY OF THE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

By Daniel James Marshall

Darwin College
University of Cambridge

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge
This dissertation, including footnotes, does not exceed the permitted length. This dissertation is my own work and contains nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others, except as specified in text and acknowledgements.

______________________________ Daniel J. Marshall
Summary

The central aim of this descriptive and exploratory study is to empirically examine the views and perspectives of practitioners working with young people in the youth justice system in England and Wales. Based on a case study of Peterborough youth offending service (PYOS), the study adopts a multi-method approach. Interviews with 22 practitioners, observations of their practice and key documentary evidence are reviewed, which identify the processes involved in the core practice of key practitioners and a deeper understanding of how policy and legislation reform are experienced in practice.

Practitioners play key roles as case managers in the intervention process, yet youth justice literature somewhat neglects the role and perspective of staff within multi-agency youth offending teams (Case, 2007), despite increasing focus on youth justice practice through organisational analyses (see for example, Burnett and Appleton, 2002; 2004a; Field, 2007; Holdaway et al., 2001; Newburn et al., 2002; Souhami, 2007; Stahlkopf, 2008), and much critique of youth justice policy in England and Wales (see for example, Goldson, 2002; Goldson and Muncie, 2006; Pitts, 2003; Smith, 2007).

The central argument of this thesis is that knowledge (what is known about effective practice) is not applied effectively in practice. Questions are raised regarding the use of professional discretion and the accountability of practitioners working with young offenders within a perceived managerialist process which neglects individuals needs in favour of achieving targets and performance measures. The findings of this study support the view that the use of standardised assessment tools increase accountability of practitioners whilst reducing their professional discretion, which constrains practice. A lack of structural support created a cultural divide between management and practitioners, which further confounded their practice. Practitioners face a multitude of obstructions to their work with young people, which seem to be further rooted in the prioritisation of recording information and meeting targets, which results in less time attributed to planning and delivering interventions.

In a climate of uncertainty for the youth offending service (YOS), in which doubts about its future are frequently raised and further reductions are made to YOS budgets, there is increased need for well-informed and supported practitioners to be working with young people who offend.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mark Cowling, Rob MacDonald, Mark Simpson, and Colin Webster for sparking my interest in pursuing PhD study many years ago whilst I was studying at Teesside University. Further thanks to Emma Wincup and Sam Lewis at the University of Leeds. The continued support from you all over the years has been invaluable.

Many thanks to the staff at Peterborough Youth Offending Service who gave up their time to allow me to ask so many questions, and hang around for so long. Without you, I would not be able to write this thesis. I wish I could name every one of you for your contribution, due to confidentiality I am unable to do so.

Thank you to Darwin College, the Economic Social Research Council, and the Institute of Criminology for supporting this thesis with funding, and travel and research grants, without which I could not have completed the PhD.

Thanks to my supervisor, P-O Wikström, for his insightful comments during the writing up phase, and assisting me in putting this thesis together.

Further thanks to the staff at the Institute of Criminology who have provided support along the way, Arnel Badayos, Tony Bottoms, Tanya Carter, Tim Coupe, Ben Crewe, Richard Davey, Manuel Eisner, David Farrington, Loraine Gelsthorpe, Michael Rice, Matt Skipper, Layla Skinns, Alex Sutherland, Kyle Treiber, and Jordi Vila. A special mention to Lisa Janes and ‘the lovely Joanne’, for years of great banter which I am sure will continue. Further special mention to Anne-Hélène Halbout for your tireless support and assistance.

An extra special mention to Mary Gower and Stuart Stone, who have provided amazing support and friendship, and are two of the best colleagues I have had the pleasure of working with. I am extremely thankful to both of you.

A special thank you to Terry Thomas, a great former colleague who has kept me sane and provided long-standing support and friendship, which was invaluable in getting me onto the PhD programme, dealing with the TOON being relegated(!), and most importantly has kept me going whilst completing the PhD.
Further thanks to all those who assisted in the early parts of the research – developing and focusing ideas – most notably Bernadette Wilkinson.

Huge thanks to the Spark Inside team, especially Baillie Aaron, for your patience, hard work, and putting up with my ‘student-ness’ over the last couple of years.

A number of people have provided support beyond measure. My mother and father, Vivien and James, my brothers, Michael and Shaun, and my sister, Amy; the greatest family I could wish for, I could not have done this without you. Thank you to Winifred Woodhouse, a truly great aunt. Further thanks to my extended family (far too many of you to mention) for your invaluable continued support.

There are no words to express my sincere gratitude to the following people, Adam Barker, Nikki Brodhurst, Laura Bui, Michael Clarkson, Amy Digout, Sophie Eastwood, Andrew Laing, Todor Shoilekov, Kuljit Singh, Neil Thirkell, and Michael Wakeford, for many years of invaluable friendship, great banter, ALE, and making Cambridge a bearable place to be. I will now (re-)join you in the real world.

Daniel Marshall
December 2012
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The central aim of this descriptive and exploratory study is to empirically examine the views and perspectives of practitioners working with young people in the youth justice system in England and Wales. Based on a case study of Peterborough youth offending service (PYOS), the study adopts a multi-method approach. Interviews with 22 practitioners, observations of their practice and key documentary evidence are reviewed, which identify the processes involved in the core practice of key practitioners and a deeper understanding of how policy and legislation reform are experienced in practice.

This thesis presents a critique of the risk assessment processes utilised within youth justice in England and Wales. It is asserted that the role of assessment confounds practitioners abilities to plan and deliver effective youth justice practice, through increased practitioner accountability to achieve targets and performance measures. This perceived managerialist process evidently neglects the individuals needs of young offenders in favour of recording information to achieve these targets. The risk assessment approach provides a framework for practitioners to record and inform their work with young offenders, however it is asserted that this process reduces practitioners professional discretion, and ultimately hinders effective youth justice practice.

The rule-breaking of young people has long attracted much attention from social scientists, policy makers and, not least, the general public. There are numerous ways to approach the rule-breaking of young people, and historically England and Wales have done so through welfare-based approaches despite increasing justice-based intervention. The contemporary approach to youth crime in the UK\(^1\) is predominantly through the criminal justice system, rather than through educational or welfare-oriented approaches (Marshall and Thomas, 2011). The Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 introduced for the first time a statutory requirement for the youth justice system to “prevent offending of children and young persons”\(^2\) (Crime and Disorder Act 1998: s.37). Overseen by the newly-formed Youth Justice

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1 There is no single approach to youth crime in the UK. There are 3 distinct legal jurisdictions: England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.
2 Young people have long been categorised as those aged 14-18 years, and those below 14 as children.
Board (YJB), Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were introduced as part of the CDA 1998. YOTs are multidisciplinary teams, bringing together social workers, probation officers, police officers and health authority staff. These professionals pool their skills and draw upon their common experience to devise an appropriate response to youth offending (Roberts and Hough, 2005).

The CDA 1998 introduced a new approach to dealing with youth crime. Direct intervention through YOTs, based on risk prevention, replaced previous schemes aimed at diverting young people away from the youth justice system. The risk prevention approach identifies the likelihood, or the risk, that an individual will commit offences or reoffend. Thus, the risk of offending is identified through an assessment tool, Asset. This assessment generates different areas of risk (for example, physical health, attitudes to offending, motivation to change), and grades them on a scale from low to high risk. Once this is completed, areas of high risk are highlighted and appropriate intervention can be carried out. Asset provides a pragmatic framework for youth justice practitioners to manage individual programmes of intervention with young offenders.

The risk prevention framework is largely based upon the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development (see Farrington et al., 1996) which asserts that future offending behaviour can be predicted through the identification of risk factors. This has led to an assertion that early intervention is the most hopeful method to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (see section 2.4). Critics state that this approach, as applied in law and order, neglects the wider political and structural factors upon youth offending (Webster et al., 2006; McAra and McVie, 2007), and targets and disciplines failing families (Pitts, 2001). Furthermore, a fundamental concern with this approach is that identifying risk is not necessarily identifying the root causes of offending behaviour. The risk factor approach lacks “consideration of the problems of establishing causation (differentiating between causes and correlates), and the problem of identifying plausible causal mechanisms (providing explanation)” (Wikström, 2007: 131). Thus any intervention which follows such assessment of risk cannot expect to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour and hence the outcomes of such intervention cannot expect to achieve the desired success – reducing offending behaviour. In practice risk prediction and causation becomes confused and inflated, leading to expectation of outcomes which cannot be achieved (see section 2.4 for further discussion).
Within this approach, a case manager / intervention model is currently used within YOTs, in which a case manager assesses the needs of the offender and decides on a programme or package of intervention(s) tailored to meet these needs (Hough, 2008). Within this approach, it is the programmes and packages of intervention that are overseen by a case manager which are deemed to have the most impact on outcomes. The assessment identifies the needs of the offender and the programme or package of intervention(s) is the vehicle through which outcomes are achieved. The skills of the practitioner can add value to the processes of assessment and intervention. However, practitioners’ skills are considered secondary to that of the programme or package of intervention(s) (Hough, 2008). This has attracted much criticism from commentators who suggest that welfare-based approaches are replaced with a managerialist approach which focuses on performance measures (see for example, Garrett, 2002; Pitts, 2003). Furthermore critics assert that there may be a tendency to industrialise and depersonalise these processes so that they can be carried out by less highly trained, motivated and qualified staff (see for example, Goldson and Muncie, 2006; Hough, 2008).

Youth justice practitioners play key roles as case managers in the intervention process, yet the youth justice literature somewhat neglects the role and perspective of the staff within these multi-agency youth offending teams (Case, 2007), despite increasing focus on youth justice practice through organisational analyses (see for example, Burnett and Appleton, 2002; 2004a; Field, 2007; Holdaway et al., 2001; Newburn et al., 2002; Souhami, 2007), and much critique of youth justice policy in England and Wales (see for example, Goldson, 2002; Goldson and Muncie, 2006; Pitts, 2003; Smith, 2007). Furthermore, the risk-factor paradigm underpinning contemporary youth justice practice has received much criticism in research. Regarding the difference between prediction and causation, which tends to be confused and inflated in practice through the use of assessment tools, which identify areas of high-risk, yet fail to accurately identify the causes of offending behaviour. This indicates that young offenders are being exposed to programmes and packages of intervention that are not addressing the root causes of offending.

Empirical research investigating contemporary youth justice practice is sparse. There is great need for in-depth studies to address the practical implications of youth justice practice, in
order to understand how risk prevention work is undertaken in practice. This thesis will present a case study of a youth offending team, focusing on practice and the views of youth justice practitioners.

Research Aims
Eight broad questions are addressed and form the basis of discussion for this study:

1. How effective are the principles and processes of intervention with young offenders?
2. To what extent do the professional judgements of YOS practitioners and national / organisational policy influence decision-making during the intervention process?
3. Who is delivering programmes or packages of intervention(s) in the YOS?
4. What is the process of intervention with young people when referred to the YOS?
5. How do the YOS address knowledge of effective practice when working with young people referred to youth justice crime prevention programmes?
6. What motivates practitioners when making decisions during the intervention process?
7. What are the perceived obstacles and challenges of practitioners working with young people referred to youth justice crime prevention programmes in the YOS?
8. What are practitioners views and perceptions of best practice and what is effective when working with young people referred to youth justice crime prevention programmes?

The structure of this dissertation
This dissertation presents the accounts of practitioners in Peterborough youth offending service who work with young people who have offended.

Chapters two and three contextualise the current study and review the research and literature identifying key gaps. Chapter two addresses contemporary responses to youth crime, asserting that official responses to young people who break rules have long been underpinned by philosophical debates between welfare and justice. Welfare-based approaches continued to dominate despite increased justice-based intervention. The CDA 1998 introduced a risk prevention agenda through direct youth justice intervention, replacing previous policy and practice which was underpinned by diverting young people
away from the youth justice system. To undertake research of YOT practice, it is also asserted that political, structural and cultural issues must be observed in order to understand the implication of policy reform in practice.

Chapter three presents a detailed review of research and literature addressing what is known about best practice within the risk-led approach underpinning youth justice practice. Whilst it is argued that the fundamental risk-led basis for such practice is flawed in its inability to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, the literature suggests that effective interventions are based on careful assessment, linked to established need and are individually appropriate, have some focus on cognitive skills, are multi-modal, contain an element of reparation, are delivered as designed, and have long-term contact and engagement time, although quality is more important than quantity.

Chapters four to eight present the empirical data upon which this research is based. Chapter four discusses the research methods adopted in this study in detail. Briefly, the current research adopted a multi-method approach: 22 practitioners were interviewed once in-depth, 44 meetings were observed, and PYOS and official documents were examined. Furthermore, before and after each observed meeting, agenda, minutes, and / or case files were examined. The case study site was Peterborough youth offending service (PYOS), and fieldwork took place over a period of roughly one year. Chapter five describes the characteristics of PYOS, exploring the funding and resources at the service and how these have changed over time. Funding of youth justice services has increased year-on-year until 2010 / 11 which saw a decrease in funding. Analyses of national funding compared to that of PYOS (local) funding suggests that there is variance in local funding, particularly with regard to statutory agency input. This chapter also raises important questions regarding funding and performance, and how the two tend to be inter-linked. Additionally, PYOS has experienced significant reductions in staff numbers in recent years, which has placed a strain on case managers who have seen increases in cases as a result.

Chapter six explores the processes at PYOS in detail to determine how knowledge of ‘best practice’ is implemented in practice. It is suggested that practitioners at PYOS are aware of and attempt to implement all areas of knowledge of best practice. However, they are hindered by obstacles and difficulties such as the young person not attending sessions, a lack
of referral mechanisms to support their work, and insufficient time (length of order) to work with the young people.

*Chapter seven* details the motivation and skills of practitioners to explore practitioners’ underlying motives that may influence their design and implementation of intervention programmes or packages for young people. It is evident that there is a lack of clarity between managers and practitioners regarding the purpose and format of supervision sessions, which in turn affects the motivation and morale of practitioners. Practitioners also asserted that there was a lack of personal development opportunities, which was further apparent when examining training and development processes at PYOS, which were severely lacking and appeared under-developed.

*Chapter eight* presents the accounts of practitioners’ views on young people and effective practice. It is the overwhelming view from practitioners that most young people do not offend, and the minority that do are the result of a complex process of factors, although family and upbringing is believed to be the main factor. Furthermore, analyses shows that overall, practitioners agree that the focus of resources and finance should be toward programme development, staff training and development, and enhanced education, training and employment provision for referring young people.

In *chapter nine*, the findings of chapters five to eight are summarised and their implications for theory, policy and practice are discussed.
Chapter 2
Responses to youth offending

2.1 Introduction
To contextualise the current study, this chapter will explore developments in the UK's response to the rule-breaking of children and young people. As Hendrick (2006: 3) highlights, the "overwhelming conclusion of historical and sociological research" in juvenile delinquency and crime can only be understood within the broad socio-political context (Bailey, 1987; Gattrell, 1990; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Muncie, 2004; Pearson, 1983). This chapter is split into four parts. Section 2.2 asserts that youth crime is committed by a minority of young people, and a small portion of this group commit the majority of crimes. Further examination suggests that self-reported crime data continued to rise during the latter part of the Twentieth Century, whilst official crime data presented a contrasting pattern, with a levelling off of crime in the 1980s, issues regarding the use of different crime data are discussed. Section 2.3 reviews official responses to children and young people who break rules, asserting that welfare-based approaches have historically continued to dominate official responses despite increasing justice-based intervention, up until the 1990s when the Audit Commission (1996) published a report entitled Misspent Youth arguing that youth justice was inefficient and expensive. This led to the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). This Act and the subsequent development of policy and legislation are discussed in section 2.4. The key assertion is that this policy reform introduced a fundamental shift from diversion to prevention. Young people were no longer diverted from the youth justice system through welfare-based approaches. The new system saw direct intervention by the youth justice system underpinned by the risk factor prevention agenda. Section 2.5 presents a framework through which the current study is analysed. YOTs present a problematic picture. It is emphasised that YOT practice should be viewed through political, structural and cultural issues which should be understood from the practitioners’ perspective.

Justice in this context is defined as more punitive measures.
2.2 The minority of young offenders commit half of all crime

It has long been acknowledged that a small percentage of young people commit crime, and of this group a minority commit the majority of crime (Farrington, 1992; 1996; Flood-Page et al., 2000; Von Hirsch, 2001; Wikström et al., 2012; Zimring, 1982). However, academics and commentators have long contributed to the conflicting messages surrounding youth crime. A dominant perspective is that media representations and popular perceptions of young people and offending have changed, rather than any change in actual youth offending (Pearson, 1983). Others claim that young people are an easy target for politicians whose own ideas and promises have failed (Haines and Drakeford, 1998) or that youth crime is a useful method of gaining electoral votes, and to repair rifts within political parties (Pitts, 2003). Rutherford (1986) asserts that young people break rules as part of growing up, and should be dealt with by minimal intervention from the penal system. Youth is a time for experimentation (Zimring, 1982, Von Hirsch, 2001) and any response to youth crime should take into account this experimental stage to “preserve the life choices for those who make serious mistakes” (Zimring, 1982: 91), although they should be held culpable to some extent (Von Hirsch, 2001; Zimring, 2000). Shifting penal policies and government responses have moved between the welfare and justice debate which had favoured welfare-based approaches until recent times. Before discussing approaches to the rule-breaking of young people, youth crime trends will be discussed.

2.2.1 Recorded and self-reported crime

To ascertain whether youth crime has in fact increased, it is important to review youth crime trends over time using different methods. Doing so may offer some explanation for official responses to youth offending; however, conflicting patterns between crime statistics and surveys are evident. Official statistics show clear rises in crime over the second half of the 20th century, a quarter of which is attributed to 10-17 year olds (Farrington, 1996; Home Office, 1995; Rutter et al., 1998). Farrington (1992; 1996) suggests that official statistics most likely represent official responses to delinquency, rather than young people committing more criminal acts. Analysis of self-report surveys shows a different picture. Estrada (1999) show that in the post-war period up to 1995 there had been an initial rise in juvenile crime followed by a levelling-off since the 1970s in most European countries. However, in England, Germany and Finland the increase in youth crime continued. Whilst recorded crime decreased in England during the 1980s, self-report studies show an increase (Estrada, 1999).
Farrington (1992; 1996) states that the likely downturn in recorded crime reflects changes to official responses, such as the implementation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and subsequent police practice. It is further stated by numerous research studies that a small percentage of offenders are responsible for a high proportion of crime; Flood-Page et al., (2000) found that ten per cent of their sample (4848 people aged 12-30 years) who reported offending were responsible for nearly half the crimes of the sample. Furthermore, Wikström et al., (2012), in their ten year longitudinal study of 700 young people followed from age 11 to 21 years, found that 5.5 per cent of their sample committed 47 per cent of all crime.

Youth crime in England and Wales undoubtedly increased in the latter part of the twentieth century. However, as highlighted by Farrington (1992; 1996) there is little hard evidence for the changes in youth crime or for the likely explanations. It is useful to explore responses to the rule-breaking of young people over time, to paint a picture of official responses to such behaviours.

2.3 Welfare-based approaches have dominated despite increasing justice-based intervention over time

Research and literature indicates that welfare-based approaches have dominated official responses to the rule-breaking of young people, despite increased criminal justice intervention over time. Contemporary reviews of the early nineteenth century suggest that definitions of the child as a criminal began to emerge within legal discourse (Hendrick, 2006). However commentators wrote that this was a time of reconception rather than invention of juvenile delinquency (King, 1998; Shore, 1999).

In the early twentieth century delinquent children became portrayed as hooligans, with increasing media attention (Pearson, 1985). There was a decline in adult recorded crime and an increase in juvenile recorded crime (Gillis, 1975). Rather than an increase in criminal activity, the evidence suggests that the rise in juvenile delinquency was because of an increased forcefulness of the police and courts to prosecute traditional working-class youthful leisure activities (Gillis, 1975). Hendrick (2006: 7) points out that this was a “clear example of juvenile delinquency being created through structural and administrative procedures which... were reactions to social and political change”.

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The Children Act 1908 displayed an attempt to merge welfare and justice principles, establishing civil and criminal jurisdictions for needy and offending children respectively (Hendrick, 2006). Notably the Act created the juvenile court, abolished the death penalty for under-16s, barred under-14s from prison, and restricted the use of imprisonment for 14-15 year olds (Garland, 1985; Hendrick, 2006; Muncie, 2004; Newburn, 1997). However, the newly formed juvenile court was underpinned by ‘conflict and ambivalence’ due to its function to ‘rescue as well as the punishment of juveniles’ (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994: 951).

Tensions between the welfare and justice principles continued to feature in juvenile justice legislation through the Twentieth Century (Newburn, 1997). The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 prohibited capital punishment for those under the age of 18 and brought about approved schools which provided education and training to juvenile offenders (Newburn, 1997). The Children’s Act 1948 placed restrictions on the use of custody for juvenile offenders. Furthermore, the 1948 Act established a local authority childcare service (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Hendrick, 2003).

The post-war period up to the 1970s was one of youth rather than children; the state of the nation was viewed through the perceived condition of its youth (Davis, 1990; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Osgerby, 1998). The Children and Young Person’s Act 1969 sought to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14, and encourage more liberal non-criminalised care proceedings for those aged 14-17. The Act was the result of social work and civil servant interests along with Labour party ideology (Bottoms, 2002). The election of a Conservative government in 1970, who opposed the welfare orientation of the Act, ensured this was never completely implemented (Hendrick, 2006); Bottoms (1974) argues that this was of considerable symbolic importance for future events. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1994: 958) further comment that Labour’s writings about crime were “shaped by and promoted broad-based socialist ideologies”, the Act was “geared to the development of what was believed to be a more just society” (1994: 958).

Despite the Conservative government’s stance for the “need to stand firm on crime” (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994: 971) the period between 1982 and 1992 has been described
as a time of optimism in youth justice. Custody use declined, recorded juvenile delinquency decreased, and the youth justice system itself seemed to be in decline (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Newburn, 1997). Goldson (1999: 4) argues that the treatment of juvenile delinquents during this period was progressive, with three underlying principles: diversion, decriminalisation and decarceration. The Criminal Justice Act 1982 scrapped borstals replacing them with youth custody and detention centres. Young Offender Institutions were introduced through the Criminal Justice Act 1988, and juvenile courts were replaced with youth courts by the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The Children Act 1989 split the juvenile court into two parts: family proceedings courts which covered care and welfare, and the juvenile courts which covered youth crime (Lepper, 2008). Despite claims that this was a period of progress in the treatment of young delinquents, the replacement of borstals with youth custody and detention was not necessarily progressive. The Criminal Justice Act 1982 arguably represented ‘a move away from treatment and lack of personal responsibility to notions of punishment and individual and parental responsibility’ (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994: 972). Furthermore, the Act represented a move away from ‘the belief in the ‘child in need’ to the ‘juvenile criminal’’ (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994: 972).

However, the Conservative government echoed academic research asserting that young people grow out of crime, and courts had to take into account the welfare of the young people brought before them (Hendrick, 2006). However, the murder of James Bulger in 1993 resulted in a media-induced confirmation of a crisis in childhood (Jenks, 1996) resulting in more punitive measures being introduced. The historical underpinning of children and youth welfare was undermined by self-responsibility and obligation (Muncie and Hughes, 2002; 4-5).

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 introduced new punitive powers. Most significantly secure training centres were established; children ages 12-14 could be detained in a private prison for up to 24 months (Goldson, 2006). Rutherford (1996) states that the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 reversed the decarcerative provisions of youth justice law and policy that dated back to the Children Act 1908.

In 1996 the Audit Commission published its first report on the youth justice system in England and Wales. The report argues that the youth justice system was ineffective and
offered no value for money, and pushed for a shift from punitive to more preventative measures, through multi-agency work (Audit Commission, 1996). “[T]he causes of offending were side-stepped by the identification of risk conditions” (Muncie, 2009: 299) and broad philosophies of justice and welfare were ignored in favour of a “pragmatic strategy to prevent offending” (Muncie, 2009: 299). The Audit Commission (1999) promoted its own performance management targets in line with risk assessment and statutory responsibility to meet performance targets.

### 2.4 Diversion from the youth justice system replaced by Risk factor prevention

New Labour entered government in the UK in 1997 with the intent to be “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime” (Labour Party, 1997: 22). Promising a radical overhaul of the youth justice system, this ideology was filtered into youth justice from the start of New Labour’s term, in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). The implementation of this act was the beginning of the most extensive overhaul of youth justice services in fifty years (Goldson, 2000b). The reform to youth justice reflected much of the Audit Commission agenda and placed an emphasis on the need for local authorities, the police, health and probation to work collaboratively (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998: s.38); and for the first time was given the statutory duty “to prevent offending by children and young persons” (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998: s.37). As a result of the act the youth justice board (YJB) was set up (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998: s.41) to oversee the newly created system of inter-agency youth offending teams (YOTs) (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998: s.39). Youth justice teams were replaced by youth offending teams; the former were designed to divert young people from court and custody, YOTs were designed to directly intervene in criminal, disorderly or anti-social behaviour (Goldson, 2000a).

The purpose of youth justice in England and Wales was reformed to prevent offending; previous debates surrounding welfare and justice were replaced with this new agenda of prevention (Muncie, 2009). To implement new programmes, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships were established in 1999. The idea was to promote and mainstream best practice on a basis of what works; zero-tolerance disorder reduction increased against the anti-social youth (Muncie, 2009). Legislation, policy and practice initiatives mushroomed from 1997 onwards. The focus on prevention opened up a raft of initiatives, pilot schemes,
action plans, targets, crackdowns, not only on criminal behaviour, but on disorderly, nuisance, and anti-social behaviour (Muncie, 2009).

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced powers for courts to implement antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs). The ASBO is a civil, rather than criminal, order, lasting a minimum of two years, which can be made by the police or local authority on anyone over ten years old whose behaviour is thought likely to cause alarm, distress or harassment. However, breach of the ASBO is considered a criminal offence, punishable by up to two years imprisonment for juveniles, and five years for adults (Muncie, 2009). The act also introduced parenting orders. These are civil penalties placing a mandatory requirement on the parents of young offenders and school refusers to engage in some form of parenting education (Ghate et al., 2008).

In 2006, Prime Minister Blair declared that criminality could be predicted (Blair, 2006). Largely based upon the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development (see Farrington et al., 1996), the identification of risk factors (e.g. poor child rearing, hyperactivity, low intelligence) have led many to assert that early intervention is the most hopeful method to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (see for example Sherman et al., 1997; Farrington, 2007; Farrington and Welsh, 2007). In addition the identification of protective factors (i.e. factors which are the opposite of, or signify the absence of, risk) is believed to help protect children and young people against crime involvement (Rutter, 1990; Hawkins et al., 1992). Farrington et al., (1996) claim that the best predictor of future criminality or anti-social behaviour is if a child has a convicted parent by the age of ten. However, critics state that the risk factor approach as applied to law and order is effectively targeting and disciplining failing families (Pitts, 2001: 97). Furthermore, Webster et al., (2006) found that over 50 per cent of their sample had never offended, despite being considered high risk on Farrington’s measures. Webster et al., (2006) draw attention to the influence of political and structural factors upon youth offending, including previous involvement in the YJS, police practice, unemployment and poverty. In addition McArta and McVie (2007) suggest that police decision-making, as gatekeepers to the justice system, is a key risk factor drawing young people into the youth justice system, rather than dysfunctional families. The authors have

further argued for non-interventionist policy based on their findings (Smith and McAra, 2004). Armstrong et al.’s (2005) evaluation of the Government’s On Track programme, with secondary school children aged ten to sixteen, found that risk or protective factors associated with offending may not be associated with recorded crime of that group, or with offending by young people not in school.

In addition, “little is known about the causal processes that intervene between risk factors and offending” (Farrington, 2003: 207). As Wikström (2007: 131) highlights the “main problem with the risk factor approach is... its general lack of consideration of the problems of establishing causation (differentiating between causes and correlates), and the problem of identifying plausible causal mechanisms (providing explanation)”. Annison (2005: 119) further asserts that “while risk assessment tools have provided a structured approach to risk assessment of young people who offend, the wider social, cultural and political context also needs to be considered.” However, the government has continued to implement new policies with the risk factor prevention agenda. The Police and Justice Act 2006 extended the range of agencies that can apply for anti-social behaviour contracts. Furthermore, the Youth Crime Action Plan 2008, a cross-governmental analysis of what we further need to do to tackle youth crime, advocated a triple track approach of tougher punishment and enforcement, targeted earlier intervention, and non-negotiable parenting support. The emphasis of the action plan was on young offenders to face up to their crimes, and meet with victims (HM Government, 2008).

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 introduced the Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO), a new generic community sentence for young people which combines a number of existing sentences. The YRO “aims to simplify sentencing for young people, while improving the flexibility of interventions” (Justice, 2011). There are 18 different types of requirement that can be attached to a YRO, these are:

- Activity Requirement
- Curfew Requirement
- Exclusion Requirement
- Local Authority Residence Requirement
- Education Requirement
- Mental Health Treatment Requirement
Chapter 2

- Unpaid Work Requirement (16/17 years)
- Drug Testing Requirement
- Intoxicating Substance Misuse Requirement
- Supervision Requirement
- Electronic Monitoring Requirement
- Prohibited Activity Requirement
- Drug Treatment Requirement
- Residence Requirement
- Programme Requirement
- Attendance Centre Requirement
- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (based on the current ISSP)
- Intensive Fostering (Justice, 2011).

The YRO is underpinned by a risk assessment\(^5\) of the young person, to construct a tailored community disposal package. Alongside this, in 2009 the scaled approach\(^6\) was introduced which proposed to match the intensity of the YOTs work with a young person’s assessed likelihood of reoffending and risk of serious harm to others (YJB, 2009).

### 2.4.1 National standards and case management

Since YOTs were implemented in 1998, national standards for youth justice services have been published which set out guidance for organisations providing youth justice services (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.41(5)(b)(iii); YJB, 2004; YJB, 2010b). The national standards are published jointly by the Ministry of Justice, Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the YJB.

In addition, case management guidance, published by the YJB, “provides a comprehensive overview of how to deliver youth justice services in the community” (YJB, 2010b:2), based on:

> “the YJB’s Key Elements of Effective Practice summaries\(^7\), associated source documents and other YJB guidance documents, as well as external guidance, statutory guidance, legislation and emerging practice. It also recognises that

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\(^5\) See section 3.4 for a more detailed account of assessment in youth justice

\(^6\) See section 3.4 for a more detailed account of the scaled approach to youth justice

\(^7\) The Key Elements of Effective Practice are reviews commissioned to serve as background source documents to accompany guidance produced by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), identifying key elements of effective practice in interventions in the youth justice context... the reviews offer an accessible guide to the current state of the evidence base on effective interventions and services, helping youth justice practitioners and managers to be aware of and deliver more rigorously evidence-based services (YJB, 2008).
effective work with children and young people who offend is based on the quality of the relationship between the case manager and the child or young person, and the techniques used to engage children, young people and their parents/carers”.

YJB (2010b:3)

Despite the introduction of such guidance, it remains unclear how the guidelines are implemented in practice, and what practitioners and organisations providing youth justice services do. There is very little research on the delivery of youth justice services in practice, particularly focusing on practitioners experience, and the context within which they deliver interventions to young people. As Case (2007) points out, youth justice practitioners are somewhat neglected in both policy consultation and research.

2.5 YOT practice is complicated by political, structural and cultural issues, which should be understood from the practitioners’ perspective

Stahlkopf (2008: 457) highlights that the organisational context of YOT practice encompasses active interaction between political influence, structural forces, and cultural elements. Chan (1999) explored the complex relationship between structural conditions, cultural knowledge and practice, asserting that police practitioners make choices shaped by cultural assumptions and structural constraints, which in turn determines practice (Chan, 1999: 105). Chan states that the connection between the three elements is fluid, and should be understood from the perspective of the participant, who is active in constructing their own environment within. Changes imposed from external bodies or the top may be resisted or ignored by staff at the operational level (Chan, 1999: 136). It is therefore important to consider the dynamic interaction of political influence, structure and culture on practice when exploring the processes and actions of YOT practitioners during the process of design and implementation of interventions or programmes of intervention with young people. As Stahlkopf (2008: 458) indicates “[Chan’s] model is helpful in providing a conceptualization of how structure, culture, and practice all interact with individuals within an organization such as the YOT”. Understanding political influence, structural influence and YOT culture is important to weave the influence they have on practice within a YOT (Stahlkopf, 2008); the three concepts are discussed further below.
2.5.1 Political Influence on YOT Practice

As previously discussed, debates on the rule-breaking of children and young people and juvenile justice have long been part of the political agenda in England and Wales. Many governments have weaved the breaking of rules by young people as a fundamental cause of disruption to maintaining the social order, into policy, legislation and practice. Stahlkopf (2008) claims that the relationship between politics, media and the public on criminal justice matters has shifted in recent times, they are “increasingly vulnerable to a consumerist public mentality and therefore to shifts of political reaction” (Stahlkopf, 2008: 458).

A consequence of this political attitude is that the government appears to come under increased pressure to deliver policies which are rapidly effective and successful. The volume and speed of policy and practice initiatives since the New Labour government were elected in 1997 have been remarkable (Muncie, 2009). As Burnett and Appleton (2004a) highlight, the fast-paced change and implementation of new policies, legislation and initiatives was felt strongly at the operational level with practitioners stating that it was difficult to keep up with the pace, and the quality of delivery was sacrificed as a result; a YOT manager describing this time as “just madness the amount of set-up stuff that is still coming” (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a: 19).

Wilcox (2003) highlights further the lack of attention given to the development of rigorous evaluation in the early stages of YOTs, and hence an evidence-based approach to youth justice was by-passed to develop and establish programmes as quickly as possible; a common critique from commentators and researchers in crime prevention is the lack of rigorous evaluation attributed to interventions (Baker, 2008; Britton and Farrant, 2008; Farrington and Loeber, 2001; Ghate et al, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Howell, 2003; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Leschied, 2000; Lipsey, 1995 and 1999; Lipsey and Wilson, 1998; Lösel, 1995; Mason and Prior, 2008; McGuire, 2002; McGuire et al, 2002; McGuire and Priestley, 1995; McLaren, 2000; NAO, 2006; Perry et al, 2008; RAND, 2006; Sherman et al, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

This pressure to deliver rapid, effective policy is seen by some commentators to be a driver of a managerialist approach to youth justice, which is focused on delivering efficient and cost-effective policies and practices, based on pragmatism rather than any fundamental
penal philosophy (Goldson, 2000; Muncie, 1999; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; McLaughlin, Muncie and Hughes, 2001). Managerialism is said to have been filtered into criminal justice in the early 1990s by the Conservative Government (Muncie, 2009). The value for money Audit Commission report 1996 is viewed as a key driver of new public managerialism (NPM) identified by New Labour as the route to an economical and accountable system which centralises and devolves state responsibility (Muncie and Hughes, 2002). The perceived result of NPM has been increased standards (focusing on identifying risk conditions, rather than causes of crime, through formulated standardised assessment tools) and performance measures, including the setting of statutory time limits from arrest to sentence, which are tied to funding, and enable auditing of efficiency and effectiveness, and comparative performance (to other YOTs nationally) (Muncie and Hughes, 2002).

Pitts (1999: 71) asserts, with regard to national standards and practice, that youth justice workers are not disinterested experts who provide value-free opinions. Practitioners manage the tension between their role to the courts and to the young people they are professionally bound to work with (Pitts, 1999); “Effective work with young offenders requires much more than managing, improving and accounting for performance levels” (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 19). Practitioners, working with young people, have always recognised those they work with as young people in need as well as offenders (Eadie and Canton, 2002). However, youth justice has become viewed as an accountable results-oriented business, where clients (young people) are seen as customers, philosophical debates of welfare and justice are side-stepped, and attention to the processes and practice of staff at the operational level is neglected (Muncie, 2009). Eadie and Canton (2002: 14) acknowledge that perceived managerialist approaches “believing that accountability demands minimal discretion, have made it harder for practitioners to do justice to the diversity of individuals’ circumstances”.

Other researchers identify this managerialist shift through empirical studies of YOTs. Souhami (2007) presents an extensive ethnographic study of a youth justice team during the period of transition into a YOT. This period was one of severe disruption, anxiety and uncertainty for youth justice practitioners as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was implemented, transforming the structure of youth justice both nationally and locally. The very nature and purpose of youth justice was called into question, and wider issues of
occupational identity and culture were of crucial importance (Souhami, 2007). The introduction of new national standards brought about increased transparency in practitioners work which they felt inappropriately compromised their professional discretion (Souhami, 2007). Further tensions are highlighted by Burnett and Appleton (2004a) as funding was held back from YOTs that failed to meet the targets and performance measures, practitioners raised concern with meeting the targets in the following year with less funding at their disposal.

2.5.2 Structural Influence on YOT Practice

During the formative years YOTs received multiple grants and funding. Burnett and Appleton, (2004a: 19) described this as the establishment of “a ‘Rolls Royce’ service” on some levels. What they noted however was the lack of “resources for ‘core services’: assessment and preparation of pre-sentence reports, court duties; one-to-one supervision of young people; case records” (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a: 19). Funding instead was allocated to specialist projects such as substance misuse and restorative justice, which YOTs were invited to apply for, introducing a competitive market approach to funding for YOT managers. YOT staff described it as a period of “champagne and caviar but not enough bread” (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a: 20) as core services suffered from being under-funded. Research has continued to support these observations, highlighting that many YOTs still have difficulty in accessing resources for core practice (Cooper et al., 2007; Mason and Prior, 2008).

It has been further highlighted that YOTs were having difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff (Audit Commission, 2004: 62). Burnett and Appleton (2004a) from their in-depth case study of a YOT, report that qualifications were not regarded as important when recruiting staff during the early stages of the implementation of YOTs. As a result the quality of work in practice decreased (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami, 2007).

The Audit Commission (2004: 62) reported that YOTs lack clear mechanisms to evaluate staff performance, good or poor performance may not be acknowledged appropriately, resulting in staff feeling that performance is low priority. In recent years, YOTs were required to
restructure and reorganise due to cuts of up to 30% from their budgets. This would suggest that access to resources is becoming increasingly strained (Puffet, 2012).

2.5.3 YOT Culture

The relationship between policy and practice is complex, and implementing national standards in practice is influenced by occupational culture (Eadie and Canton, 2002). Occupational culture refers to values, attitudes, rules, practice wisdom, knowledge and skills within an organisation (Eadie and Canton, 2002; Souhami, 2007). As practitioners respond to situations and challenges confronting them, they draw on professional, historical and cultural traditions to make sense of their work (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 15). Both internal dynamics and external influence impact occupational culture within an organisation; this culture cannot be controlled as it is fluid and complex (Eadie and Canton, 2002; Souhami, 2007). Important aspects of members’ occupational experience tend to be overlooked in cultural work and particularly in accounts of youth justice (Eadie and Canton, 2002; Souhami, 2007).

Souhami (2007: 39-40) presents three frameworks which have come to dominate organisational cultural thinking, as developed by Martin (1992; 2002), Martin and Meyerson (1988) and Meyerson and Martin (1987). The three perspectives are:

- Integration – understood in terms of “what people share”, or common underlying assumptions. If there is disagreement, then “that group does not have culture with regard to those things” (Schein, 191: 247-8).

- Differentiation – emphasising difference and conflict, or competing and overlapping sub-cultures. Within the subcultures, there is agreement; between sub cultures there is no agreement.

- Fragmentation – the central concept of this perspective is the uncertainty of cultural experiences. Ambiguity is the essence of organisational culture, operating in a fluid, uncertain form.


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8 See chapter 5 for further discussion of youth justice funding and cuts to YOT budgets.
The authors stress that these frameworks should not be seen as objective representation of an organisation, rather each perspective provides a “subjectively imposed framework” which can be “imposed on the process of collecting and analysing cultural data” (Souhami, 2007: 39).

During the implementation of YOTs, Burnett and Appleton (2004b: 51) concluded that the new multi-agency approach had begun to realise positive changes. They further highlight that the attitude of YOT workers at this time was one of enthusiasm and optimism. Holdaway et al., (2001) report similar findings that YOT workers had positive and enthusiastic attitudes. They also state that there was evidence of cultural hangovers from the previous youth justice teams. Furthermore conflict surrounding the implementation of case working, and resistance to management attempts to introduce evidence-based practice, was apparent (Ellis and Boden, 2004). Bailey and Williams (2000) also report conflict, during the early stages of YOT implementation, between the different agencies working in YOTs. Maguire et al., (2001) found the opposite, stating that despite the conflicting cultures of police and probation officers, which created tensions, working relationships between different agencies were positive. Stahlkopf (2008) further asserts that the cultural outlook of staff during the implementation period of YOTs was positive, despite political and structural pressure.

2.6 Conclusion
To understand responses to the rule breaking of young people it is important to consider the broad socio-political context. It is apparent that responses in England and Wales have long been underpinned by philosophical debates between welfare and justice. Welfare-oriented approaches dominated official responses, despite increased criminal justice intervention over time. It is further apparent that youth crime increased from the 1960s onwards, and despite recorded crime figures showing that this increase had levelled off in the 1980s, self-report studies report that youth crime continued to increase; suggesting that changes in policy and practice approaches from law enforcement agencies were having an impact on the levels of recorded crime, whilst actual crime has continued to increase (Farrington, 1992; 1996).
Furthermore, Garland (2001: 172) asserts that contemporary ‘[youth] justice is now more vulnerable to shifts of public mood and political reaction’. Garland (2001) argues that there has been a decline in the rehabilitative ideal (the assumption that people can be reformed), and a re-emergence of retributive forms of justice (just deserts) which allow for justification of more punitive sanctions in contemporary justice. The overarching pressures of managerialism place further pressures on the youth justice system through increasing financial oversight and control by government, the use of performance indicators, and cost-effectiveness as a primary value in service delivery. Garland (2002) asserts that a culture of control has emerged due to the decline of penal-welfarism (that punishments should aim, where possible, to reform) and the changing structures of contemporary society. ‘Late modernity and the new politics to which it gave rise, changed how organisations thought about punishment, justice and control, just as it changed the terrain on which these organisations operated.’ (Garland, 2001: 103).

A perceived managerialist approach to youth justice emerged in the 1990s, which places higher accountability on those delivering youth justice services to provide efficient and cost effective work. Following the implementation of YOTs in 1998, national standards for youth justice placed requirements and responsibility on YOT managers to deliver key measurable objectives and standards; shifting practice to a more technical process (Eadie and Canton, 2002). It is argued “that best practice requires both high accountability and wide discretion” (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 14); managerialist approaches appear to indicate that the professional judgements and discretion of YOT workers is reduced. New Labour’s tough on crime stance has further supported this argument.

However, the limited empirical research on YOT practice and the implementation of YOTs suggests that the new collaborative approach and inter-agency working had begun to realise positive results (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a). Furthermore the cultural outlook of YOT workers appeared positive (Holdaway et al., 2001; Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami, 2007; Stahlkopf, 2008). Doubts over structural influence on YOT practice remain a concern, especially regarding funding to YOTs, access to resources for core practice, and the skills and retention of YOT workers (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Cooper et al., 2007; Mason and Prior, 2008).
The current approach to young people who offend in England and Wales is intervention through the youth justice system, and this work is predominantly carried out by YOTs. It is therefore important to review what work YOTs do and what is known about effective practice. The following chapter will address these questions.
Chapter 3
Effective practice

3.1 Introduction
Chapter two discussed official responses to rule-breaking by young people. The dominant risk factor prevention approach to offending behaviour utilised by the UK government has received much criticism. However, youth justice policy and practice are still based on the risk factor prevention paradigm. Because this approach remains so widely enforced, it is essential to understand what is known about the best practice within the risk-led context. This chapter is divided into five sections, providing an extensive overview of research and literature regarding the process of designing, implementing and delivering programmes of intervention with young offenders.

The first section addresses which features of interventions are effective with young offenders. It is argued that research and literature which underpins youth justice practice is based on studies and reviews which do not address the root causes of offending behaviour. Rather, studies focus on the reduction of risk of reoffending, which confuses prediction and causation of offending behaviour, when applied in practice. This literature suggests that key features are interventions which are based on careful assessment, linked to established need and are individually appropriate, have some focus on cognitive skills, are multi-modal, contain an element of reparation, are delivered as designed, and have long-term contact and engagement time, although quality of contact is asserted to be more important than quantity.

The second section addresses the key components of implementation of an intervention. Research suggests that aspects of implementation have been widely neglected in preventive intervention studies, despite the stated importance of implementation research to achieving successful intervention outcomes.

The third section discusses the role of assessment in youth justice, which is identified within the risk factor reduction literature as a vital prerequisite for interventions with young offenders. The assessment tool used in youth justice, Asset, is critically appraised, arguing
that the use of such assessment tools is too individualistic and may neglect wider social problems and are not addressing the root causes of offending behaviour. Furthermore, the use of asset arguably deskills and reduces the professional discretion of practitioners through the routinisation of practice.

The fourth section will examine key factors involved in the delivery of interventions, covering offender classification, intervention planning, and core features of supervision. If an intervention is in principle effective, poor delivery of the programme suggests that the potential effectiveness would decrease. Furthermore, research increasingly highlights the importance of a quality relationship between practitioners and offenders to successfully engage a young person during an intervention.

The fifth section highlights the importance of staff knowledge, experience and training in the design, implementation, and delivery of programmes of intervention with young offenders. Research suggests there is a lack of evidence on the training of practitioners in youth justice in the UK (Baker, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Sherman et al., 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). However, it is acknowledged that staff should have the requisite skills and training or motivation to fully carry out interventions with young people in the youth justice system (Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

3.2 Effective interventions
A key concern regarding research and literature on effective offending behaviour intervention is the basis for which the reviews and conclusions are based. Since the 1990s there has been an increase in research and literature emphasising what works in relation to both adult and youth offending in the UK and the USA (see for example, McGuire, 2002; McGuire et al, 2002; McGuire and Priestley, 1995; McLaren, 2000; Prior, 2005; Whyte, 2004). Researchers have tried to establish which interventions for offenders can be demonstrated to be effective using meta-analyses9 (Lipsey, 1995 and 1999; Lipsey and

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9 “Meta-Analysis was designed to synthesize empirical relationships across studies, such as the effects of a specific crime prevention intervention on criminal offending behaviour. Meta-analysis focuses on the size and direction of effects across studies, examining the consistency of effects and the relationship between study features and observed effects. The findings from meta-analysis not only reveal robust empirical relationships but also identify existing weaknesses in the knowledge base. Furthermore, meta-analytic results can easily be translated into summary statistics useful for informing public policy regarding effective crime prevention efforts” (Wilson, 2001: 71).
Wilson, 1998; Lösel, 1995; McGuire et al, 2002; Wasserman and Miller, 1998). However, these meta-analyses and reviews are based on studies which do not address the causes of offending behaviour, and will therefore produce results which are not effective for addressing offending behaviour. Focus is on reducing the risk that an individual will commit offences in the future, and not addressing the root causes of that behaviour. For an intervention which intends to reduce the likelihood of offending behaviour, it is important that the intervention addresses the root causes of offending in order to achieve any change in offending behaviour (Wikström, 2007; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

However, current youth justice practice is directed by these risk-focused meta-analyses and systematic reviews. The authors of these meta-analyses stress the “lack of rigorous research evidence upon which such analyses can draw… [and] the lack of evidence about why some interventions work better than others” (Mason and Prior, 2008: 10). Furthermore, these meta-analyses tell us very little about what makes a difference when applying interventions in practice, and the techniques or lessons required for practice when interventions are implemented (Mason and Prior, 2008). Much of the intervention research currently conducted are “small in scale, slight in ambition or poor in execution” (Newburn and Souhami, 2005: 378). Consequently leaving some distance to go to having “clear and robust messages” (Newburn and Souhami, 2005: 378) for those attempting to design interventions that will prevent offending by young people or mitigate criminal careers. As Lösel (2001: 70) further asserts “there are far fewer methodologically well-founded treatment studies on specific types of programmes, offenders and settings than the general what works discussion would suggest”.

Meta-analyses of interventions have sought to establish which interventions are effective based on rigorous evaluation evidence, including programmes that are preventative and those that target different types of offenders (Mason and Prior, 2008). These reviews focus on outcomes. In other words, which interventions lead to reduced reoffending or reduced onset of their participants’ offending (Mason and Prior, 2008). In their systematic review of engaging young offenders, Mason and Prior (2008: 10) conclude that effective interventions are those that:

- Are based on careful assessment.
• Link interventions to established need and thus are individually appropriate (using risk and protective factors framework).
• Include an element that focuses upon cognitive skills.
• Are multi-modal (address different aspects of the young offenders’ behaviour or lives, for example by working with the family as well as providing a range of direct support), and with elements that are co-ordinated or interrelated.
• Include an element of reparation.
• Are delivered as designed (are based on programmes that have demonstrated they are effective and are delivered as such, so that they have programme integrity).
• Have long-term engagement and contact time (the greater amount available, the greater the impacts), particularly for persistent and more serious offenders; continuity of contact is important.

In another extensive review of effective interventions, Utting and Vennard (2000: 79) conclude that more effective programmes

“target high and medium risk offenders; are well-structured; use an approach which challenges ways of thinking as well as behaving; address the full range of offending-related problems, including family and environmental problems as well as personal deficits; [and] adhere to agreed objectives and procedures”.

Adversely, it is improbable that such interventions are likely to have any impact if they are:

“given to low risk offenders; use vague, unstructured counselling; fail to recognise the influence (for better or worse) of families, friends and peers in young offenders’ lives; [are] unable to address the multiple problems presented by the more persistent and serious young offenders, including poor mental health and drug and alcohol abuse; [and are] too brief or diluted to establish the conditions in which young offenders can make sustainable changes in their lives” (Utting and Vennard, 2000: 79).

McNeill and Batchelor (2004: 49) criticise these general conclusions, which they indicate are “informative and useful in guiding local strategy and practice, [however] they must be interpreted with appropriate caution”. Furthermore, in the instance that infinite resources
Chapter 3

were available, the simplicity of designing or buying-in programmes, and evidencing these principles may be difficult and / or impractical for numerous reasons:

- Individual issues: it would need to be clear the persistent offenders in the local population were sufficiently similar to those subjected to the interventions in the research studies.
- Cultural issues: even were such similarities apparent, the cultural appropriateness and intelligibility of the programmes would need to be carefully assessed.
- Contextual issues: a further critical difficulty with reviews like those considered above is that, even if we were convinced that the effectiveness principles represented a reasonable distillation of what works, such reviews have less to say about how, why, by whom and in which conditions change is achieved; questions which are as a minimum as important as what works?.

(Adapted from McNeill and Batchelor, 2004: 49).

Dumas et al., (2001: 39) highlight that “traditional outcome research has... more often assumed, rather than demonstrated, that participants received the intervention(s) they were supposed to receive as designed”. Pawson and Tilley (1998) assert that there is the need for understanding the individualised contexts and processes of change involved, when replicating successful programmes of intervention. Furthermore, “by designing out flexibility, adaptability and individualisation, too systematic and programmatic an approach to developing effectiveness might frustrate its own objectives (McNeill and Batchelor, 2004: 50).

In particular, placing too much emphasis on reviews of meta-analyses has led to the perception that “everything is now known that needs to be known about how to implement effective crime prevention with persistent offenders” (McGuire, 2002: 163). Additionally, although “findings represent only the clearest or most consistent trends emerging from the meta-analytic reviews”, there still remains an abundance of unanswered questions, with many issues still requiring clarification (McGuire, 2002: 163).

Furthermore, as Lipsey (1999: 163) highlights: “The more specific one attempts to be in regard to the nature of effective programs for particular sorts of juveniles, the fewer
relevant studies there are to analyse”, and that categorically speaking rehabilitative intervention does work with juvenile offenders; however, “not every intervention works in every application” (Lipsey, 1999: 163).

“The challenge presented by the research evidence is not to the premise that rehabilitative intervention can be effective, nor to the promise that its effects can be of meaningful magnitude, but to rehabilitative practice, which can be either very effective or very ineffective depending upon how it is carried out” (Lipsey, 1999: 164).

Wikström and Treiber (2008) summarise their systematic review on offender behaviour programmes stating that the facets of effective intervention are:

1. Programmes and interventions that have proven promising or effective through appropriate evaluation procedures (e.g. randomised experimentation and correct interpretation of outcomes) have the greatest potential to provide effective intervention when applied to routine practices (other interventions risk wasting time and resources).

2. Effective implementation and delivery of interventions and programmes requires an understanding of the theoretical basis of the intervention (e.g. what it intends to effect, and how).

3. Effective implementation and delivery is critical to the success of an intervention, and should be carefully structured and continuously monitored and supervised by qualified practitioners to ensure that the programme is doing what it is meant to do.

Wikström and Treiber (2008: 58)

Wikström and Treiber further state that the core of selection and implementation of any intervention should be these principles, which will “provide the best opportunity to derive appreciable results from promising interventions” (Wikström and Treiber, 2008: 58). It is essential that an intervention will have the desired effect before issues regarding implementation are considered. If an intervention is based on ineffective criteria or methods, the way the intervention is implemented is irrelevant, as that intervention would not have the desired effect however it is implemented. Crime prevention intervention must address the causes of offending behaviour in order to change that behaviour.
3.3 Implementation

Research and literature focused on effective interventions identifies a complex process in determining the success of an intervention. Implementation is highlighted as a key factor to the successful outcomes of interventions with young offenders. Despite the stated importance of implementation research, it is surprising that a key shortcoming in many preventive intervention studies is that investigators assess programme outcomes while failing to examine most, or any, aspects of implementation (Durlak, 1997; Durlak and Wells, 1998; Gresham et al., 1993; Dane and Schnieder, 1998). Understanding and monitoring variation in the implementation of an intervention is a vital prerequisite to the evaluation of outcomes. A growing number of prevention programmes have monitored implementation extensively and have shown that variability in the quality of implementation is related to programme outcomes (see Domitrovich and Greenberg, 2000).

Implementation quality is also referred to as treatment integrity, fidelity, or adherence (Dane and Schneider, 1998; Dobson and Cook, 1980; Domitrovich and Greenberg, 2000; Dumas et al., 2001; Elias et al., 2000; Gresham, 1989; Gresham et al., 1993; Bernfeld, Farrington and Leschied, 2001; Moncher and Prinz, 1991). An elementary definition of implementation is proposed by Yeaton and Sechrest as “the degree to which treatment is delivered as intended” (1981: 160); further described by Durlak as “what a program consists of in practice” (1995: 5) and how much it is delivered according to how it was designed (Durlak, 1998).

Key implementation components are advocated by Weissberg (1990), Chen (1990; 1998), Dane and Schneider (1998) and Domitrovich and Greenberg (2000); these components are advanced by Greenberg et al., (2005: 6) who advocate eight principles for studying and monitoring implementation:

1. **Effort Evaluation** - To know what actually happened.
2. **Quality Improvement** - To provide feedback for continuous quality improvement.
3. **Documentation** - To document compliance with legal and ethical guidelines.
4. **Internal Validity** - To strengthen the conclusions being made about program outcomes.
(5) **Programme Theory** - To examine whether the change process occurred as expected.

(6) **Process Evaluation** - To understand the internal dynamics and operation of an intervention programme.

(7) **Diffusion** - To advance knowledge regarding best practices for replicating, maintaining, and diffusing the programme.

(8) **Evaluation Quality** - To strengthen the quality of programme evaluations by reducing the error in the evaluation.

Fixsen et al. (2005) conducted an extensive review of implementation research and prescribe the following: practitioner selection, preservice and inservice training, ongoing consultation and coaching, staff and programme evaluation, facilitative administrative support, and systems interventions (external systems). Furthermore, the context in which the programme of intervention takes place is important to the success of implementation attempts (see Fixsen et al., 2005).

Greenhalgh et al. (2004) further point toward the role of the adopter (i.e. the person implementing the programme of intervention). They identify seven aspects of adopters and the adoption process, based on Rogers’s (1995) extensive overview of the wider literature on adoption: (1) general psychological antecedents; (2) context-specific psychological antecedents; (3) meaning; (4) the adoption decision; (5) concerns in preadoption stage; (6) concerns during early use; (7) and concerns in established users. The first four aspects have a common denominator of motivation, commitment, and skills of the adopter; does the adopter have the required skills, values, intellectual abilities, and / or motivation to adopt the innovation? The latter three aspects concern the context and system of support in which the innovation operates; are the requirements of the innovation clear and appropriate for the setting? Is there a continued system of training, support, evaluation, and feedback?

Implementation is evidently a key aspect to the successful outcomes of an intervention, specifically in providing the context and means for which the intervention is delivered. Research highlights the importance of practitioner selection and training before and during

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10 Fixsen et al., (2005: 29) define these as “strategies to work with external systems to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of the practitioners.”
an intervention which is supplemented with ongoing support and consultation. Practitioner characteristics and relationships with the service user are also identified as key to the effective implementation of the intervention. These issues will be further discussed, beginning with a review of the use of assessment in youth justice.

3.4 Assessment
Assessment is perceived to be the foundation of effective work with young people. However, as stated previously, these conclusions are based on meta-analyses and systematic reviews which raise important concerns regarding the basis of their reviews. If they are not reviewing studies which are addressing the causes of offending behaviour the results will not provide the required answers regarding effective intervention for crime prevention programmes.

General agreement from meta-analyses and systematic reviews of interventions is that the foundation of effective work with young people who offend is assessment. Furthermore, it is asserted that the role of appropriate assessment is clear in ascertaining the young person’s level of need or magnitude of risk to be addressed, and the appropriate interventions assigned to the young person (Baker, 2008; Britton and Farrant, 2008; Farrington and Loeber, 2001; Ghate et al, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Howell, 2003; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Leschield, 2000; Lipsey, 1995 and 1999; Lipsey and Wilson, 1998; Lösel, 1995; Mason and Prior, 2008; McGuire, 2002; McGuire et al, 2002; McGuire and Priestley, 1995; McLaren, 2000; NAO, 2006; Perry et al, 2008; RAND, 2006; Sherman et al, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

In a systematic review of Assessment, Planning Interventions and Supervision, Baker (2008) highlights that assessment provides the basis of work with young people who offend or who are at risk of offending, which steers focus for the selection of appropriate interventions; hence the aim of assessment should be to guide action (Reder et al, 1993:83). The assessment tool used by the YOS in England and Wales is the young offender assessment profile (ASSET).

Asset is a structured assessment tool used by YOTs in England and Wales on all young offenders who come into contact with the criminal justice system (YJB, 2009b). The tool
looks at a young person’s offence(s) and identifies a multitude of factors or circumstances across 12 core areas:

- Living arrangements
- Family and personal relationships
- Education, training and employment
- Neighbourhood
- Lifestyle
- Substance use
- Physical health
- Emotional and mental health
- Perception of self and others
- Thinking and behaviour
- Attitudes to offending
- Motivation to change

The extent to which a section is associated with the likelihood of further offending is rated on a 0-4 scale, 0 being no association, progressively through to 4 being very strongly associated (YJB, 2009b). The information gathered from Asset can be used to inform court reports, and interventions. Furthermore the tool can assist in measuring change in needs and risk of reoffending over time (YJB, 2009b).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, research evidence to date indicates that effective intervention programmes are multi-modal and based upon a holistic assessment of young people’s needs. Farrow et al., (2007: 53 - 76) drawing on a detailed account from practice, advocate further that a holistic approach to assessing a young person is crucial to successful engagement in an intervention programme. They see this as a strong precursor in the development of an effective relationship between the practitioner and young person, which avoids “imposing an adult, impersonal, professional interpretation too early in the process”; hence “the importance of collaborative, interactive and motivational methods” and “particularly the principle of empathy” (Farrow et al., 2007: 59). The Key Elements of Effective Practice documents further highlight that as part of a holistic assessment, it may be appropriate to involve family members as well as the young person (Baker, 2008; Britton and Farrant, 2008; Ghate et al, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008).

The use of risk assessment tools has attracted much criticism. The limits of risk assessment tools to accurately identify causal relationships between risk factors and offending, is
problematic (Kemshall, 2008). Farrington (2000: 7) asserts “a major problem of the risk factor prevention paradigm is to determine which risk factors are causes ... [i]t is also important to establish processes or developmental pathways that intervene between risk factors and outcomes”. Risk factors “over-simplify the complex interactions and psychosocial and structural mechanisms ... as well as further overstating the ability of [risk factor research] and practice to distinguish the aetiology of offending (the causal influence of risk factors)” (Case, 2007:97). Webster et al., (2006) further criticize these assessment tools for focusing too much on individual factors and neglecting the wider complex social problems. Furthermore, Field (2007: 312) has voiced concern that the use of such assessment tools might contribute to the development of a practice culture that may “marginalize the status of concern for the welfare of the young person as an objective within the system”. It is further argued that the de-skilling of professionals and loss of professional discretion (Eadie and Canton, 2002; Pitts, 2001) is confounded by assessment tools through the routinisation of practice (Baker, 2005). Smith sums this up in his assertion that the introduction of Asset alludes to “[t]he core beliefs of those who see a central place for individual decision making and imaginative decision-making in working with young offenders are thus fundamentally challenged” (2007: 114). However, Pheonix (2010: 121) suggests, despite the use of standardised assessment tools, such as asset, which provide an “objective task of assessing”, YOT workers make their own subjective assessments.

Further criticisms are directed at the YJB’s introduction of the scaled approach in November 2009, which proposed to match the intensity of the YOT’s work with a young person’s assessed likelihood of reoffending and risk of serious harm to others (YJB, 2009). The basis of this system was the existing framework of Assessment, Planning Interventions and Supervision (APIS) (YJB, 200411). APIS provides the basis for youth justice practice, underwritten by minimum National Standards (YJB, 2004; [updated] YJB, 200912). National Standards aim to ensure fair, equitable and consistent practice across the youth offending service (YJB, 2009). The model incorporates assessment and reassessment, design and redesign of sentence planning, and supervision, in a continuous cycle (as shown in figure 1).

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Introducing a risk-led approach is intended to allow an intentional differentiation between interventions according to the risks and needs of young people. The scaled approach to intervention is based on assessed level of risk, and improved “practice in Asset completion, pre-sentence report (PSR) writing and intervention planning” (YJB, 2007a: 3). The intention is to allow YOTs to target resources effectively; however, this raises accountability and defensibility of decisions (Kemshall, 1998). Robinson (1999) has highlighted that practitioners do not always share the objectives and values of the risk factor prevention paradigm. Kemshall et al., (2005) further highlight that professional discretion can still mediate risk principles, and risk led interventions do not necessarily follow from risk led assessments (Kemshall, 1998, 2003).

Sutherland (2009) raises three important questions regarding the introduction of the scaled approach. Firstly, one prescribed change from the previous model to the scaled approach is that guidance will be more prescriptive on the level and type of intervention, which is directly dependent on the offence seriousness and the Asset score. Risk is fluid and changeable (Kemshall, 1998), which infers that the scaled approach carries an assumption that as risks change, as will the level of intervention; matching the proposed amount of intervention to risk level will be central (YJB, 2007a). This raises an important question regarding perception from ministers, courts, and the general public of a young person who commits a serious offence but presents few assessed risks and is hence given a community order with minimal intervention. On what basis is the sentence justified? (Sutherland, 2009), and can the media or the general public be expected to differentiate between treatment and
punishment? Likewise can young people be expected to make this distinction? (Sutherland, 2009).

Sutherland (2009) also raises an important question regarding resources. Assumptions are made by the introduction of the scaled approach that resources are readily available to fit the needs of the young person, and that the young person can access these provisions as needed. There will be inevitable differences from one YOT to the next regarding access to resources. Previous research indicates that the majority of YOTs would have difficulty accessing resources (see Cooper et al., 2007; Mason and Prior, 2008). This in turn raises questions surrounding the use of YOT funding; will this be allocated on the basis of the scaled approach? YOTs with high caseloads, particularly high risk caseloads, would require more funding than a YOT with low caseloads or caseloads with low or medium risk cases (Sutherland, 2009). In addition, how will YOTs focus their individual funding, and how will partner agencies be involved in this decision?

Furthermore Sutherland (2009) and HMIP (2004; 2005a; 2005b; 2006a) indicate that resources follow risk to a limited extent as they are not properly targeted. If this targeting is improved and young people receive exactly the services they were assessed as needing at the time, this indicates that the intervention is reactionary rather than preventative; what happens to the preventative agenda in this instance? (Sutherland, 2009). In addition, what is being addressed in an intervention? If the risks / needs of a young person are met at the time of an intervention, are the actual cause(s) of offending behaviour addressed? The risk / protective factors model which underpins this idea is essentially a-theoretical (Case, 2007; Wikström, 2007; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

3.5 Delivery of interventions

Delivery of an intervention is another critical part of establishing effective practice. If a programme or intervention is in principle effective, poor implementation and delivery of that programme would suggest that the potential effectiveness would decrease (Wikström and Treiber, 2008). Poorly implemented and delivered cognitive behavioural programmes (CBT), as demonstrated in meta-analytic research, are associated with smaller or no effects than programmes and interventions which are better implemented and delivered (e.g. Lipsey and Landenberger, 2006). This section will review the research and literature on what
is known about effective delivery of interventions and programmes, covering three broad themes. Firstly offender classification will be addressed, which informs the intensity of service provided to a young person. Secondly intervention planning is discussed, addressing the content of intervention plans. Thirdly supervision is examined, looking at relationships and contact between staff and offenders, case management, and compliance.

3.5.1 Offender classification

Baker (2008) asserts that offender classification can increase success without increasing cost. However, care must be taken as evidence suggests that inappropriately targeting interventions may have negative outcomes, especially when programmes which reduce recidivism in high risk offenders could increase recidivism in low risk offenders (Lowenkamp, Latessa and Holsinger, 2004). Baker (2008) advocates that interventions are based on comprehensive assessment, which takes into consideration “individual risk, need and circumstances” (Baker, 2008: 31). Asset can be used to classify offenders into groups. This data can be used to make a decision about the level of intensity of supervision. It is important to note here that offenders are not necessarily allocated into categories automatically, and professional judgement is still important; the classification system can provide an important baseline for decision-making (Baker, 2008: 32).

It is important to look beyond just risk of reoffending within offender classification. The heterogeneity of offenders receiving the same intervention, despite satisfying common eligibility criteria prior to acceptance on the programme, has been highlighted in numerous studies (Lowenkamp, Latessa and Holsinger, 2004; Moore et al., 2004; Gray et al., 2005; Baker, 2008). It is thus important that intervention plans are individually-tailored in order to have an impact on offending. In a system classifying offenders by risk it is important to take into account the different types of risk factors; static risk factors, which are historical factors, e.g. age at first offence, prior criminal history, and dynamic (changeable) risk factors, which are amenable to deliberate interventions (for example, substance abuse, unemployment) (YJB, 2010a).

Classification systems “oversimplify” (Mcghee and Waterhouse, 2007: 107). It is therefore important, as Baker (2008) asserts that such systems remain flexible in approach to respond
to changes in a young person’s situation or behaviour. These systems can provide benefits for practice, in guiding practitioners toward appropriate actions (Baker, 2008).

### 3.5.2 Intervention planning

Intervention plans should be designed to address the most significant risk and protective factors identified during the assessment (Baker, 2008; YJB, 2010a). A number of studies suggest there is little connection between assessment and the intervention plans subsequently produced (Merrington, 2001; Haslewood-Pocsik and Skinns, 2000; Bonta and Rugge, 2004; Sutherland, 2009).

As addressed previously, the targeting of specific factors is key when planning interventions. Baker (2008: 33) assessed the internal quality of intervention plans, against how closely the plans reflected the assessed risks and needs. Research indicates that intervention plans are often poor in quality (Moore et al., 2004; Baker et al., 2005; BSC, 2005; HMIP, 2006a; Sutherland et al., 2006; Sutherland, 2009). Sutherland (2009: 49-50), based on his study of the relationship between assessment, intervention planning and supervision (APIS), offers a number of possible explanations as to why there is a “seeming disparity between assessed risk and the setting of intervention objectives by practitioners”:

- There is a practical limit on how many objectives can be worked on during an intervention (Merrington, 2004);
- Some intervention plans only included objectives for the first three months of an order, whilst others considered the full length;
- Plans often contain targets for factors that were addressed as having no or little impact on offending behaviour (Baker et al., 2005; Baker, 2008: 33);
- Welfare issues were perhaps considered over reducing reoffending in particular cases;
- Plans may not be tailored to individual risk;
- Prioritisation of risk, may neglect the difficulties practitioners face trying to address them; particularly if a good working relationship has yet been established with the young person (Burnett, 2004).
Interventions should be targeted at factors most closely associated to offending, within the context of the risk principle. Dowden and Andrews (1999) highlight how targeting non-criminogenic factors may lead to an increase in recidivism. The YJB (2006) in its guidance on Asset, advises that sections scoring highest (3 or 4) should be targeted for intervention. Baker et al., (2005) and Sutherland et al., (2006) both found an unexpectedly low proportion of areas with relevant targets in intervention plans. This they suggest, due to the nature of the areas identified as proportionately low (family and personal relationships and lifestyle) may be attributed to practitioners’ difficulties in addressing targets when the problems identified involve other people (parents / carers / peers). Furthermore, research has identified that YOTs appeared to be providing a standard programme for all young people in their caseload, and interventions were not being tailored to assessed risk and need (Audit Commission, 2004; Baker, 2008; HMIP, 2006a; Sutherland et al., 2006). Evidently the research highlighted suggests there is disconnect between assessed risk and need and the targeting and objectives in interventions. In turn this would indicate that expected impact on reoffending may be less than expected.

3.5.3 Staff-offender relationships

Increasing attention is now being paid to the importance of a quality relationship between workers and offenders (Baker, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008). There is very little research focusing on the interaction between worker and young person. In youth justice this research is practically non-existent. This is echoed in findings from research with children and young people that have established the importance of such relationships within preventative services more generally (Edwards et al, 2006). Burnett and McNeill (2005) (discussing the role of the officer-offender relationship in probation, which McNeill (2006) argues is applicable to young people who offend) assert that despite relationships as a dimension being absent from discussions of effective practice and guides to effective practice, it has remained at the heart of practice and is now beginning to be recognised as the essential feature of interventions that rely on the interpersonal and relational skills at the centre of delivery. Practitioners have continued to identify relationship building as a prerequisite to influence change (Burnett, 1996; McNeill, 2001; Rex, 1999). Where these features are identified in research they centre on the importance of relationships and individualised interventions (Mason and Prior, 2008). Critics of evidence-based practice have argued that this focus limits the ability for practitioners to work in individualised and supportive ways
with offenders (Pitts, 2001). The overemphasis on programmes is such that the service user-worker relationship has come to be seen as almost incidental to the process of promoting change (Barry, 2000).

Drawing on their meta-analysis of effective interventions Dowden and Andrews (2004: 204-205) identify a set of five Core Correctional Practices (CCPs):

- effective use of authority
- modeling and reinforcing anti-criminal attitudes and behaviors
- teaching concrete problem-solving skills to the offender
- advocacy and brokerage with community services
- relationship factors – arguably the most important “this approach argues that the interpersonal influence exerted by the correctional staff member is maximized under conditions characterized by open, warm, and enthusiastic communication” (2004: 205).

They found that these principles were rarely used in programmes, but where there was evidence of these principles enabling an individually tailored approach, those interventions “were associated with substantially higher mean effect sizes than programs that did not” (2004:210).

McNeill and Batchelor (2002; 2004) similarly argue for change-focused practice that is based on sound assessments of need and the identification of appropriate support; developed through communication built on empathy and trust, and delivered through individualised active and participatory support. Burnett (2000: 15) states that “for influence to be exerted in interventions, good communication built on empathy and the establishment of trust are needed”. McNeill and Batchelor (2002) argue for a more desistance-focused approach, rather than focusing on the factors which led to offending. To address the wider context of young offenders’ lives, “the qualities and skills of workers remain vital in developing the relationships within which such magical processes occur” (McNeill and Batchelor, 2002:40); the worker needs to “sensitively and thoughtfully individualise the change process” (McNeill and Batchelor (2004: 68).
Eadie and Canton (2002) follow a similar stance to that of McNeill, advocating that practice must take into account the developmental stage, through which young people who offend are passing. The wisest course may be to support young people as they grow out of crime (Rutherford, 1986); practitioners “have to realise that adolescence is about testing boundaries, and help young people address problems so as to find alternative ways of behaving” (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 14). They assert that the reflective youth justice practitioner must remain “both accountable to the organisation and retain sufficient (that is, not unbounded) discretion and judgement” (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 14). Moreover, as with McNeill’s assertion, the authors stress the need for practitioners to be aware of the wider contextual issues as “[a]ny purposeful attempt to ‘address offending behaviour’ must take account of these influences, the reality of their lived experiences” (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 22, emphasis in original).

Raynor (2004) emphasises the significance of the interpersonal skills of professional staff. He highlights that interventions can be delivered as designed, but the relationship aspect should remain a prominent part of the process. Furthermore, the context of young people’s lives and the ability to refer young people onto other appropriate interventions, which can address the diversity of such contexts, should also maintain a significant role in the intervention process. McNeill (2006) further argues that neglecting the individuality and the impacts of social and material contexts in shaping individuals’ lives, in implementing structured programmes and prescribed interventions, will likely result in practice which is ineffective with young people who offend. McNeill views adolescence as a period of transition, “a period of malleability during which there may be the opportunity to enable the development of positive identities before negative messages are internalized” (McNeill, 2006: 133). Real progress can be made in the prevention of future offending through the quality of the relationship formed, at this crucial stage of personal development, between the professional and young person (Mason and Prior, 2008).

3.5.4 Research with adult offenders

There is a branch of research which addresses the features of the worker-offender relationship. Although this is with adult offenders, McNeill (2006) asserts that the research has resonance with that of young people who offend. In her study of the experiences of probationers and desistance from offending, Rex (1999) addresses the features of such
relationships and how they come to exert positive influences. As has been advocated elsewhere (see McNeill and Batchelor, 2002) those that attribute changes in their behaviour to probation supervision described it as active and participative. As many as half of the probationers Rex interviewed revealed feelings of personal loyalty and accountability towards their supervisors. Reinforcing pro-social behaviour was another prominent feature of probationers’ accounts of positive supervision, as well as being treated as people (rather than offenders); “engagement seemed to be generated by the commitment, both personal and professional, shown by probation officers” (Rex, 1999: 371). De Winter and Noom (2003) and Hill (1999) suggest that young people especially need to be treated as ordinary people, and “not simply in relation to one ‘problem’ or ‘disorder” (Hill, 1999: 135, emphasis in original) or simply as just “a client” (de Winter and Noom, 2003: 336). McNeill (2006: 133) uses these examples to highlight the centrality and significance that is placed on the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and young person who offends, and how this in turn is “likely to be particularly significant” in helping them to desist from crime; the evidence suggests that relationships matter a great deal in promoting and sustaining desistance (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005; Burnett and McNeill, 2005; McNeill et al., 2005; McNeill, 2006). When carrying out interventions with young people who offend it is “how interventions are delivered, the methods and context, which matters, along with the attention that is paid to the influences which continue to shape their lives into adulthood” (Farrow et al., 2007: 70). Williamson (2005: 13) suggests that practitioners should be “critical people at critical moments.”

3.5.5 The practitioner – young person relationship

Burnett (2004) highlights the lack of a satisfactory evidence base of interpersonal practice; “more research is needed to enrich our theoretical understanding of such interpersonal work and to build up an empirical evidence base” (Burnett, 2004: 191). Discussing the initial aims of the probation service, Burnett (2004: 181) states that “the essence of [the practitioners] role was to provide a supportive relationship, based on the assumption that this relationship would be influential and would facilitate change”. Studies have highlighted the significance that offenders can attach to their relationships with practitioners, and the consequential impact that this has on their self-perceptions and life choices (Brown, 1998; Kelly, 1997; Rex, 1999; for discussion see Burnett, 2004). In the absence of a close or trusting relationship in their personal life, it is quite possible that the practitioner becomes a
significant other to the offender (Burnett, 2004). The practitioner and the relationship formed with the offender becomes one of increasing significance; the practitioners interpersonal skills are crucial in this instance. These incorporate the social and interpersonal skills that the majority of “people acquire in the normal process of becoming functioning human beings who care about and depend on others” (Burnett, 2004: 183). Furthermore, skills and techniques learned “for a purpose: to influence, help or change others” (Burnett, 2004: 183) can also be incorporated. Which of these two acquired skill sets are the most important is unknown. McGuire (2002) points towards the fact that research rarely addresses interpersonal skills and the ability to develop relationships with others, and furthermore, as discussed earlier, “evidence from adjourning fields such as mental health indicates that [they are] pivotal” (McGuire, 2002: 28).

3.5.6 Social work practice

The reformed youth offending service was seen as a departure from a welfare-based approach to dealing with young offenders toward more punitive and managerialist approaches (Fionda, 1999; Goldson, 2000; Muncie, 2002; Pitts, 2000 and 2001). However, research has suggested that “the social work ethic has survived the overhaul of the youth justice system” (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a). It is thus useful to look at literature regarding social work practice, particularly concerning the relationship between the practitioner and the young person.

Brandon, Schofield and Trinder (1998:71) assert that “accurate empathy, warmth and genuineness [are] essential precursors for a helping relationship with children.” These precursors are explained as follows:

- Accurate empathy requires the worker to see and understand the child as an individual within her own context and to attempt to gain access to the child’s perspective. [The worker should not] presume to know how the child must feel in this particular situation – find out and learn from the child and others who know the child well.
- Warmth can be conveyed to the child through an approachable manner and an attitude of concern and caring. Over-effusive behaviour will not win over many
children and taking over is not [the worker’s] role since parents or carers will have day-to-day care and should not be undermined.

- Children are adept at spotting authenticity and genuine interest and feel let down by adults who they feel do not have time for them...a genuine interest will help the child talk to the worker, who in turn needs to listen to the child and contain and anticipate the child’s ambivalence (cited in Mason and Prior, 2008: 24-25).

As with McNeill’s (2006) assertion that research with adults is applicable to young people, Brandon, Schofield and Trinder (1998) state that in general social work methods are applicable to both adults and young people (see Trevithick, 2005 for an overview of social work skills). Supplementary, and in addition, to the precursors identified above the following are skills that have been identified in social work as significant to building a positive relationship between practitioner and service user:

- **empathy** – the ability of the practitioner to display empathy appears to be a central aspect of effective practice in social work (Egan, 1990; Wilson et al., 1992; Kadushin and Kadushin, 1997; Shulman, 1999; Trotter, 1999)

- **trust and respect** - identified as key to effective youth work practice and has implications for preventative as well as formal interventions and programmes (Evans et al., 2006)

- **rapport** - one of the key building blocks in the formation of effective relationships for change (Barker, 2003) when the state of rapport exists, the service user can develop confidence in the practitioner, and consequently the potential for engagement in ongoing work is formed (Trevithick, 2005)

- **motivation** - the technique of motivational interviewing (MI) was developed by Miller and Rollnick (2002). This method “is an important technique for enhancing people’s motivation to change behaviour” (Miller and Rollnick, 2002: 187). They found that a confrontational, challenging style was unsuccessful when attempting to motivate and engage clients, whereas a supportive and empathic style was effective; emphasising that the spirit of the working relationship is crucial to outcome (Miller and Rollnick, 2002).
3.5.7 Youth work

Youth work that is effective has its foundation in the relationships developed between the youth workers and young people. The essential features of these relationships have relevance to previously stated messages from other areas of research and practice:

- based in mutual regard and respect
- characterised by honesty and trust
- involve agreement through negotiation of the goals and outcomes to be reached and the methods in which to achieve them. (Young, 1999; Huskins, 1996; Merton et al, 2004 cited in Mason and Prior, 2008: 33).

There are common themes surrounding messages from research and practice. Youth work literature is consistent with those presented earlier in the report; “committed and skilled practitioners are required... [and the ability] to communicate effectively with people from a range of backgrounds about a range of issues in a non-judgemental way” (Mason and Prior, 2008: 33). In addition the youth worker must have good listening skills and have the ability to empathise. Furthermore, being supportive and engaging aids the development of motivation for change, in both compulsory and voluntary settings, especially in the setting of goals with the young person and agreeing methods to achieve those goals. The significance of the messages from youth work practice is that they contain insights for those working with young people who offend in a programme of change (Mason and Prior, 2008).

3.5.8 Case management

Mason and Prior (2008) highlight the importance of a sustained case management relationship. As highlighted previously in this chapter effective interventions require a holistic programme of intervention building on an assessment addressing core risk and need, consistently monitored through on-going review, and “with a relationship for change as the purposive feature” (Mason and Prior, 2008: 43). This process can be designed, implemented “and maintained through an approach that has a single practitioner at the centre” (Mason and Prior, 2008: 43). Cooper et al., (2007) recommend a one-to-one case work approach (case management approach within youth justice) which is long-term and flexible supporting young offenders and sustaining engagement. They further emphasise that practitioners who hold a limited caseload should be able to take up a supportive role, to assist in the complex...
and time-consuming nature of the process. This is further supported by the Key Elements of Effective Practice source documents (Britton and Farrant, 2008; Ghate et al., 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Hutchings and Levesley; Perry et al., 2008; Sherman et al., 2008; and Thomas, 2008).

In addition, case managers need to have appropriate access and be knowledgeable on the range of provision available locally to support the needs of young people which are not a part of the YOT provision. Due to the chaotic lifestyles which many young people lead (MacDonald, 2006) additional support in accessing provision, external to YOT provision, is essential if young people are to access and engage effectively. Specialist workers in YOTs may be the most appropriate to facilitate this support, guidance and access (Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Thomas, 2008), overseen by a case manager providing continuous support (Mason and Prior, 2008).

Another key aspect of the case management approach is the consistency and on-going assessment and review which is essential to work effectively with young offenders (Baker, 2008; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008), this is supported by a case management approach to intervention. Cooper et al., (2007) further highlight the need for an engaging and supportive relationship between practitioner and young person, which a case management approach provides potential for. The skills and knowledge of the practitioner is key for this relationship to be effective (Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

3.5.9 Contact (dosage and frequency)

Lipsey (1995) found that interventions with higher dosage tend to be more effective; the opposite was reported in the findings of Latimer et al. (2003). Taxman (2002) further asserts that research continues to show that the number of contacts does not impact offender outcomes. The findings of Sutherland et al. (2006) suggest that there is considerable variation between YOTs in the number / frequency of appointments offered to young people on similar orders. However, as the limited evidence suggests it is the quality of the intervention and contacts that is most important rather than the number of contacts (Baker, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).
3.5.10 Compliance

The basis of promoting compliance is a positive relationship between the worker and young person. Compliance, such as setting effective boundaries is an important part of practice with young people (Baker, 2008). Some research has highlighted that requirements around enforcement and breach can have a positive impact on compliance (Field, 2007; Moore et al., 2004). It is also important, as previously discussed, that interventions are effectively targeted. This key factor helps to reduce the risk of non-completion (Baker, 2008). Moore et al., (2004) in their evaluation of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)\(^\text{13}\) showed that completion rates varied according to risk / need profiles. Baker (2008: 37) highlights the different elements of interventions which “are likely to affect compliance in different ways”. Cognitive behavioural programmes seek long-term impact on compliance by changing a young person’s thinking and attitudes, whereas electronic monitoring focuses on short-term compliance with a particular order. When aiming to promote compliance it is essential to be aware of exactly what type of compliance is being targeted.

Bottoms (2001: 90) highlights different types of compliant behaviour: instrumental/prudential compliance (based on self-interested calculation); normative compliance (based on a felt moral obligation, commitment or attachment); constraint-based compliance (derived from some form of constraint or coercion); and compliance based on habit or routine. A flexible approach is required from practitioners in response to compliance measures, as young people can be compliant for different reasons in different contexts (Hedderman, 2003). Baker (2008: 37-8) suggests the following when considering how best to promote compliance:

- What type of compliance are you trying to promote? Is it compliance with the law, with the legal requirements of a community penalty or with the ground rules of a programme?
- What rewards/sanctions are available? Prevention programmes will not be able to use constraint-based compliance in the way that, for example, ISSP can.

\(^{13}\) ISSP is a highly intensive multi-modal programme, combining supervision with surveillance in an attempt to ensure programme completion and to bring structure to young people’s lives (Gray et al., 2005: 22).
• How will this particular intervention impact on compliance, and what types of compliant behaviour might it promote?

Limited data on enforcement suggests that, in relation to breach, there is variation between YOTs (Moore et al., 2004; Gray et al., 2005). Small studies on adult offenders have concluded that enforcement action did have a reduction effect on reconviction rates in adult offenders (May and Wadwell, 2001). However, Hearnden and Millie (2004: 160) concluded that “strictness of enforcement appears to have little impact on the overall reconviction rate”. Bottoms (2001) highlights that reconviction is not the only outcome measure which defines effectiveness. A community sentence can be seen as at least partially effective if other goals are achieved, such as a significant reduction in alcohol consumption through a prescribed treatment programme, of someone whose offending behaviour which has been linked to heavy drinking (Baker, 2008).

There appears to be conflict between promoting public and judicial confidence in community penalties and effective use of compliance and enforcement (Baker, 2008). Over-enforcement may lead to reduced completion of programmes, having a negative impact on recidivism; “We can be fairly certain that a zero-tolerant approach will result in poor retention rates and high reconviction rates” (Hedderman and Hough, 2004: 163).

In practice it is important that practitioners maintain a flexible approach to compliance and enforcement. To promote public and judicial confidence in community sentences Hedderman and Hough (2004) suggest the following:

• a graduated response that ranges from reminding offenders of the terms of their orders, through to Initial and Final Warnings;
• “...like the breach system, routes to positive rewards should be spelt out and operated even-handedly and transparently.” (2004:164)
• avoid over-focusing on coercive threat since rewarding compliance may prove as effective as punishing non-compliance
• encourage compliance by making it normative – for example, through use of prosocial modelling techniques or mentoring.
Furthermore, Bottoms (2001) asserts the need to take into account the young person’s perceptions of compliance. If the young person believes that compliance with a programme will affect other outcomes, they may be more willing to comply and co-operate (Baker, 2008).

There are evidently many factors which affect the effective delivery of an intervention. As previously discussed an intervention should be based on a comprehensive assessment, be targeted individually and appropriately, be multi-modal and delivered as designed, with long-term engagement and contact time. In addition, Dowden and Andrews (2004) highlight the need for staff characteristics and training in core skills to be addressed for effective impact of interventions.

3.6 Training and knowledge

It is suggested that many of those working in day-to-day practice may not have the relevant skills and training or motivation to fully carry out the programme or intervention as intended (Wikström and Treiber, 2008). Gendreau et al., (2006: 434-5) highlight that staff should be “trained and hired based on their knowledge of effective relationship and therapeutic skills”. They further comment that practitioners and managers in correction lack the requisite skills and training to develop and deliver treatment programmes of therapeutic integrity. It is further highlighted that there is a significant lack of research evidence on the training of practitioners in youth justice in the UK (Baker, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Sherman et al., 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

Reviewing the key elements of effective practice it is apparent that similar factors emerge across the reviews with regard to the training of practitioners. It is agreed that staff should be well trained in assessment, working with young people and delivering effective interventions (Baker, 2008; Britton and Farrant, 2008; Ghate et al, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Perry et al, 2008; Sherman et al, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). Training and experience is extremely important (Baker, 2008). Inadequate training, which may be through a lack of training or bootleg training conducted informally by non-certified trainers, will result in reduced accuracy and
effectiveness (Lowenkamp, Latessa and Holsinger, 2004). It is therefore critical that “staff delivering these interventions are educated and well-trained in the specific knowledge and skills necessary to implement these interventions” (Wikström and Treiber, 2008: 52). It is also vital that those people overseeing the implementation of interventions and recruiting practitioners delivering the interventions have a clear understanding of the requirements of the intervention (Wikström and Treiber, 2008).

Research has identified that for successful programme and service delivery it should be ensured that staff are competent and knowledgeable on the area of practice they are required to provide (Baker, 2008; Britton and Farrant, 2008; Chapman and Hough, 1998; Ghate et al, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Hutchings and Levesley, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Merrington, 1998; Perry et al, 2008; Sherman et al, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). This should be based on credible, theoretically informed materials (Baker, 2008) and firm empirical evidence (Wikström and Treiber, 2008). Training should be conducted by certified trainers with knowledge and expertise in the area of focus, with additional booster sessions (Ghate et al., 2008) which ensure periodic and continuous education and training programmes for practitioners and managers (Sherman et al., 2008; Thomas, 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). As Thomas (2003) highlights, practice can be positively influenced and shaped by well-informed staff with the requisite skills, knowledge and expertise to delivering a high standard of service. Mason and Prior (2008) add that practitioners should also receive training in case management, managing caseloads and engaging with partners.

Furthermore, this training should be extended across agencies and be available to all who come into contact with young people (Grimshaw, 2008), accounting for the working techniques, methods and requirements of different agencies (Mason and Prior, 2008). Non-youth justice staff should also receive adequate training in youth justice practice and procedures, in order to engage effectively with YOTs (Ghate et al., 2008). Practitioners should have very detailed knowledge of local provision and partnerships (Mason and Prior, 2008).
In their extensive review of implementation techniques, Fixsen et al., (2005) identified the core components of training in the implementation of programmes. They concluded that the key functional components of staff training are:

- knowledge of the programme and practices (history, theory, philosophy and rationales for programme components);
- demonstrations of key skills (knowledge testing during training);
- practice to criterion of key skills (behaviour rehearsal to receive feedback on the practice).

(Fixsen et al., 2005: 43).

Fixsen et al., (2005) further report that key factors impacting on training are allowing adequate time to conduct training sessions and that the content is useful, beneficial and appropriate to practice. Programmes which are evidence-based, and have well defined core intervention components should be adequately placed to cover these issues. Buston, Wight, Hart, & Scott (2002) highlight that trainers faced obstacles in conducting training sessions, with staff absence and turnover negatively impacting on the abilities of trainers to conduct the training sessions.

Fixsen et al., (2005) highlight the lack of evidence available on effective training practice, however the research and literature reviewed has many common features to the *key elements of effective practice* documents. Staff should receive training which ensures they are competent and knowledgeable on the core components of the programme. In addition staff “must be motivated to adopt new practices, know what actions constitute the practices, have the tools to perform those actions, and have the ability and confidence to perform those actions (self-efficacy)” (Fixsen et al., 2005: 42). Demonstration of key skills should be demonstrated, practiced and tested during initial training, and continuously reviewed through refresher training on a periodic basis - the duration of time between sessions is dependent on the intensity of the intervention programme (Fixsen et al., 2005).

The prior life experiences, employment, training and education of staff employed to work with young offenders is likely to be diverse from one worker to the next. As Stephenson,
Giller and Brown (2007:5) highlight “it is often not the case that the actions of professionals are determined largely by the most up-to-date and reliable research findings”. They state that the more significant influences on practice are:

- Knowledge gained during primary training;
- Prejudice and opinion;
- Outcomes of previous cases;
- Fads and fashions;
- Advice of senior and not so senior colleagues (Trinder and Reynolds, 2000).

The reasons they believe are behind these influences are:

- Much of the research available to practitioners lacks methodologies which are robust;
- Volume of research can overwhelm busy practitioners;
- Practitioners lack appraisal skills to assess validity of research methodologies and quality of research.

(Stephenson, Giller and Brown, 2007: 6).

They further highlight the “effect of maturation, the very different contexts and opportunities such as access to the labour market could alter the effectiveness of particular practitioner styles and approaches” (Stephenson, Giller and Brown, 2007: 32).

### 3.6.1 A note on the skills of practitioners

Within the context of the risk prevention paradigm, evidence-based practice provides a framework which aims to narrow the research-practice gap, enhance the take-up rate of research by practitioners, and increase the consistency of methodology for researchers (Stephenson, Giller and Brown, 2007). It is difficult for practitioners to make informed decisions when planning and implementing programmes of intervention with young offenders due to the lack of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the options available. Thus, there is evidently a need for additional development of evidence-based practice to further narrow the research-practice gap. This may enable enhanced consistency of research methodology for researchers and clarity of effectiveness for practitioners.
Whilst these findings highlight gaps in youth justice practice, and provide a basis for developing frameworks in which to train and develop practitioners, it must also be acknowledged that there is no ready-made criminological theory or method which can be implemented into youth justice which fully addresses the causes of offending behaviour. It is not necessarily the case that practitioners lack the skills and abilities to design, implement and deliver interventions. Rather, the fact that the knowledge (evidence) base does not provide a framework which addresses the causes of offending behaviour is a research issue, not a lack of ability on the part of the practitioner.

3.7 A note on the research studies in this chapter

This chapter has identified a broad range of relevant research studies to examine the key components of the risk factor prevention literature. A critical element of any review of literature is to acknowledge the context within which the research is placed. A number of the studies identified have been undertaken with adult offenders (for example, Brandon, Schofield and Trinder, 1998; Rex, 1999). Furthermore, a number of studies identified were undertaken in countries outside of England and Wales, within which the empirical research of this thesis is carried out (for example, Lipsey, 1995 & 1999 – USA; McNeill, 2006 - Scotland). The majority of the studies examined are also male-focused, which raises questions regarding the suitability of such research when applied to females. Whilst the themes of the studies presented may be relevant to the current research, it is important to consider the political, structural and cultural differences, and the contextual elements which are at play within each study.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the research and literature on risk factor prevention which underpins contemporary youth justice practice. It is highlighted that this approach does not address the root causes of offending, which suggests that any intervention based on these principles has little chance of appropriately addressing offending behaviour. It appears that this approach will merely manage risk, and neglect the wider social problems and deeper underlying causes of offending behaviour. If we consider the training and scrutiny health practitioners undertake in order to practice medicine, it is somewhat alarming that youth justice practitioners tasked with changing the fundamental behaviour of the young people
they work with, are not exposed to the same rigorous procedures. Crime is not an illness; however, in order to change the behaviour of an individual, one must be confident that any intervention will have the desired positive effect, and not risk causing damage to that individual.

The research reviewed suggests that effective interventions are based on careful assessment, linked to established need and are individually appropriate, have some focus on cognitive skills, are multi-modal, contain an element of reparation, are delivered as designed, and have long-term contact and engagement time (see section 3.2). The implementation of an intervention is a key factor to successful programme outcomes, and understanding and monitoring variation in the implementation of an intervention is a vital prerequisite to the evaluation of outcomes (see section 3.3).

Assessment is evidently the foundation of effective work with young people who offend within the risk factor prevention paradigm (see section 3.4). Asset is an assessment tool used by the YOS in England and Wales. This is used as a framework for gathering and analysing information which in turn can be used to inform intervention plans and court reports. Once an effective programme has been established, based on a comprehensive assessment with consideration of core implementation components, the delivery of the intervention is crucial. The classification of offenders must be done in a flexible way to allow for changes in a young person’s circumstances (see section 3.5.1). Intervention plans should be based on a comprehensive assessment, targeted appropriately to individuals and take into account the time available to work with the young person (see section 3.5.2).

Research increasingly highlights the importance of a quality relationship between practitioners and offenders; this is key to successful engagement of the young person during an intervention, particularly through a case management approach (see section 3.5.9). Furthermore, a quality relationship between the practitioner and young person promotes compliance with an order, which is essential for achieving successful programme outcomes (see section 3.5.11). The quality of the intervention and contact between practitioners and young people is more important than the number of contacts (see section 3.5.10).
On-going training and support is highlighted as an essential factor in effective programmes with young people. Well-informed staff with the requisite skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver interventions to a high standard can positively shape and influence practice (see section 3.6). This knowledge and expertise should be demonstrated and refreshed periodically dependant on the intensity of the intervention. However, as highlighted in section 3.6.1, it is difficult for practitioners to make informed decisions when planning and implementing programmes of intervention with young offenders due to the lack of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the options available. There is a need to narrow the research-practice gap to clarify effective practice to practitioners.

The following chapters (four to eight) will present the current study. Chapter four outlines the aims of the current study and discuss the methods adopted.
Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction
Thus far, the thesis has explored the literature and research surrounding historical and contemporary responses to the rule breaking by young people and what we know about best practice; particularly from the macro level of central governance, to the micro level of the day-to-day practice of YOTs. The purpose of these previous reviews was for the reader to understand the complexities and difficulties associated with working with young people in the youth justice system and its wider socio-political context. In this chapter the research methods adopted for the current study will be outlined.

The current research adopted a multi-method approach: 22 practitioners were interviewed once in-depth, 44 meetings were observed, and PYOS and official documents were examined. Furthermore, before and after each observed meeting, agenda, minutes, and/or case files were examined. The case study site was Peterborough youth offending service (PYOS), and fieldwork took place over a period of roughly one year.

In this chapter the process of negotiating access with the fieldwork site through to data collection, followed by an overview of the research rationale and design are discussed. Issues of sampling and interviewing professionals are presented, followed by an overview of the analytical methods used. Background information of the fieldwork site is then presented, followed by some overall concluding comments on the research methods used.

4.2 The research process
4.2.1 Timetable
During the fieldwork, there were 3 distinct stages in which the research activities were undertaken. The first stage was from January 2009 to March 2010. During this phase access to the fieldwork site was negotiated, and a series of meetings with PYOS managers took place, including one interview with a practitioner. Furthermore team meetings were attended by the researcher for personal introduction and to introduce the research to PYOS staff, and obtain their consent to take part.
In the second stage, April 2010 to January 2011, a series of observations were undertaken of meetings, one-to-one sessions between practitioners and young people, of group sessions, of other sessions at PYOS between practitioner and young person, of the general day-to-day work of staff at PYOS (the entire duration of stage two). Furthermore, documentary evidence from PYOS and nationally was collected. The third stage between February 2011 and May 2011, 22 in-depth interviews were conducted with practitioners at PYOS. These stages are discussed in more detail below.

4.2.2 Access to the fieldwork site
Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out that access is a problem which persists throughout the research process; this is something that was experienced vividly during the process, as discussed below.

A colleague instigated initial introduction to a practitioner at the potential fieldwork site\(^\text{14}\) with whom the researcher had many informal conversations about PYOS processes and resources, and interviewed on the record in the early stages of the research design. Through these conversations, and the initial interview, the researcher developed great insight in the basic structure, processes, and resources at PYOS. This led to a formal letter being written by the researcher to the head of service\(^\text{15}\) outlining the research plans and needs, and requesting a meeting to discuss these plans further. No immediate response was received from the head of service, and correspondence was followed up with a phone call to his secretary. This enabled the scheduling of an appointment to meet with the head of service; the secretary was also aware of the original letter which had been sent by the researcher. A meeting then took place between the head of service and the researcher, in which the research plans were discussed, how they fit with PYOS’s vision for developing practice, and what would be required in order to progress. Access for the research to be undertaken at PYOS was granted at this meeting by the head of service.

\(^{14}\) See also section 4.2.3
\(^{15}\) See appendix 1
Furthermore, the researchers attachment to the Peterborough Adolescent Development Study (PADS)\textsuperscript{16} at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, previous experience of conducting research with the youth offending service (YOS), and professional experience working as a police officer for six years, undoubtedly contributed to access being granted; in addition, the research was in line with PYOS’s commitment to improvement and evidence-based practice to support young people’s needs.

Contact between the researcher and PYOS was maintained throughout the design phase of the research, to keep up-to-date with any policy developments and structural changes within PYOS, and also to remind PYOS of the requirements and timelines for the research; this was primarily through the head of PYOS and the sponsor practitioner. At the end of 2009, the head of service retired, and left PYOS without warning. This was an unforeseen event in the research plans. This triggered a process of re-entry, in which meetings with the new acting head of service had to be set-up, and repeat the process of access; the new management team wanted to go through the process of introduction again. The researcher sent the new acting head of service a letter of introduction, and arranged a meeting with him; this was arranged very rapidly through telephone conversations. Everything was again agreed in this meeting, and the researcher was swiftly invited to attend team meetings to be personally (re-)introduced and to introduce the research to the staff at PYOS. Several team meetings were attended by the researcher with various staff members at PYOS; all staff agreed to take part in the research, and with the commitments that were outlined. The team meetings proved invaluable as a setting where all staff were together, introductions could be made and the research aims presented with ease, in turn giving staff a chance to ask questions and / or raise concerns and issues with the researcher in a forum (or focus group setting).

Following these meetings, a number of observations of one-to-one sessions between practitioners and young people were made, and various other related meetings at PYOS (from March 2010 – August 2010).\textsuperscript{17} Following a period of observations\textsuperscript{18} (September 2010

\textsuperscript{16} See www.pads.ac.uk for more information.

\textsuperscript{17} See section 4.5 of this chapter for discussion of sampling methods.

\textsuperscript{18} See section 4.2.6 for discussion.
to January 2011) interviews\textsuperscript{19} were conducted (February 2011 – May 2011) with a selection of practitioners.\textsuperscript{20}

\subsection*{4.2.3 Being with the team}

During the time spent at the fieldwork site it was important for the researcher to remain conscious of the role held at PYOS and also obtaining and maintaining the co-operation of staff in the research. The wider youth justice context at this time (as addressed in chapters five to eight) led to much uncertainty amongst PYOS staff of the future of the youth offending service, and ultimately their jobs. This was evident from the first contact between the researcher and PYOS, and in turn there was a constant air of tension between staff; it was apparent that the wider context seemed to be having an impact on staff relations, during observations and interviews many staff stated that this was the unhappiest time they had spent working at PYOS, and were critical of other staffs’ abilities.\textsuperscript{21}

With this in mind, the definition of the researchers’ role had to be constantly revisited, and how this may be perceived by PYOS staff. It was important that the researcher was seen as an outsider, being independent and open-minded, whilst not being seen as an inspector of PYOS. At the same time the researcher had to maintain an insider role, having understanding of PYOS and the issues that were deemed important by PYOS staff (Powell and Lovelock, 1991). The researcher’s previous role as a practitioner assisted with fitting in, and understanding the practical workspace, and more importantly the language and acronyms used by practitioners. However, the balance between insider and outsider was a difficult one to manage. Extra effort was made prior to any observation to ensure that staff knew the rationale for the researcher’s presence; purely to observe and not take part directly in the sessions with young people. During many observed sessions, practitioners would ask the researcher questions as if to a co-worker, placing the researcher in an uncomfortable position. To attempt to alleviate the situation the researcher tried to ensure any comments and responses were neutral, and to reduce any further direct involvement in the sessions significantly. For example, practitioners would ask, whilst the young person was present, “what do you think?”, “what are your thoughts on this?”, “do you want to run through one

\textsuperscript{19} See section 4.2.2 for discussion.
\textsuperscript{20} See section 4.5 for discussion.
\textsuperscript{21} See chapter 7 for discussion
of the examples?” This presented a very uncomfortable position whereby the young person was evidently looking at the researcher for the answer, meaning that the researcher had to remain acutely aware of the effect of any responses.

The insider-outsider role has been well documented as somewhat contradictory and difficult to sustain. Bresnan (1988) highlighted these issues when researching industrial and trade union organisations. He listened sympathetically and offered possible solutions to problems raised by the workforce, to avoid causing disruption or aggravation. This strategy of sympathetic listening was adopted, and by doing so, along with the researcher’s well-informed knowledge of PYOS work and processes, enabled a great deal of insight to be gained about the wider issues of concern to PYOS staff. Possible solutions to problems were never suggested by the researcher, and care was taken not to be drawn into insider debate surrounding these issues; remaining as independent as possible was critical in these moments. Being empathetic with PYOS staff meant the researcher began to feel much more comfortable in the environment. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out the issues and stressful nature of field research and highlight that one should strenuously avoid feeling at home in a research setting. The researcher maintained these thoughts throughout the fieldwork process.

Pre-observation approaches were revisited and refined each time an observation was undertaken, whereby a practitioner had included the researcher directly in the session. The purpose of this was to enable future clarity to practitioners who were being observed of the researcher’s role during sessions.

### 4.3 Research rationale and design

The research is exploratory and descriptive, addressing practitioners’ views and perspectives in the context of youth justice. This focus led to the adoption of a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews as the main research tool. A case study research design was used, incorporating interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, examining one youth offending team; this allowed for more in depth analysis of core practice, with the key practitioners of the team, and with staff that support their day-to-day role. The focus on practitioners’ views and perspectives in particular is due to key gaps highlighted in the youth justice literature, which indicated the challenges faced by youth justice practitioners; these
provide a structure for this thesis, enabling empirical investigation and refinement of existing research. In addition the initial interest in this research area was sparked by the past experience of the researcher.\footnote{Previously working for six years as a police officer, and also previous research experience with the youth offending service}

A key proponent of the methods adopted is the promotion of multiple strategies of research to explore the day-to-day practice and processes of PYOS. Garland neatly sums up this stance:

> For practical purposes, the kind of knowledge that is most useful is detailed, specific, local knowledge, focused on a particular problem, or institution, or policy question and informed about the specific cultural, political, and penological circumstances that apply. The best studies of this kind are nuanced, subtle, and complex; are able to see the phenomenon in all its complexity and yet at the same time clearly situate it within its social and historical context; and aim to unravel the details of its many determinants, dynamics, and consequences. Typically, works of this kind – whether historical or contemporary – tend to utilize the kind of interpretive pluralism I have been describing rather than rely entirely on one or other interpretive framework.


To illuminate the experiences of the interviewees, a multi-methodological approach was adopted. Observations combined with documentary analysis, supplemented the semi-structured interviews. The rationale for this was to collect additional data to situate the views and perspectives of the practitioners within the context they worked, both socially and historically. In doing so, the research aimed to provide context, and to reduce the risks of taking the practitioners views at face value. Holstein and Gubrium explain the goal of such an approach is:

> “...to show how interview responses are produced in the interaction between interviewer and respondent, without losing sight of the meanings produced or the circumstances that condition the meaning-making process. The analytic objective is not merely to describe the situated production of talk, but to show how what is being said relates to the experiences and lives being studied.”

(1995: 79-80)
The methods adopted will now be discussed in more detail.

4.3.1 Case Study

Platt (1988; 1992) highlights that the definition and value of case study research varies between academic disciplines; in essence, a case study is an in-depth investigation of one or more naturally occurring cases. A single “case can be a person, a small group, a community, an event or an episode” (Platt, 1988: 2). PYOS, within these definitions and for the purpose of this research, is a single case. Yin (2009) further describes the case study as a twofold definition which “shows how case study research comprises an all-encompassing method – covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (Yin, 2009: 18).

Case study research presents a very useful means for exploring micro-level social action (Swanborn, 2010). Understanding the processes and practice at PYOS is an important way of understanding how national guidelines and legislation are implemented. This localised knowledge from one YOT may also contribute to in-depth understandings of the national picture of YOT practice, although the research takes into account the diversity between local needs and practice nationally. Criminological theorising may also benefit from case study research of YOT processes and practice, through the coaction of macro-level socio-political developments, such as decentralised government and late modernity (Giddens and Sutton, 2010). Therefore, this case study research explores the complexities of the micro social world whilst contributing to an understanding of structural factors.

Generalisability of case studies is a common criticism (Yin, 2009). The current research offers valuable insight into the day-to-day practice and processes of youth justice practitioners. The lessons learned regarding common themes and issues, in particular the application of knowledge and how practitioners formulate decisions within the context of national guidelines will be generalizable to all youth offending teams in England and Wales, albeit in different contexts which must be taken into consideration when applying such conclusions widely. In addition the research contributes to lessons and understanding for similar YOTs, and may also raise important questions for future empirical investigation. As Punch (1998) highlights, generalisability is an important question to address; it is not a case of whether we
can generalise, it is a case of what can be reasonably generalised. To understand what can be generalised, the context of the case requires acute attention, and not just the behaviour of those within the case. Geertz (1973) terms this a thick description of the case. Platt (1988; 1992) further advocates that selection of cases should be a strategic choice and generalisability to large numbers should be avoided; rather, consideration should be prioritised for logical relations between characteristics of cases and interpretations in keeping within its features.

In keeping with the arguments above, the current case study, PYOS, was selected strategically and systematically, and all interpretations are based on the features of this case. PYOS was selected due to the researcher’s attachment to a large social research project on the lifestyles of young people which was being undertaken in this area.23

4.3.2 Interviews

The principal aim of the interviews was to understand the perspectives of youth offending team practitioners working with young people. In addition, a number of informal discussions took place with people connected to the young people: PYOS volunteers24, external agencies25, parents26, and the young people27 themselves. These informal interviews were recorded in a fieldwork diary at the next practical moment, usually straight away, when the person in question had left, or as soon as the researcher had finished with immediate commitments that day. Issues concerning ethical considerations of not gaining informed consent were fully addressed, and these conversations were used to supplement understanding during the fieldwork process to the wider context of PYOS, and how it was perceived by different groups accessing and using the service.

All core practitioners agreed to take part in the research, and were interviewed. All participants kept appointments, with some requiring rescheduling, but no-one withdrew.

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23 See www.pads.ac.uk for information on the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study.
24 These included referral panel members, mentors, and appropriate adults.
25 Including NACRO, multi-systemic treatment (MST) workers, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), linguistic translators, volunteer training organisations.
26 Parents were present at final warning meetings, referral panels, intervention planning meetings, and in some cases in the reception of the PYOS office.
27 Whilst observing one-to-one sessions between practitioners and young people, the researcher had the opportunity to speak to the young people (see observations section for further discussion). There were also a number of times the researcher sat in PYOS reception with the young people, whilst they waited for their meetings.
from participation. In addition to core practitioners, administrative staff who were not involved in the core practice were approached for interview, some were not interviewed as they were not of interest to the core research aims. Instead of formal interviews with the administrative staff their role was discussed, in person or via telephone, and notes were made which were used to supplement the interviews with core practitioners. Contact was made with every member of the youth offending team, and all members of the team were spoken to in person, even if they were not interviewed using the main interview schedules.

4.3.3 Design of the interview schedules
Initially the literature and research surrounding youth crime prevention programmes and the youth justice system was reviewed to highlight key gaps, as presented in chapters one and two. In addition, the researcher contacted and spoke to a number of academics, researchers, and practitioners working in the youth justice system for advice and guidance on the focus and design of the research questions. Furthermore, UK-based youth justice conferences, both academic and practitioner-oriented, were attended by the researcher to gain insight into current topics and research priorities in the youth justice space.

Contact with the fieldwork site was made early in the research process (January, 2009). This enabled the researcher to:

1. gain access as early as possible to the fieldwork site;
2. determine the suitability of the fieldwork site to the research aims;
3. determine any expectations / concerns of the research PYOS might have which may conflict with the proposed research;
4. identify any risks associated with the research in collaboration with PYOS;
5. identify the general processes of PYOS, which assisted the structure of research questions.

Contacting PYOS early allowed access to practitioners at the design stage of the interview schedules. This early access allowed for refinement of the research aims, whilst also permitting exposure to the setting which assisted the structuring of interview schedules in a way that matched the order of processes at PYOS; hence practitioners would not have issues

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28 The administrative roles of these staff members meant they never had contact with young people directly, and held positions which supplemented the human resource side of PYOS.
understanding the flow of questions. Initially many informal conversations with staff were had, and one practitioner was interviewed in an open-ended, semi-structured way to allow the flow of conversation and to explore the processes at PYOS. This provided invaluable insight into the ways in which PYOS worked; the resources available, and the workforce structure of PYOS. A colleague introduced the researcher to this practitioner, who quickly became a sponsor of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 60), assisting in introducing the researcher to other team members, and ultimately the head of service.

After initial obstacles were overcome with the process of gaining access, a series of observations were conducted of core practice which further enhanced initial understanding of processes at PYOS, the language used by practitioners, and adding practical meaning to the research and literature earlier reviewed, in addition to the initial practitioner interview.

After designing the interview schedules, they were piloted with a group of practitioners working at a YOT in the North of England. This enabled the researcher to get a sense of how the questions were received by current YOS practitioners, and any issues in the understanding / interpretation of them.

Following the piloting of the questions, a number of academics working in the areas of youth offending and youth justice were consulted for final thoughts on the structure of the interview schedules, and amendments were made as necessary. The above processes enabled further confidence of collecting high quality data, and that the questions being asked would be understood by the interviewees.

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29 This practitioner was a middle-manager, and responsible for workforce development at PYOS.
30 See section 4.3 for further discussion.
31 See section 4.2.6 for further discussion.
32 Access to the YOT was through former colleagues of the researcher, who agreed to spare some of their time to be interviewed, during December 2010. The interviews were not tape recorded, however notes were made on any questions which caused issue / concern, and discussed these issues / concerns with the interviewee immediately after the interview.
4.3.4 Interviewing professionals

In total 22 practitioners were interviewed in-depth, between February 2011 and May 2011. Two interview schedules were designed to reflect the different roles practitioners held at PYOS. YJOs and specialist staff received the same interview schedule as there were many questions relevant to both roles. Managers received a separate interview schedule.

Table 1: Roles of professionals interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Number interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers (middle managers and senior managers)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth justice officers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic information was obtained from, and an organisational questionnaire given to, all interviewees before interview commenced. Interviews were by appointment, tape-recorded and lasted between 45 – 90 minutes. The researcher’s regular presence at PYOS offices enabled ease of making appointments with practitioners in person. All interviews took place in private rooms in PYOS offices. During interviews notes were taken by the researcher, which acted as summaries of interviews, and prompts of key points. These notes were added to the transcripts. The interview transcripts were transcribed in full, by the researcher, and analysed using Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software. All practitioners who participated in interviews signed consent forms.

4.3.5 Validity of interviews

As the sample is relatively small, the question arises of to how reliable and honest is the information received from participants? As common themes and answers emerged across the 22 interviews, this would suggest that the answers were reliable and honest within the context of PYOS.

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33 See appendix 4 and 5.
34 These notes also acted as a back-up in case the tape-recorder failed; thankfully, it never did.
35 See section 4.6 of this chapter for detailed discussion.
36 See appendix 2. For further discussion of ethical considerations see section 4.2.9.
4.3.6 Observations

The initial purpose of observing meetings was: (1) for the researcher to be personally introduced to staff; (2) to introduce the research to staff; (3) and for the researcher to become familiar with the processes and procedures at PYOS. After attending several team meetings, and spending time hanging around at PYOS, a decision was made to observe some of the one-to-one sessions between practitioners and young people.\(^{37}\) The purpose of the one-to-one observations was to record and explore interactions between practitioners and young people, the resources used in sessions, and also the degree of correspondence between interview and observational data.

Gold (1958) cross-classifies participant and observer, describing four ideal-typical roles of the researcher; complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, complete observer. Of these four types the participant-as-observer role was chosen. Within this role the observer and participants “are aware that theirs is a field relationship” (Gold, 1958: 220); the observer does not conceal that they are researching participants, whilst the role as observer is prioritised over the role as participant.\(^ {38}\) As the researcher was not an active member of PYOS or associated agencies, and the research was not covert, this role was the most appropriate for observations. Having already established a relationship with practitioners at PYOS, the researcher tried to blend in as much as possible so that his appearance and demeanour were in keeping with that of other practitioners in meetings, and those in the one-to-one sessions. Prior to each meeting, a conversation between the researcher and the lead practitioner took place to determine the researcher’s role in that meeting, then at the start of each meeting the researcher was introduced as a student doing research towards a PhD on the processes and resources at PYOS; each person present at the meeting was asked to consent verbally to the researcher’s presence in the meeting.\(^ {39}\) Aside from introductions, the researcher would rarely speak unless asked a direct question.

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\(^{37}\) See section 4.5 for a discussion of the sampling methods used.

\(^{38}\) See Adler and Adler (1994); Becker (1958); and Wolcott (1988) for additional commentary and frameworks of participant observation.

\(^{39}\) No-one ever objected to the researchers’ presence at meetings. It was evident during final warning observations that the parents of the young people receiving the final warning required more information about the research and the presence of the researcher, which was duly given; again no-one objected to the researchers’ presence at meetings.
Prior to team meetings the researcher would arrive early to read the minutes, agenda and supporting papers, and discuss this with the chair / lead person of the meeting. In addition, departure from these meetings was deliberately delayed to enable the researcher to further introduce the research to practitioners, and continue to build relationships with them; this in turn assisted the process, of contacting individual practitioners for one-to-one observations, as they already knew who the researcher was and why access was wanted to observe their meetings. Likewise with one-to-one observations of sessions, the researcher would arrive early or stay beyond meetings, to view the young person’s case diary history on the young offender information system (YOIS\(^{40}\)), and discuss the process with the practitioner leading the meeting. This information proved invaluable to follow the direction of conversations in meetings, and as a constant reminder of the research questions.

For each meeting observed, copious notes were made. Generally note-taking during meetings was kept to a minimum, writing key points and brief summaries, so not to act as a distraction to participants and so the researcher could engage more effectively in the discussions taking place. For every meeting, notes were made of the date, location, scheduled start and end times, actual start and end times, a room plan of the meeting including a seating plan of each attendee, the title of the meeting, a summary of each topic of discussion and a note of who said which part. After each meeting, summaries were made of each part, and any issues highlighted which were relevant to the research questions.

4.3.7 Documentary evidence

In addition to the interviews and observations, seven main sources of documentary evidence were analysed in this case study:

1. National YOS policy and procedure documents;
2. PYOS policy and procedure documents;
3. PYOS inspection reports;
4. Internal PYOS user satisfaction surveys;
5. PYOS practitioner work diaries;

\(^{40}\) YOIS is a case management system featuring assessment, monitoring and review capabilities, combined with integrated reporting and evaluation tools, offering a platform for working with YOT statistics, sending returns to the Youth Justice Board and tracking and managing the work of the YOT.
6. PYOS casework files;
7. Minutes and agendas from previous team meetings, where possible.

These documents were used to explore the historical developments of PYOS, and to build a picture of current policy and practice at PYOS.

4.3.8 Youth offending team administrative records
Several attempts were made to access PYOS human resource records for staff; all staff consented to this. However, obstacles emerged in the form of blocks from administrative staff to access the records as they were not readily available, and evidently stored away from PYOS offices in central Peterborough county council offices (a separate building approximately 1 mile away from PYOS offices). After numerous conversations with management and central council administrative staff, it became apparent that the records may not be up-to-date or complete for each staff member. Given the time constraints, it was decided that this would not be pursued. All participants in the study gave demographic information, and were asked about their previous education, training, and employment. The initial exercise of trying to access human resource records proved valuable however, as this further highlighted the lack of structure and organisation to administrative records and processes at PYOS, as discussed further in chapter five.

4.3.9 Ethical considerations
In order to encourage honest reporting, it was important to give participants a complete guarantee of confidentiality. Interview information and consent forms were given to each participant, which were read and signed by the participant and researcher prior to interview. The confidentiality guarantee is strengthened by the Data Protection Act 1998 which allows for personal data to be exempt from subject or any other access where they are held only for preparing statistics or carrying out research. All data are stored securely and information that might identify participants can be accessed only by the researcher.

4.4 Sample selection
This section will discuss the sampling methods adopted, and how participants were selected at each stage of the fieldwork process. The stages of sampling can be broken down into six sections. First, staff meetings which were attended are discussed; second,
observations of intervention sessions; third, informal observations of the day-to-day working of PYOS and external agencies; fourth, the in-depth interviews which were carried out; fifth, informal interviews which formed part of the informal observations; and sixth, the documentary evidence which was analysed is discussed. This section concludes with a note on young people at PYOS.

4.4.1 Team meetings
In total seven team meeting were attended between March 2010 and January 2011. These were held on a Wednesday morning, on a fortnightly basis, lasting 2 hours. The aim of the meetings was to bring together all core practitioners to discuss organisational policy changes and reform (local and national), strategic management, structural changes to the organisation, and any other relevant organisational issues at that time. An agenda was set and distributed before each meeting to all attendees. It was common for a number of staff to be absent from the meetings due to a variety of reasons; commitments to other appointments, annual leave, sickness.

The first meeting attended by the researcher was an opportunity to be personally introduced to staff at PYOS and to introduce the research. Following this meeting invitations to future meetings were from the acting head of service. These offers were taken up and a series of meetings were attended; in some instances meetings were held at short notice and as the researcher was present at PYOS offices at that time, these meetings were attended.

4.4.2 Participant observations
Participants for observation were selected at random. A list was obtained of the staff working at PYOS from the acting head of service; every member of staff’s name was written onto an individual piece of paper and placed into a hat. These names were then randomly drawn out and a note made of the order. Staff members who were drawn out of the hat were then contacted in the order drawn, and observations were set-up. Table 2 lists the types of sessions observed. If a member of staff was no longer working at PYOS, or it was established that the member of staff’s role was not relevant to the research (i.e. those not actively involved in the core team), or the member of staff refused participation (discussed below) then they were removed completely, and the next member of staff’s name was drawn. This process was repeated until all members at PYOS had been contacted.
Table 2: Observation types and number of observations per type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%age of total observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final warnings</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral panels</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one session</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team meetings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention planning meeting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative justice conference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the scheduled observations, twenty-five were cancelled due to a variety of reasons beyond the researcher’s control. The most common reason was that the young person did not turn up for his / her appointment, accounting for 44% (11) of the total cancelled observations. There were also clashes of appointments which young people had with other agencies, and practitioners were occasionally required to attend court at short notice to cover staff shortages. Three members of staff who were contacted no longer worked at PYOS; one member of staff refused as they were leaving PYOS within a month of the request; five members of staff refused due to having workloads which were too high; five members of staff refused as their role was not relevant (these were all administrative roles, with no direct contact with young people).

4.4.3 Direct observations

Between January 2009 and May 2011 the researcher spent a lot of time hanging around at PYOS. This was for a number of reasons: waiting for a meeting with a practitioner, waiting for a meeting / intervention session to start, waiting for an interview participant, shadowing practitioners. As with the participant observations, notes were made in the researcher’s fieldwork diary, at every practical moment, summarising each day. Direct observations allowed access to see the day-to-day working practices of PYOS, the environment, the

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41 Final warnings are typically held on an evening at a police station, and multiple meetings occur in that one evening.
setting, widening understanding of processes and structures, and also enabling the researcher to see practitioners interact with each other. These observations included PYOS staff at all levels, young people, external agency workers, volunteers, and parents / guardians of young people. As discussed earlier in this chapter, issues of not obtaining informed consent from every individual, especially from those who were not aware of whom the researcher was, remained a priority and anonymity and confidentiality was observed at all times. With this in mind, any notes relating to these observations, were completely anonymised and treated in the same way as all other data collected.

4.4.4 Interviews
Following the process of recruiting participants for observations, members of staff were identified who were relevant for in-depth interviews, in relation to the original research questions. Eleven youth justice officers were identified, and these were the absolute priority for interview, as they were the practitioners who work directly one-to-one with young people. Following conversations with PYOS managers, a further two members of staff were identified who held a caseload (working directly one-to-one with young people), and they were also prioritised for interview. There were only four managers at PYOS so all were prioritised for interview. Members of staff involved in the delivery of training were also interviewed.

Further to the case managers and PYOS managers, there were a number of administrative workers and specialist staff. Information collected from observations was consulted which identified which specialist and administrative workers had direct contact with young people, or were actively involved in the intervention planning and delivery process, and these staff members were contacted for interview; in total there were seven. Informal conversations were had with every other member of staff, in which notes were taken, and consent obtained from each individual to use the notes in the research.

4.4.5 Documentary evidence
Numerous forms of documentary evidence were analysed. All National policy and procedure documents, and PYOS inspection reports were reviewed, which were freely available electronically via the internet. In addition PYOS policy and procedure documents were analysed, which were obtained from the head of service. PYOS had conducted a number of
internal user satisfaction surveys, which were accessed by the researcher. In addition PYOS allowed the researcher access to practitioner work diaries, PYOS casework files, and minutes and agendas from previous team meetings, where possible.

4.4.6 A note on young people at PYOS

In order to conduct an in-depth case study of PYOS, in relation to the research questions, a decision was taken not to interview any young people who were on court orders at PYOS. This was due to the focus of the research on practitioners, and also on time constraints. To collect meaningful data from a significant sample of young people, would have meant a lot of time lost on the focus of the research, and the researcher chose to use this time to observe and interview practitioners in more depth.

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 Issues with analysing data

The use of computer-assisted analysis software has received numerous criticisms (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; Coffey et al., 1999; Mason, 1996; O’Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). Computer-aided analysis can lead to the researcher depending on the organisation of data within the software, and loss of the close relationship with the data (Wolcott, 1994). In turn, the researcher may adopt an uncritical approach with a set of pre-defined strategies which are inherent in the computer aided software (Coffey et al., 1999). There is also a danger that the data loses its contextual value, becoming “concrete, uniform, and static” (Mason, 1996: 118). The following sections describe the methodological framework within which the data was coded and analysed.

4.5.2 Coding the data

Atlas.ti computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CADQAS) was used to analyse the interview transcripts and observation of meetings. Atlas.ti was used rather than analysing the data manually due to the time saved using this software, freeing the user from tasks that a machine can do much more effectively (Friese, 2012). Furthermore, the consistency of coding across interview transcripts and observations ensures that data can be retrieved more efficiently than a manual process (Friese, 2012). Through the coding process, themes were explored in the data. The coding process took the form of two phases. Firstly, Layder’s (1998) recommendation to develop theorising as a continuous part of the research process
was adopted, and at the end of each fieldwork day detailed summaries of observations and key summaries of interviews were made, similarly at the end of each week, all documents and summaries were reviewed and a running track was kept of themes that appeared from the research data. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate, this technique allows for substantive concepts to emerge on their own, rather than being forced into any pre-defined categories. In allowing these themes to emerge, this allowed the researcher to develop coding categories (or nodes) as the fieldwork process progressed. Before applying these codes to the transcripts, and to enhance the validity of the coding process, Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) constant comparative method was followed. This consisted of re-reading the literature review carried out whilst continuously reflecting on the research questions, systematically comparing emerging incidents from the existing literature and the transcripts with similar occurrences from other transcripts. The researcher’s supervisor was also presented a copy of the emerging themes for further examination and discussion.

In addition, the researcher read through the interview transcripts and observations, “openly coded” (Friese, 2012: 63), and made many notes on key themes in each transcript, using Atlas.ti. This process was repeated three times. In doing this, it became apparent that several coding categories had been missed which seemed to be prominent in the data; for example collegiality emerged from the open coding process. In total, there were five key coding categories which emerged from this first stage of the coding process of the data. Within these five categories were sub-categories, which were broader themes taking into account the positive and negative aspects of PYOS processes.

After this process, a secondary phase of coding was entered in which re-examination of previous nodes took place and the sub-categories were merged, examining in much closer detail the networks created in Atlas.ti (Friese, 2012: 191). This further highlighted gaps in the coding process, for example, the newly created node of collegiality highlighted in the network views that there was issues between the different roles at PYOS, which in turn highlighted issues of occupational identity and culture.44

42 The process was repeated to keep reviewing and as a reminder of the research questions in relation to the data, and to keep the researcher close to the data (Wolcott, 1994).
43 These five themes were: i. Assessment; ii. Planning; iii. Implementation; iv. Delivery; v. Training and knowledge.
44 Souhami (2007) provides an in-depth analysis of occupational identity and culture in a YOT.
Each node was given as precise a definition as possible and inputted into Atlas.ti. As the nodes were applied to the interview and observation transcripts, further checks were carried out for validity issues and the researcher remained open to the addition of new nodes, which were added and defined during the coding of the transcripts. Coding was completed on all of the transcripts by December 2011.

4.5.3 Analysing the data
Wolcott (1994) advocates the principles of description, analysis and interpretation, as three major ways to “do something with descriptive data” (Wolcott, 1994: 10). Whilst analysing the data, the researcher was guided by this approach. Description refers to the question of what is going on, where the underlying assumption is data is allowed to “speak for themselves” (Wolcott, 1994: 10). Analysis expands on descriptive accounts, systematically examining relationships in the data. Interpretation concerns making sense of what is going on, adding meaning and context to the analysis and descriptive accounts, drawing implications and inferences (Wolcott, 1994: 11). As Wolcott highlights, these three categories are not mutually exclusive, and overlap between them is inevitable. However, separating these processes assisted the analysis and writing of the data, where the description informed the analysis and the interpretation.

In writing the chapters, themes (nodes) which emerged during coding of the transcripts became key discussion points in each chapter, and sub-themes (sub-nodes) became key discussions within each theme. Atlas.ti allows for searches across the transcripts by theme; this was adopted for each chapter, meticulously searching through each theme, cutting and pasting key quotations, and making extensive notes on each theme.

In Atlas.ti, within each individual theme, each interviewee’s response was separated with a code unique to that person. Essentially, themes could be searched by the interviewee’s code and role at PYOS. This enabled horizontal analysis, comparing responses across roles at PYOS, and vertical analysis, comparing responses within each role at PYOS. These comparisons enabled a systematic approach to the analysis (Wolcott, 1994), which looked beyond an individual or specific role within PYOS, to comparisons across roles at PYOS.
Due to the need to maintain the anonymity of participants and data protection, the researcher was careful when writing to remove any identifying markers of individuals. Numerical coding was chosen for interviewees and observations, to avoid the names or initials being copied into the writing, and hence identifying the research participants. Demographic data was analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel 2010.

4.6 Background information about the fieldwork site

4.6.1 The city of Peterborough

Peterborough is a Cathedral city situated in the county of Cambridgeshire, in the Eastern region of England, with an estimated population of 173,400 (ONS, 2010). Of the total population at the time of the 2001 UK census (156,061) 24.6% were aged 0-17 years; higher than the average for England which was 22.7% (UK Census, 2001). The historic roots of Peterborough’s industrial past are still evident today. However, in 1968 it was designated a New Town, and much of the city’s social character and built environment has been established since. The City Council achieved unitary status in 1998. One of the aims of inclusion in the New town movement was to double the population of the city; Peterborough’s population grew by 45.4% between 1971 and 1991. Further population growth is planned to continue at a higher rate than the national average. It is anticipated that by 2020 Peterborough will have a population above 200,000 (Peterborough City Council, 2008a).

Peterborough’s population is diverse with 14.2% of young people aged 10-17 are from black and ethnic communities (Peterborough City Council, 2007). 10.3% of all people in Peterborough described themselves as non-white; the Pakistani population making up the largest ethnic minority group, 4.5% of the city’s population (UK Census, 2001). Peterborough was designated an asylum dispersal area in 2001, and was allocated an estimated 78% of all asylum seekers dispersed to the East of England region (Partnership plan, 2009). The expansion of the European Union in May 2004 saw an influx of migrant workers from eight new accession states (Partnership plan, 2009). There has been a dramatic increase in recent years of immigrants from Eastern European countries such as Poland and the Slovak

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Republic (Wikström et al., 2012). This increase in diversity brings economic growth, but also emerging challenges around social cohesion (Wikström et al., 2012).

Peterborough contains areas characterised by both high and low social disadvantage (Wikström et al., 2012). The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 ranked Peterborough amongst the third most deprived local authorities in England. 22 (16.4%) of its 134 super output areas (SOAs)\textsuperscript{46} ranked among the most deprived in England (Noble et al., 2004). Peterborough presents extremes of low and high deprivation; 25 (18.7%) of its SOAs ranked among the least deprived in England. Across many socio-economic indicators, Peterborough is generally similar to other UK cities.

\textbf{Figure 2: Peterborough}

\textsuperscript{46} Super output areas are larger geographical units comprised of five output areas (on average).
4.6.2 Peterborough youth offending service

The YJB oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales, comprising of 158 youth offending teams (YOTs) (YJB, 2012). Peterborough YOS was introduced in April 2000. The principal aim of the team is to work towards preventing young people aged 10-17 offending. By using an evidence led approach, improving outcomes for victims and working in partnership, the team provides statutory services to young offenders, their families, courts, victims of crime and the people of Peterborough:

(a) the provision of persons to act as appropriate adults to safeguard the interests of children and young person’s detained or questioned by police officers;
(b) the assessment of children and young persons, and the provision for them of rehabilitation programmes;
(c) the provision of support for children and young person’s remanded or committed on bail while awaiting trial or sentence;

(d) the placement in local authority accommodation of children and young person’s remanded or committed to such accommodation under section 23 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1969;
(e) the provision of reports or other information required by courts in criminal proceedings against children and young person’s;
(f) the provision of persons to act as responsible officers in relation to parenting orders, child safety orders, reparation orders and action plan orders;
(g) the supervision of young person’s sentenced to a probation order, a community service order or a combination order;
(h) the supervision of children and young person’s sentenced to a detention and training order or a supervision order;
(i) the post-release supervision of children and young person’s under supervision

(Peterborough City Council, 2008b).

4.6.3 Performance

A HM Joint Inspection during March to May 2006 found mixed results, including:

- improving the governance arrangements through strengthening the Strategic Management Board;
- improving performance against partnership targets; and
- addressing management communication issues within the service

(HMiP, 2006b).

The Peterborough Youth Justice Action Plan 2007/08 reported that the:

“Levels of recorded youth crime in Peterborough are down 11% on the previous year. The five most common crimes, which represent 73% of all youth crime, are the same as in recent years; these are violence against the person, theft and handling, motoring (not including car theft), criminal damage and public order offences. However, violent offences have become the most common crime, moving up from 2nd position last year. This reflects national trends. Overall, during the period April–December 2006 there were 1036 offences, representing just over 3.5 offences a day across the city. Seriousness of the types of offences very marginally reduced over the same period.”
The service further recorded satisfactory to strong results against a number of statutory performance management requirements:

- the service fully achieved 75% KPIs, and was close to achieving 20% of KPIs\(^4\). These included accommodation for young people, timeliness of prison planning meetings, the levels of remands and custodial targets. Of concern is the fact that the service failed to achieve the education, training and employment partnership target, with only 57.6% of children known to the service in education, training and employment against a target of 90%.

- Overall, there has been an 8% reduction in re-offending levels, which exceeds the target. This compares the re-offending rates of young people in 2003 to 2006.

- Performance was on target to reduce new entrants to the youth justice system with actual performance of 47.3% against a target of 48%.

- Effective practice quality audits (EPQA) demonstrate effective performance in a number of areas. Substance misuse work received a regionally validated score of 3, the highest possible meaning that “effective practice is being followed consistently and systematically, by all practitioners, managers and strategic partners.” The court remand work regionally validated at 2, meaning that “effective practice is mostly being followed, but is not system wide.”


\section*{4.7 Conclusion}

The methodological approach used in this thesis is designed to explore practitioners views and perspectives on core practice within a YOS. The research framework emphasises multi-layered and multiple strategies of research; a case study research design was selected, incorporating interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. The case study is PYOS, and a thick description of the context indicates that generalisations to other similar YOTs may be possible. In addition, it is apparent that common themes and issues addressed in the research will be applicable to other YOTs in England and Wales, particularly the application

\footnote{Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined by the YJB measure the effectiveness of priority areas of YOT activity.}
of knowledge and how practitioners formulate decisions within the context of national guidelines.

Interviews and observational data were coded and analysed using Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software, drawing out key themes relevant to the research questions, and issues and challenges faced by practitioners at PYOS. Demographic data was analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel 2010. The following four chapters will address the key research questions and present the empirical data collected from PYOS.
Chapter 5
PYOS characteristics

5.1 Introduction
In the previous chapter, the research methods utilised for the current study were discussed in detail. This chapter explores PYOS characteristics, to determine the changes to the structure of the service.

The chapter begins with a discussion regarding the transition of PYOS from a youth justice team to a youth offending team. Secondly, the governance of PYOS and how the service is inspected is presented. Thirdly, issues of multi- and inter-agency work are addressed and the characteristics of PYOS practitioners, examining their backgrounds and entry to PYOS further examined. In addition, the changes in the organisational structure of PYOS, with particular emphasis on the number of staff employed, their roles within the team and the broader impact of socio-political factors on the changes over time are also presented.

This chapter raises important questions regarding the connection between YOS performance and funding. Critics of a perceived managerialist approach to youth justice have raised such issues previously (see for example, Goldson, 2000; Muncie, 1999; Muncie, 2009; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; McLaughlin, Muncie and Hughes, 2001; Smith, 2007). With this in mind, an examination of the funding of PYOS is presented, followed by a detailed account of youth justice funding nationally, using the framework adopted by Solomon and Garside (2008) to contextualise PYOS within the national picture of youth justice funding.

5.2 Peterborough youth offending service: the transition from a youth justice team
PYOS was introduced in April 2000, transitioning from a youth justice team following the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). The YOS Headquarters are based in Peterborough city centre in a four-storey building comprising of open-plan offices. The new YOT multi-agency approach was a big shift from previous work in the youth justice team, as one senior practitioner who was part of this transition described:
“We were a youth justice team before [2000], we had a little office just up the road, much smaller team. With the crime and disorder act you had the multi-agency approach to working, whereas before you literally just had several youth justice officers and a manager, and some admin support, and you just went in and did your stuff really, did your reports and didn’t worry about assessments or anything, it’s completely changed. Big changes since I started.”

Staff members who were part of this transitional period described the move from a youth justice team to a YOT as a period of optimism and enthusiasm, much aligned with previous findings of research on the implementation of YOTs (see Holdaway et al., 2001; Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami, 2007). They also described that to be employed in the youth justice team workers had to be qualified social workers, this changed during the transition to a YOT, as a senior practitioner put it:

“Interestingly up to that point [becoming a YOT in 2000] there’d always been a qualifications bar, the old youth justice team only ever recruited qualified social workers. This requirement was removed when we became a YOT.”

Previous research on the implementation of YOTs identified that despite the newly formed YOTs, which brought together different agencies working together as one organisation for the first time in youth justice, a social work ethic had survived the transition from youth justice teams (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami; 2007). The qualifications and previous employment and experience of practitioners are discussed later in this chapter.

5.3 PYOS governance
PYOS operates within the boundaries of the Cambridgeshire Constabulary area, located within the Directorate of Children’s Services of the unitary authority of Peterborough, managed by the Assistant Director, Safeguarding Children and Communities. PYOS is a member of the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board helping to shape criminal justice priorities (Peterborough City Council, 2007). A two-tier structure of governance exists. The overarching body is the Community Safety Executive Board (CSEB), which is the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), which serves as the overall governing body for Community Safety, Drug Action Team and the YOS (Peterborough City Council, 2007). The second tier arrangement is the Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board (SMB),
meets bi-monthly and exception reports\textsuperscript{48} to the CSEB quarterly. The SMB is chaired by the Assistant Director for Specialist Services, who also sits on the CSEB and is the line manager for the Youth Offending Service (Peterborough City Council, 2007). This replaced the previous arrangement of the Youth Offending Service Steering Group which the HM Joint Inspection 2006 found was not robust enough to deliver effective monitoring or strategic governance of the service (HMIP, 2006b).

5.3.1 How is PYOS inspected?
PYOS has had two core case inspections (2006 and 2012) since its implementation in 2000. Inspections are led by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and visit all 158 YOTs in England and Wales:

“\textit{The joint inspection of YOTs is an independent programme, funded by the Home Office and reporting to the Secretary of State. Inspections are conducted jointly, involving CSCI, Estyn, the Healthcare Commission, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HMIC, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, Ofsted and SSIW as appropriate. The joint inspection team is located within and led by HMI Probation.}”

(HMIP, 2006b).

The inspection process examines “the quality of work undertaken with children and young people who offend, whoever is delivering it” (HMIP, 2012). The inspection team looks at a “representative sample of individual cases up to 12 months old” (HMIP, 2012). Furthermore, interviews are conducted with case managers and where possible with the individuals receiving the interventions, their parents / guardians, and victims of offending by children and young people. The inspections broadly “cover Assessment and Sentence Planning, Implementation of Interventions, and Achieving and Sustaining Planned Outcomes”, as detailed in the core case inspection criteria (HMIP, 2010 – Core case inspections).

A major criticism of the inspection process is that they focus on recorded data, not the practical aspects of delivery. The inspection claims that it measures the quality of work undertaken, however neglects to look in detail at how programmes and packages of intervention are designed, implemented and delivered in practice. Key conclusions are

\textsuperscript{48} An exception report outlines reasons for current performance and progress against goals.
drawn from case files and discussions with case managers about individual cases, yet inspectors are not observing practice. It is therefore important to treat the results and conclusions of such inspections with caution.

5.4 Multi-agency and inter-agency working

Multi-agency partnerships are formed to respond to a particular issue, operating within existing practices and structures (Souhami, 2007). In contrast to this, YOTs epitomise the inter-agency relations partnerships described by Crawford (1997). These partnerships “interrupt and interpenetrate the normal internal working relations of the collaborating organisations, usually resulting in new structures and forms of working” (Souhami, 2007: 20). Research on multi-agency initiatives has highlighted that the effects of informal responses and other complexities between policy statements and how they are realised in practice, are likely to be under-estimated (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). During the formative years of YOTs, many YOT staff were fresh from partner agencies and identified strongly with their home agency than the YOT itself (Bailey and Williams, 2000; Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami, 2007). This section will review the characteristics of PYOS practitioners, examining their backgrounds and entry to PYOS, followed by an examination of the changes in the organisational structure.

5.4.1 Role descriptions

Practitioners were not necessarily undertaking the role that their job title and job description suggested. The major issue was with the YJO role. A number of practitioners were actually employed in a specific role (e.g. bail officer, team leader, referral order officer) and declared this as their role. However when observing and discussing their actual day-to-day role it was apparent, due to managing caseloads, that they were fulfilling the duties of a YJO and spending less time and attention on the role they were employed to fulfil. One practitioner found herself managing cases rather than carrying out the role she was supposed to:

“I’m supposed to be a [specialist practitioner]... when I first started this job I used to spend both youth court days in court... but really now I’m 90% a youth justice officer”.
A restructuring of the organisation had recently taken place prior to the practitioners being interviewed for the current research and a number of staff found themselves now managing caseloads due to the reductions in budgets and staffing levels, as discussed later in the chapter. This meant their actual day-to-day role did not fit with their employed role, and was indicative of an organisational shift at PYOS. A number of practitioners noted that their roles unofficially changed in 2010. During this time PYOS saw its largest reduction in staff numbers, especially YJOs, since the service was implemented in 2000. As a consequence a number of staff had to now manage cases, which in turn reduced time spent doing their usual day-to-day roles.

5.4.2 Time worked at PYOS
Peterborough youth justice team transitioned into PYOS in April 2000. Three of the current staff were part of the former youth justice team, and a further four current practitioners had joined the newly-formed PYOS within the first year of the transitional period. Of the remaining practitioners only six had worked at PYOS for less than five years. Figure 4 displays the length of time each practitioner has worked at PYOS.

Figure 4: Length of time practitioners have worked at PYOS.
Three out of the four practitioners currently on the PYOS management team had worked at PYOS since its implementation in April 2000. They had all previously worked as social workers or toward social work qualifications, which was a key component of the former youth justice teams (see Souhami, 2007). In total, seven practitioners had worked at PYOS for over ten years and all had a professional background in social work, policing, probation or the prison service.

Nine practitioners had worked at PYOS for over five years but less than ten years. Of these practitioners, five were working in YJO roles. It is interesting to note staff that had joined PYOS between 2002 and 2006 had a mixture of experience, including professional experience in policing, probation, and the prison service, with an additional group who had experience in education, health, resource work, youth work plus some experience of volunteering. This is in line with the growth of the organisation during this time, the wider political agenda to increase specialist services within YOTs (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a).

The remaining six practitioners who were interviewed for the current research had worked at PYOS for less than five years. This group had backgrounds in more generic council roles within children’s services in Peterborough and had moved to PYOS from other council departments. They were also a younger age group than those who had worked at PYOS for over five years, and most had degrees and / or qualifications in a related subject to youth justice.

5.4.3 PYOS organisational structure

It is evident reviewing the annual PYOS organisational structure since its implementation in 2000 that the service expanded significantly, in terms of collaboration with external agencies and staffing, until 2009 when staffing was reduced. A senior practitioner explained:

“The structure has tended to change every year. It is built upon a foundation that is entirely flexible, although there is a clear structure. The YOT is split into teams and strictly speaking practitioners work within their specific team, but there is scope for flexibility across teams.”
Figure 5 shows the number of full and part time staff at PYOS between 2000 and 2011. The changes in PYOS organisational structure during this time are discussed in more detail below.

**Figure 5: Staff Numbers at PYOS by Year.** Source: *PYOS Organisational structures each year from 2000 – 2011; PYOS youth justice plan 2007-08; HMIP 2006; PYOS Management.*

### 5.4.3.1 2000 - 2002

Following the transition from a youth justice team to a YOT, the team was relatively small from 2000 – 02, a total of 20 operational staff plus sessional staff\(^{49}\). The team comprised of a YOT manager, and two team leaders who oversaw two smaller sub-teams made up of a combination of youth offending team officers (YOTOs), youth justice workers, a probation officer, a police officer, a teacher, a reparation worker, a court administrator, a bail support worker, and sessional staff. There was also a separate administration team which supported the service, and in addition the team was supported by drugs workers, careers advisors and a restorative justice project.

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\(^{49}\) Sessional staff were a pool of staff who are non-salaried support staff employed by the YOT and paid an hourly rate only for the hours of work they do.
5.4.3.ii 2003 – 2004

By 2003 – 04 the team had almost doubled in size to 35.5 operational staff members plus 25 sessional workers, as the inter-agency roles were filled. This increase in staffing resulted in a new organisational structure; the YOT manager overseeing a team manager, who in turn oversaw four assistant team managers. There was also an increase in partnerships and specialist staff such as education, accommodation and drugs workers. A significant new role was the seconded psychologist. In 2000 the *NHS Plan Implementation Programme* (DoH, 2000) included a requirement that health and local authorities work together to produce a local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) strategy. The Prison Reform Trust (2001) reported that a high number of young offenders, especially those receiving custodial sentences, had mental health difficulties. The new multi-agency approach of YOTs recognised this, and aimed to increase links between health work and young people who offend (Burnett and Appleton, 2004a). In 2003, *Every Child Matters* set out the core framework for reform of children’s services, including Children’s Trust arrangements and the five outcomes (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing) with the 2004 Children Act giving statutory force to these.

5.4.3.iii 2005 – 2006

2005 – 06 saw additional significant changes to the organisational structure with further identification of distinct teams: Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) team50, early intervention community team51, court services team52 and the Drug and Alcohol Response Team (DART)53. The level of operational staffing increased to 41 plus 25 youth support casual workers54. A significant new role was the addition of a co-ordinator of services for those young people who sexually harm. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 protects children and young people by creating age boundaries that affect the seriousness of the offence; young people under the age of 13 are unable, in law, to give consent to sexual activity and those over the age of 10 who engage in sexual activity are expected to take

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50 “The most robust and innovative community-based programme available for persistent and serious young offenders.” (Gray et al., 2005).
51 Includes Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISPs) working with young people aged 10-18 who are considered to be at risk of offending.
52 Represents the YOT in court, prepares pre-sentence reports about young people for the court.
53 Includes specialist substance misuse workers and facilitates a network of young people’s drug treatment providers and co-ordinates DART.
54 Previously titled sessional staff.
Chapter 5

responsibility for their actions (c. 42, Part 1, ss 5-8 & 9-15). The implementation of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 meant that YOTs (along with other agencies) are expected to work closely with young people and their families to explain the legal implications of such reported behaviours, in addition to the Crown Prosecution Service who takes responsibility for decision-making (Grimshaw, 2008).

5.4.3.iv 2007 – 2008

2007 – 08 saw further increases and adjustments to the structure of the organisation. Operational staffing increased to 47 plus 25 youth support casual workers, with an increase in the number of volunteers as mentors, appropriate adults and referral panel members. Teams within the YOT became more refined as: Early intervention and prevention community team, court services team, education, training and employment team, intensive services team and performance and partnership services. In 2006 a specific performance and partnership team was developed after recommendations from the joint inspection of Peterborough YOS in 2006. The inspection reported that some key partnerships in Peterborough were underdeveloped, and liaison with other agencies required improvement (HMIP, 2006b):

“[t]he YOS was not using its full potential to work with partners to address crime prevention and anti-social behaviour in Peterborough.”

(HMIP, 2006b: 10).

The recommendations of the inspection team were highlighted in the Peterborough Youth Justice Plan 2007 / 08, which stated the:

“need to establish agreed protocols between the service [PYOS] and organisations with which they work closely, including Children’s Social Care, Probation, Connexions, Youth Service and the Courts.”

(Peterborough Youth Justice Plan 2007 / 08: 8).

In addition PYOS was required to improve:

“the governance arrangements through strengthening the Strategic Management Board, improving performance against partnership targets and addressing management communication issues within the service.”

The youth justice plan reports that PYOS had “difficulty in recruiting a Performance Manager [which] ha[d] put pressure on the service to maintain its progress” (Peterborough Youth Justice Plan 2007 / 08: 8). A senior practitioner explained that:

“A performance manager was recruited in 2007... [who] oversaw a team of support officers and volunteers and casual staff, to monitor performance closely and manage partnership links. We [PYOS] improved performance from two to four on the YJB framework\textsuperscript{55}, and increased our KPI outputs\textsuperscript{56}, which we’ve maintained and continue to improve.”

\textbf{5.4.3.\textit{v} 2009 – 2010}

In early 2009 there was a decrease in operational staffing numbers, reducing to 45 plus 25 youth support workers and volunteers. Significantly the head of service retired in December of 2009, and was replaced by an acting head of service from within PYOS. In 2010 PYOS was informed of reductions to budgets the service would receive from the YJB; a reduction of 6% per year for four years (24% total). This led to major restructuring and inevitable job losses and redundancies in the service; operational staff numbers decreased further to 35.5 (back to 2003 / 04 staff levels) plus 25 youth support workers and volunteers. The majority of the reductions were administrative, which was a cause for concern, as this increased the administrative workload onto core practitioners. The majority of practitioners stated that half of their working time was now spent on administrative duties (report writing, letter writing to young people and families, inputting information on the computer), which many felt detracted from valuable planning time for interventions, as summed up by one practitioner:

“you find that half your time is spent just inputting on the computer, because there’s not enough admin staff or support, you have to do it yourself, and that’s wasted time really, because it could be spent working with young people, but because of the lack of staff you have to do it yourself.”

\textsuperscript{55} The aim of the Performance Management Framework is to help the YJB fulfil its statutory remit to monitor the performance of the youth justice system while also helping YOT Management Boards and management teams to ensure that YOTs are delivering an effective service to young people, communities and partner agencies.
However another practitioner felt that the loss of administration staff wasn’t an issue, and stated that it was more efficient to be responsible for one’s own administration:

“they [increase in administration tasks] don’t affect me, I know they affect other members in the team, I have OCD, I’m like, obsessional about the way I organize my time, the neatness of everything, so I find it very easy to manage admin tasks and things and would rather do them myself than have someone else do them for me.”

This suggests that the increase in administrative duties of practitioners should not have a major impact upon their work. However, when examining closely what the administrative tasks entail, it was apparent that each practitioner did things differently and there was no consistency across the service. For example, to remind young people of appointments one practitioner would make calendars for the young people, whereas another would send letters, another would use mobile texting - short messaging service (SMS) - another would telephone the young person, and some practitioners would use a combination of each. With each individual case came different issues, such as ease of getting in touch with a young person using a particular method, following up an individual if they did not respond or turn up to pre-arranged meetings; sometimes practitioners did not know if the young person knew they had an appointment, or had forgotten about it, as they had not responded, and sometimes the young person would turn up late. These issues of contact and attendance filtered into the administrative tasks of practitioners, and were a real concern for many:

“sometimes the chaotic lifestyle of young people, they’ve changed their mobile number, they’ve moved home, parents when they are on board are reminding kids that’s great, but unfortunately that’s quite rare.”

(YJO).

“Sometimes you ring young people to remind them of appointments, and they’ll say ‘would you come to me instead of me coming to you’, so you have to dash out of the office at the last minute to get there for the appointment.”

(YJO).

“Young people turning up, people not bringing them to appointments on time, bad weather can stop them getting here, or make things happen a lot later.”

(YJO).
“my typical experience of it is, especially in the early stages, is actually getting them to come in, you get quite a lot of ‘no-shows’, until they realize that you’re not here to have a go at them, you’re not here to stab them in the back, ya know, you have to gain their trust, and then until they come in you can’t really do that, so that’s the hardest thing is getting them in. Sometimes you get people who don’t come in and they end up going straight back to court.”

(YJO).

“I think sometimes they’re often late for appointments, and you have to deal with them, and ya know, because you don’t want to disengage them from the service because of their time management is not particularly good, you can work on that, try and introduce perhaps some rewards or something like that for coming in on time.”

(YJO).

“Sometimes people when they don’t turn up, and if the young person doesn’t turn up, and that session that you’ve planned might go out the window, or you’d reschedule it. But because my understanding is to reschedule an appointment within 3 working days, so you’re not into areas of breach, that might mean that they are coming in on days, particularly because I’m at university it might be a Wednesday and I think I can’t see him tomorrow and Monday, Friday I’m at college, then I’d have to come in on a Friday, and if someone can deliver a piece of work that’s great, but that rarely happens it usually the young person coming in, signing in and you’ve lost that opportunity to deliver that work.”

(YJO).

As part of the restructure in 2009 – 2010, the performance and partnership team was dissolved into a single performance officer role; the majority of staff in the performance and partnership team were administration staff and had left PYOS as part of the budget reductions. Perhaps more of a concern for PYOS was the reduction of youth justice officers (YJOs), from 9 to 6.5, plus a further two YJOs on a temporary one year leave to complete social work qualifications which reduced actual operational YJOs to 4.5. As a result existing roles within the service were reviewed and other members of staff began to manage caseloads, as a temporary measure, and effectively take on a YJO role. Matters weren’t helped when a temporary member of staff who was providing cover for the low numbers of YJOs suddenly left, which meant further members of staff had to take on his caseload. The service became stretched by the increased caseload and reduced operational staffing; team
leaders, court workers and specialist staff had to pick up some cases, as one practitioner explained:

“I’ve had a case now and again throughout the last 2 years [2009 -2011], it fell to me because we had a temporary member of staff who left suddenly, so we’ve had to divvy out his work and there’s only a little piece of work needed doing on this, so I took this on board rather than giving someone else an overload, another case manager”.

5.4.3 2010 - 2011
In early 2011 another YJO departed through voluntary redundancy; however two YJOs returned to PYOS from temporary leave following completion of social work qualifications, one manager took up a YJO position, and a specialist member of staff took up a part time YJO role, which meant the service had 10 operational YJOs, and (at the time of interviews) 14 members of staff holding caseloads, two of whom were part-time YJOs, and three practitioners who were working caseloads as well as their regular roles. A senior practitioner described it as a new world for the team:

“when the team is fully staffed that it has a good level of resource, or certainly had a good level of resource, obviously we’ve lost quite a lot of that resource through reductions in budgets, and so we’re at the start now, of this new world, where we’ve reduced the staffing, we’ve reduced management, we’ve reduced the budget generally”.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of the workforce at PYOS in 2010 - 11, and is comparable to figure 7 which shows the breakdown of the national YOT workforce for 2010 - 11. There is variation in the size of different YOTs in England and Wales, which is dependent on local need and available local resource; however the overall national picture gives an indication of the typical (average) demographic make-up of a YOT in terms of roles. It is apparent when compared to the overall national workforce PYOS has a higher proportion of volunteers and sessional workers, and lower proportion of full time practitioners and administrative staff; this is indicative of the recent staff losses during this time at PYOS due to reductions in the organisations budget. Indeed this is nothing new to YOTs in England and Wales; Burnett and Appleton (2004a: 27-28) in their research at Oxfordshire YOT report that “staffing levels for core practice were inadequate” and “[s]taff felt too stretched to do a good job”. As the
staffing levels over time show in figure 5, PYOS has recently been reduced to staffing levels similar to that of 2003 – 04 which have placed additional pressures on practitioners working on core practice.

**Figure 6: Breakdown of all staff at PYOS in 2010 - 11.** Source: PYOS Organisational structure 2010; PYOS Management.

![Pie chart showing staff breakdown at PYOS in 2010-11](chart1.png)

**Figure 7: Breakdown of national YOT workforce in 2010 / 11.** Source: Youth Justice Annual Workload Data 2010 / 11, p82.

![Pie chart showing national YOT workforce breakdown](chart2.png)
5.5 Peterborough youth offending service funding: swings and roundabouts

The funding of PYOS was described by one senior practitioner as surrounded by “a lot of political issues” and like “swings and roundabouts”:

“Funding comes in from the government, the council, and from agencies. An agreement has been signed which states that if the council were to withdraw any funding, then the government would follow suit. For example: if the council reduces its funding by 10%, the government reduces its funding by 10%, and effectively we [PYOS] lose 20%. We [PYOS] perform highly in the league tables, however when funding is pulled this affects performance, causing a slip down the table, to the mid-range, and we [PYOS] starts again – funding is increased and they rise again – it’s very much swings and roundabouts.”

Figure 8 shows a breakdown of Peterborough youth offending services budget for 2010 / 11. Half of the budget is made up of government grants: YJB funding to support effective practice, performance improvement, substance misuse interventions and other intervention programmes (43%), and a grant from the youth crime action plan (7%) which offers “non-negotiable intervention to the families at greatest risk of serious offending” (HM Government, 2008). Over a third of the budget (38%) is provided by the local authority chief executive. The statutory agency input from the Police (3%), Health (1%) and Probation (1%) are relatively low in comparison. The remaining 7% of the budget is made up of other grants; these are a combination of the previously mentioned grants provided to local authorities for youth justice services, some of which are ring-fenced for targeted intervention. As this type of funding is restricted to specific intervention, if it is not used within the financial year it is allocated, it is reduced or potentially removed in the next financial year of funding (YJB, 2011a). The YJB has stated that from 2011 / 12 the YOT grant from the YJB was one single grant with no ring fenced amounts for certain strands of work (YJB, 2011b). As one senior practitioner stated, the removal of ring-fencing on YOT grants may not necessarily be as positive for YOTs as the YJB advocate:

“On the one hand removal of restrictions to grants is great, more scope for local youth services to focus on local needs. On the other hand the question is will this money be passed on to YOTs? Councils have been hit by the budget cuts, this money might be passed to other areas and the YOT might lose out.”
In a survey conducted by *Children and Young People Now (CYPN)* of Directors of Children’s Services in England and Wales, the vice president of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services commented:

“Ring-fences are off local government funding, so councils can decide to reallocate cash to children's services from other services, but in reality few have done so because of the lateness of the settlement and cuts already made to other services. Many children's services departments are making 15 per cent or more reductions to services in 2011/12, making them the biggest losers in local government next year.”

(Higgs, 2011).

**Figure 8: Breakdown of Peterborough youth offending service budget 2010 / 11 (£). Source: Peterborough youth offending service, 2011.**

![Breakdown of Peterborough youth offending service budget 2010 / 11 (£).](image)

Figure 9 shows a breakdown of PYOS 2010 / 11 budget compared to the 2007 / 08 budget. Overall funding reduced from just over £2.24 million in 2007 / 08 to just under £1.96 million in 2010 / 11, a total reduction of £283,216. The largest reductions look to be from the YJB and local authority grants, however PYOS received grants from the YJB and local authorities through the youth crime action plan and other grants, taking these into consideration the actual levels of funding between the two years are likely to be much less than the split shown in figure 9. Statutory agency funding decreased by £191,713; £41,200 (police),
£89,313 (probation) and £61,200 (health). This is in contrast to the overall national increase of statutory agencies contribution to funding YOTs by £13.3 million between 2007 / 08 and 2010 / 11. This further suggests the variance of funding across England and Wales at the local level; whilst the YJB can report national increases in funding by statutory agencies, at the local level this is not necessarily the case.

The reduction in funding, and uncertainty of future funding, was a cause for concern for all practitioners, although as one senior practitioner optimistically highlighted this wasn’t so bad when put into the context of PYOS performance:

“Back in 2008 we had something like £2.2 million budget... we’ve lost another 300 and odd grand this year, so you know, the budgets gone down quite a lot and performance continues to improve, and you sort of think what the hell did we do with £2.2 million. So you know I think it’s interesting. So thinking in that kind that way, the expectations are not unreasonable.”

Figure 9: Breakdown of Peterborough youth offending service budget 2007 / 08 and 2010 / 11 (£). Source: Peterborough youth offending service, 2011.

The funding of youth justice has attracted much interest. In the current climate of funding cuts to youth justice, it is important to understand the trends of funding over time, and also
explore the reasons for changes. Solomon and Garside (2008) undertook an independent audit on the youth justice reforms since the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. They reported that youth justice spending had increased by 45 per cent between 2000/01 and 2006/07 (Solomon and Garside, 2008). Between 2006/07 and 2010/11 there has been a 5 per cent real terms decrease in youth justice spending. Solomon and Garside’s analysis has been used as a framework for which current youth justice spending will be analysed in the following section.

5.6 Youth justice funding
The majority of YOTs in England and Wales were established in 2000/01 and spending on the youth justice system in that year was just over £380 million (YJB, 2001). In 2010/11 spending had more than doubled to just under £679 million (YJB, 2011c), a real terms growth of 40 per cent. In cash terms, since 2002, the actual spend on the youth justice system in England and Wales was a total of £5.7 billion (YJB, 2000; YJB, 2002; YJB, 2003; YJB, 2004a; YJB, 2005; YJB, 2006a; YJB, 2007a; YJB, 2008a; YJB, 2009c; YJB, 2010c; YJB, 2011c; Hansard, 2007; Solomon and Garside, 2008), which was a substantial injection of money. The YJB and the 158 YOTs account for all targeted spending on youth justice in England and Wales. The funding is received through Ministry of Justice grants and a variety of statutory agencies (police, probation, health). Statutory agencies’ spending on youth justice have only been published since 2002/03, so it is unclear how much exactly was spent between 2000 and 2002 (Solomon and Garside, 2008).

Spending on youth justice in 2010/11 totalled £678.9 million. Figure 10 shows that the YJB contributed more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of the total expenditure, which amounted to £452.3 million. Statutory agencies contributed £226.6 million (33 per cent). A significant proportion of the YJB contribution is toward the purchase of secure accommodation, which accounts for over 61 per cent of the total YJB spend, as shown in figure 11.

57 For information on calculating real terms growth see HM Treasury: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_gdp_annex.htm
58 140 YOTs in England and 18 YOTs in Wales (YJB, 2011a).
59 Solomon and Garside (2008: 19) point out that YOTs have received additional funding over the years from “Europe, the government’s Single Regeneration Budget, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Children’s Fund and Quality Projects.” These figures however are not published separately so are not included in analysis here.
As Solomon and Garside (2008) highlight, spending on youth justice significantly increased from April 2000. From this point the Labour government began providing considerable extra resources into the criminal justice system (Solomon et al., 2007). As with Solomon and Garside’s (2008) independent audit report, this section has taken 2000 / 01 as the baseline for analysing recent trends in spending on youth justice.

Table 3 shows that total spending on youth justice increased by £297.6 million between 2000 / 01 and 2010 / 11, a real terms increase of 40 per cent. Spending on youth justice increased year-on-year and peaked at £731.1 million in 2009 / 10. Up until this point spending had seen three spikes in increases between 2000 / 01 and 2002 / 03 (£130.9 million, when YOTs became fully operational across England and Wales), 2004 / 05 and 2005 / 06 (£61.4 million, largely because of the increase in secure accommodation due to rises in the number of children and young people in custody), and 2006 / 07 and 2007 / 08 (£58.1 million, “as demand for custody remained high” (YJB, 2008: 31)).

<table>
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<th>02-03</th>
<th>03-04</th>
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<td>722.1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statutory agencies’ spending on youth justice have only been published since 2002 / 03 so it is unclear exactly how much was spent between 2000 and 2002. The figure for 2000 / 01 is a projected figure from the Youth Justice Board Statement of Accounts 1999 / 00.

The funding trend changed from 2007 / 08 onward. Although overall expenditure increased until 2010 / 11, the proportionate cash increase actually decreased significantly until 2010 / 11 when there was an overall decrease in expenditure, down to £678.9 million. The YJB reported a 10 per cent decrease in the cost of custody; overall numbers declined in the secure estate and two young offender institutions (YOIs) were decommissioned (YJB, 2011c).

A further reason for the downturn in spending was an announcement from the Cabinet Office in 2010 that the YJB was to be abolished, and its functions to be transferred to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This would be achieved through the Public Bodies Bill in 2011 (Cabinet Office, 2010). This brought uncertainty to the nature of the YJB and the wider youth justice system, especially within youth offending teams as will be discussed in the proceeding chapters. The sources of funding to the YJB from the MoJ and the Home Office stated their intention to reduce funding year-on-year to the YJB. The Home Office would reduce to zero from 2012 / 13; the MoJ intended to reduce from £402 million in 2010 / 11 to £356 million in 2014 / 15. After much political debate, the YJB was saved from abolition in 2011, however still announced plans to reduce its budgets by up to 30 per cent between 2010 / 11 and 2014 / 15 (YJB, 2011a); this reduction in funding would be passed on to youth offending teams.

Figure 11 shows a breakdown of the YJBs expenditure in 2010 / 11. By far the largest proportion of spending was on providing places to children and young people sentenced to custody; £268.9 million (61.2%) almost two-thirds of the total budget. Direct YOT funding is the next highest proportion of funding, £72.6 million (16.5%) which includes funding to
support effective practice and performance improvement, and also to provide substance misuse and other intervention programmes (YJB, 2011c).

Section 37(1) of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act “provides that it shall be the principal aim of the youth justice system to prevent offending by children and young persons”. It is striking that the figures in 2010 / 11 show that only £36.2 million (8.2%) of the budget is spent on crime prevention programmes; more than seven times less than on custody. Furthermore, since its implementation the YJB has advocated the development of effective practice and an evidence-based approach to reducing offending, however the 2010 / 11 figures show only a £0.2 million (<1%) spend on research.

**Figure 11: Breakdown of Youth Justice Board expenditure 2010 / 11 (£million).**

*Direct YOT funding includes money to support effective practice and performance improvement described in the YJBs annual accounts as ‘direct YOT funding’, and also money for substance misuse programme and other ‘intervention’ programmes.

YJB funding to YOTs had increased year-on-year since 2000 / 01 up to 2010 / 11, alongside monies from partner agencies and local authorities. The overall budget is made up of three
parts: from central government grants, from the statutory partners of police, health and probation and the remaining portion from the local authority (Solomon, 2007); figure 12 shows a breakdown of funding received by YOTs from each statutory agency in 2010 / 11.

The proportion of funding received by YOTs in 2010 / 11 from statutory agencies totalled £273 million, a reduction of £8 million from 2009 / 10. The YJBs direct YOT funding was a significant contributor to this, reducing from £54.1 million in 2009 / 10 to £46.4 million in 2010 / 11; a total reduction of £7.7 million. Probation also reduced its funding by £1.5 million from £17.9 million in 2009 / 10 to £16.4 million in 2010 / 11. However there were overall increases in Police, Health, and Local Authority funding, the latter providing by far the most of all agencies, almost two-thirds of the overall budget (62%). As was highlighted in the 2006 / 07 figures by Solomon and Garside (2008) it is somewhat surprising that Health services provide the lowest contribution to YOT funding, given the number of young people in the youth justice system with Mental Health needs (Solomon and Garside, 2008).

**Figure 12: Breakdown of statutory agencies’ funding for youth offending teams in England and Wales, 2010 / 11 (£million).** Source: Youth Justice Board (2011), Youth Justice Statistics 2010 / 11 England and Wales, London: Youth Justice Board.

*From 2008 / 09 funding from the Welsh Assembly Government was recorded by YOTs; in previous years this category was not included.
The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to secure young people’s access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities. Funding of these youth services however is not mandatory, and due to the localised nature of provision has meant wide variation in spending on youth justice services across England and Wales (Parliament, 2011). Until April 2011, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was a key funding source for local authority youth services, administered by the Department for Communities and Local Government (Parliament, 2011). In addition to direct YOT grants central government has provided a number of additional grants to local authorities for youth justice services, including: the Youth Opportunity Fund (£40.75 million in 2010-11), the Youth Crime Action Plan (£11.98 million in 2010-11), Challenge and Support (£3.9 million in 2010-11), Intensive Intervention Grant (£2.8 million in 2010-11), the Children’s Fund (£131.80 million in 2010-11), the Positive Activities for Young People Programme (£94.5 million in 2010-11), Youth Taskforce (£4.34 million in 2010-11), Young People Substance Misuse (£7.0 million in 2010-11) and Teenage Pregnancy (£27.5 million in 2010-11).

5.7 Conclusion

One of the key aims of this thesis is to explore the extent that national and local policy is influencing practitioners decision-making throughout the intervention process. It is widely documented that managerialism, applied to the youth justice system, may be damaging to the young people it intervenes with, through increased government financial oversight and control, and the use of performance targets which utilise cost-effectiveness as a primary driver of service delivery (Garland, 2001; Goldson, 2000; Muncie, 1999; Muncie, 2009; Muncie and Hughes, 2002; McLaughlin, Muncie and Hughes, 2001; Smith, 2007); a performance culture where process dominates, and outcomes are neglected in favour of meeting targets. The discussion and comments in this chapter highlight important issues about the connection between performance and funding, and what that performance means.

The purpose of the creation of YOTs was to “prevent offending by children and young persons” (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, S 37(1)), through an holistic approach to intervention, based on research and evidence of what we know is most effective with young
people (YJB, 2008). The findings of this chapter indicate that the motivations of practitioners who work with young people in the youth justice system are focused on meeting targets, rather than focusing on the individual young person and designing and delivering programmes of intervention using well-informed, supported methods. Further suggesting that targets will be met but individuals needs will not. Thus, managerialist approaches are having a damaging impact on the work undertaken by youth justice practitioners, and ultimately the needs of the young people they work with.

In addition, there has been a shift in the demographics and characteristics of the workforce at PYOS over time. PYOS has a number of staff who have remained in their post for a number of years, especially at the management level, indicating sustained leadership over time and a continuation of social work ideals that the prior youth justice team had, as discussed in the work of Burnett and Appleton (2004a) and Souhami (2007). However, the newer members of the team tend to be younger, have university degrees and come from more generic backgrounds within council departments rather than having social work, probation, prison service or policing experience. They also tend to have a lot of prior volunteering experience compared to those that had worked at PYOS for more than five years. This is indicative of the changing structures of YOTs, and external changes at the national and local level. Previously, practitioners were sought from external agencies bringing expertise from a particular profession, whereas it now appears that generic YOT roles have emerged which require that people have relevant experience working with young people, and are increasingly employed to manage caseloads rather than offer expertise to case managers. This further emphasises the potential changing ethos within YOTs from social work ideals to risk / target-focused approaches, which has contributed to the reduced specialisation of practitioners through the creation of generic YOT roles.

These issues are discussed in further detail in the following chapters.
Chapter 6
Addressing effective practice in the YOS

6.1 Introduction
The previous chapter has examined the characteristics of PYOS and discussed the changes to the organisational structure since its implementation in April 2000. This chapter will address the process of intervention with young people when referred to PYOS, and how practitioners address what is known about best practice and what is effective when working with young people referred to PYOS. Relating back to the reviewed literature surrounding effective practice in chapter three, this chapter will present data collected on the following: (1) the process of intervention at PYOS; (2) the use of assessment; (3) how does PYOS link interventions to established need?; (4) are interventions tailored to be individually appropriate?; (5) use of cognitive skills in interventions; (6) are interventions multi-modal?; (7) do they include an element of reparation?; (8) are interventions delivered as designed?; (9) do interventions have long-term engagement and contact time?; (10) how are interventions reviewed? Furthermore the chapter will address observed case examples to highlight the points discussed. The assessment of young people at PYOS is presented first.

6.2 Assessing young people's needs
Baker (2008) highlights that assessment provides the basis of work with young people who offend or who are at risk of offending. This assessment should be to guide action (Reder et al., 1993) and steer focus for the selection of appropriate interventions (Baker, 2008). At PYOS, all practitioners who manage a caseload complete an assessment, using the Asset tool, for each young person before a programme of intervention takes place. This was declared at interview by all interviewees managing cases and observed in all cases on several occasions. All information collected by the practitioner and work undertaken, is recorded using the young offender information system (YOIS). YOIS is a computer-based, case management programme, which allows YOT practitioners to input data on cases, such as assessment and reports. This can then be reviewed by the case manager and YOT management.
6.2.1 Initial interviews
All practitioners described a process whereby the asset was written up and completed after two or three interviews with the young person. The interviews would, if practical, be undertaken with the young person and their parent / guardian present; following this the asset would be completed on the computer by the case manager:

“I’d have 2 or 3 assessment sessions where we’d discuss a lot of the issues in Asset, talk about the offence, talk about the triggers for the offence, talk about some early life experiences and how that led to the offence and how that might have impacted on the young person’s risks and needs, do some more specialist assessments in terms of just kind of learning styles, self-assessment they do, a mental health screen, and possibly further work on that if necessary, and then I would complete the asset, and from the asset I would then formulate the intervention.”

6.2.2 Parent / guardian involvement
Practitioners explained that when parents / guardians of the young people were on board (i.e. took an active interest in the work PYOS were doing with the young person) they were generally very helpful in taking an active interest in the young person’s work and progress, and bringing the young person to, or reminding them of, appointments. However, some parents were difficult to engage with, as a case manager highlighted:

“I try as much as I can to get parents involved at a very early stage, because then you’ve got them on board and you’re putting across the importance. Either, sometimes I find parents are working full time and they haven’t got the time to commit to that which is a shame really, or parents have got issues themselves they’re dealing with and they haven’t really got the time. Generally, they are pretty good really, I go round and see them at home.”

6.2.3 Time taken to complete Asset
It typically takes on average 2.5 hours to complete the initial asset (interviews and information gathering), and 6 hours for the overall asset (information inputted in to the computer) to be completed. However there was variance between one practitioner to the next. Practitioners described that the time taken is affected by a number of complexities, such as contacting the young person, any additional plans (such as risk of self harm (ROSH)) that need completing, other enquiries that need to be carried out, entering the information
into the computer, and previous knowledge of the young person, as a case manager explained:

“If it’s a normal asset with no risk of harm [ROSH] I’d say 3 or 4 hours. With interviews it can take ages; that can take days trying to get hold of people. You have to obviously get all the information first before you can complete the asset, to do the asset on its own on a computer its about 4 hours, but if you’ve got a more complicated asset, and you’ve got lots of plans to do, it can take a whole day; seven and a half hours.”

**6.2.4 Collecting information**

Furthermore, enquiries which are carried out during the initial stages of asset preparation may involve visits to the young person’s home and / or conversations with different agencies, for example, social services, education services, housing services. Practitioners raised concern with the amount of time they spent “sat in front of a computer” than working with young people directly:

“I spend far more time sat in front of a computer than I do working with young people, and I recognise that there’s a need for assessments and reports and stuff, but in terms of being able to offer the young people a good service, I don’t think any of us would say that we’ve got all the time in the world to stay with the young person, and that’s really unfortunate.”

This is highlighted by Burnett and Appleton (2004a: 30) who observed the shift in practice from youth justice teams to youth offending teams which “has resulted in a job which is more desk-bound and mechanistic, involving more contact with colleagues and less contact with young people and their families.” Indeed it was apparent whilst spending time in the offices at PYOS that contact time between practitioners and young people was minimal, and practitioners spent a vast amount of their time collecting information for reports, contacting agencies, consulting with staff in-house, reviewing any previous records held about the young people, arranging appointments, sending reminder letters, SMS messages, or phone calls to young people, and chasing up missed appointments.

**6.2.5 Previous knowledge of a young person**

Practitioners had conflicting views on whether previous knowledge of a young person (i.e. having previously worked with the young person) increased or decreased the efficiency of
putting together and completing the asset. Some practitioners saw it as an advantage to have previous knowledge of the young person when putting together the initial stages of the asset:

“it would very much depend on whether or not I’ve got previous knowledge of them or not, but generally speaking if I’ve never met the young person before then 3 or 4 hours maybe, if I know the young person then it can take less time”.

Other case managers found it takes longer when they have worked with a young person before:

“When you do an Asset and you’ve never worked with them before it’s very straightforward, sometimes it’s a child that you know, it’s very different; I always seem to take a long time to do them”.

It was apparent from spending time with practitioners on a day-to-day basis that some were more competent and skilled at certain tasks than others. Older members of staff, particularly those who had worked in previous youth justice teams, were more concerned that collecting “so much information”, data entry into computers and monitoring was a waste of their skills and detracted from working directly with young people, which, as Burnett and Appleton (2004a: 31) found, “they regarded as the most valuable and meaningful aspect of their job”. Practitioners would speak in terms of “old times”, “in the old days” and suggest that “things were more effective then” [before YOTs]. Younger members of staff, who had notably not worked in the previous youth justice team set-up, were a lot more positive about the use of computers, however, as previously mentioned, they raised concerns with the amount of time spent “sat in front of the computer”; the main reason they attributed to this was a lack of administrative support, which had reduced during the budget reductions and organisational restructuring discussed in chapter five.

6.2.6 Practitioner views on the use of Asset
Asset was viewed by all practitioners as the foundation of effective intervention. As one practitioner summed it up, Asset is a “guide and justification” for planning interventions. It was further claimed that Asset “identifies the needs of young people by creating risk scores.
You can then see what interventions could change those scores, and reduce them, their offender risks”. Another practitioner asserted that “I use [Asset] to identify what appear to be the points of major concern underpinning someone’s offending behaviour.” Furthermore, Asset is a “risk of reoffending assessment [which identifies] high risk areas in terms of causing further offending.”

Asset was clearly viewed by practitioners as the solid foundation which guided their work, specifically in the planning of interventions (discussed in more detail in section 6.3). The highest risk scores generated from the assessment process highlight to practitioners the key areas of focus for intervention planning. However, one practitioner stated that “sometimes there’s areas that score lower but need to take priority because without addressing them first you won’t be able to address other stuff. So say substance misuse, that may have to take priority because if you don’t address that they’re not gonna be able to engage in anything else.” During observations of assessment processes, and as highlighted in interviews, practitioners appeared somewhat confused as to what exactly the Asset assessment was measuring. It was clear that there was an assumption that risk of reoffending, as identified by asset risk scores, was identifying causes of further reoffending. As previously stated, critics of risk assessment tools highlight that accurately identifying the causal mechanisms between risk factors and offending behaviour, is problematic (see section 3.4).

6.3 Intervention planning and use of Asset

Previous research has highlighted that intervention plans should be informed by, and address the significant risk and protective factors identified during the assessment (Baker, 2008; YJB, 2010b). As one practitioner at PYOS stated, “the [intervention] plan is completely, 100 per cent based on the assessment”; this was a common statement from all practitioners:

“[Asset is] absolutely key to it [intervention plan], because you’re looking at the different areas... the process of writing asset makes you more aware of which areas that need working on, along with the score, so entirely involved.”

Some practitioners found that Asset was useful, not only as an assessment tool, but as a way of engaging the young person:
“I think the engagement relationship with the young person, bearing in mind as a youth justice officer you’ll be working with that person, it’s a difficult bridge sometimes because on the one hand clearly you’ve got to be honest and direct but on the other hand you don’t wanna antagonise the relationship before you’ve started working with someone, so I’ve found asset is something you can use because it’s got scores on it, like 2, 3, 4, its quite a non-direct way of saying look this is what the assessment says rather than my own individual judgement of you.”

One practitioner stated that Asset provided a justification for selecting specific areas to include in the intervention plan:

“I use asset basically to both guide and justify what I’m doing, because the asset obviously, sometimes when you do the asset something gets thrown up that you didn’t really expect, ya know it’s because when you’re analysing it, so its acts as a guide, because that helps, that clarifies what I want to do, but also if somebody turns around and says why is this in your intervention plan I can say well it’s because the asset has indicated that its needed. So a guide and justification.”

This may suggest that increased accountability and reduced discretion is now in the mind-set of youth justice practitioners, and potentially motivating them to include or exclude things in intervention plans that they would not have done previously. As Eadie and Canton (2002) assert, youth justice practice which operates in a context of high accountability and low discretion potentially constrains practice. They observe previous youth justice practitioners as operating in a context of low accountability to the organisation and high discretion in their practice, as it lacked rigorous monitoring and much of the work undertaken by practitioners was invisible (Eadie and Canton, 2002: 17). They advocate practice which is both highly accountable and highly discretionarly, which they claim allows for a flexible approach to implementing national standards, under the guidance and authorisation of the line manager. At PYOS practitioners were certainly conscientious of the accountability of their professional judgements; however they retained a high level of discretion when putting together intervention plans and programmes of intervention. Interestingly management oversight was not a rigorous process. Monthly meetings took place between a practitioner
and line manager once a month, and practitioners spoke of informal supervision every day, which was observed, and practitioners raised issue with the process.\(^\text{60}\)

### 6.3.1 Intervention planning historically at PYOS

In July 2009, intervention planning at PYOS was reformed to add structure to the process. Prior to July 2009 the intervention planning process at PYOS, the case manager would draft an intervention plan, discuss it with the young person, and both the case manager and the young person would sign it. As one senior practitioner described:

> “Most staff would then take it round to the young person’s address and go through it with the parent and get the parent to agree, but if the parent wasn’t around or whatever then that would be missed.”

This process did not appear to involve the young person in the intervention planning process; rather the case manager decided what was needed in the intervention plan, presented it to the young person, who then had to agree to the decision and sign it. This process was reformed internally at PYOS in July 2009; a new multi-agency approach to intervention planning was introduced, which bring together all relevant practitioners (internal and external), the young person, and parents / guardians, in a forum to discuss and agree the intervention plan. This new system of planning interventions was described by one senior practitioner:

> “We devised our own paperwork, and a new kind of system, so as soon as the young person was sentenced we explained there was going to be an intervention planning meeting, the young person always has a parent at court, so it’s an ideal opportunity to get the parent involved and explain why and what was involved at that meeting. Book that meeting there and then at court, and immediately the allocated officer will send out invites, the meeting will happen within 10 days of the court hearing; then we’ll send invites out to all of the people who are working with them. If they can’t attend we’ll ask for a report to be written, so that can be presented to the meeting, and the report asks for things like, what do you feel we can give to this young person, any engagement concerns you’ve had, how have you overcome them, any individual diverse needs that need to be addressed, that kind of thing.

\(^{60}\) See chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion on supervision.
Then we sit round in that forum with the planning paperwork, and what I always try to do is always ask the young person first, we go through their Asset, what it is and why we do it, and how we hope that will change. We talk through individual needs, we talk through safeguarding and risk, and then I’ll say to the young person ‘what is it that you think you need to be doing, what’s your big goal here, what do you want in terms of support’, because that in a way should be the number one thing, I mean if they came out with something like I think I need to learn to play football or something then we might have to look at that, because what we then try and do is prioritise the goals set with their risk of reoffending, their risk of harm, and their vulnerability. So we try and set, give, those higher recognition as possible. And then we review that every 3 months, and every time that same core group of professionals, or if there’s other people involved in their life, are invited to that meeting. And I think, my experience of it, is that when we do get a good meeting like that going regularly that it works quite effectively for that young person. And it also means that everyone knows where they stand in delivering a programme for that young person.”

This process was described by all practitioners. During observations of intervention planning meetings (IPM) at PYOS it became apparent that there were practical issues which did not fit neatly with the description above. IPM’s take place at the very beginning of the young person’s court order, and take place in a private office at PYOS; IPM reviews take place every three months of the young person’s order. In one particular observed three-monthly review IPM, which was overseen by the practitioner who detailed the process above, these issues were strongly highlighted:

**Case example 1: IPM review**

The IPM was due to start at 1600hrs. After arriving at PYOS at 1525hrs the researcher waited for the lead practitioner of the IPM (a pre-briefing for the researcher had been arranged for 1545hrs). At 1600hrs a colleague of the lead practitioner met the researcher and walked to the room in which the IPM was to be held, as the lead practitioner was held up with something else. Present in the room were three PYOS practitioners, the young male (aged 11 years) for whom the meeting was for, and the young male’s sister (who was an adult). After a few minutes the young person’s sister ran out of the room; it transpired that she did not like being in crowded rooms and described herself as claustrophobic. This was discussed amongst the practitioners present, who claimed they had prior knowledge of this and “we should have thought about this before.” One practitioner followed the young girl, and another telephoned the mother, who was on her way in a taxi. All returned, except the young males sister, and the lead practitioner was now present. The four practitioners debated starting the meeting without an adult present and decided to delay; in the mean
time small talk about football with the young male took place. By 1620hrs the mother was
not yet at PYOS, and the lead practitioner decided to start the meeting without an adult
present, the rationale was that the practitioners could go over all the intervention details
etc. and the mother just needs to agree its ok, she doesn’t necessarily have to hear it all. The
lead practitioner then went on to introduce everyone in the room to the young male,
followed by questions: why did you get the supervision order? What have you done with
[case manager]? What have you done with [specialist worker]? The young male said that he
could not remember. At this point his case manager took the lead and began to prompt him;
he duly acknowledged the prompts agreeing to the case managers comments. At 1625hrs
the young males’ mother entered the meeting along with his sister. The lead practitioner
then re-introduced everyone in the room, and led discussion with the young male regarding
his programmes of intervention so far and plans for future sessions. The young males’
mother was asked if she was happy with this and had any concerns or issues with anything;
his mother agreed with what was said by the practitioners and the meeting ended at
1700hrs.

This observed meeting highlighted many issues, although it is acknowledged that this is only
one IPM review. IPMs and IPM reviews starting later than scheduled was consistent across
all of other observed meetings, regardless of who was present or leading the meeting; more
often than not it was the parents of the young people which caused the delay by arriving
late. Furthermore, this meeting highlighted a lack of planning on the part of the participating
practitioners; although they were aware of the sisters concerns of being in crowded rooms
they did nothing to address this prior to the meeting. As the lead practitioner explained
parents / guardians should be present at IPMs; on this occasion the meeting was started
with no parent / guardian present. It was also apparent that the young person claimed he
did not remember any of the work he had undertaken so far at PYOS; this may be indicative
of young people genuinely not remembering, or it may be that he was not comfortable
talking about it in such a large group of practitioners. These issues are addressed in further
detail below in section 6.6 of this chapter.

6.4 Delivering interventions

Practitioners mainly met with young people for one-to-one sessions in private rooms at the
PYOS office; although on occasion meetings would take place in schools / education
establishments, and / or in the young person’s home. PYOS covered the cost of bus travel for
young people to attend meetings, although the young people have to purchase and present
the ticket to PYOS staff first; this was used as a reason for non-attendance by some young
people in observed sessions, stating that they could not afford to purchase the ticket up front. PYOS office is (at the time of writing) conveniently located in Peterborough city centre and within very close proximity to Peterborough bus station; which increases the accessibility of PYOS to young people.

6.4.1 Setting

Practitioners raised concern regarding the privacy of the rooms used for one-to-one sessions with young people, commenting on both their appearance and structure:

“the rooms, the doors, the walls are quite thin so you can hear, you can’t necessarily hear exactly a conversation but you can definitely hear a mumbling of next door, and if someone’s outside in a corridor they can look through and they can hear each other, so I think in terms of privacy with the young person, I think that’s sometimes a compromise.”

The practicality of some of the rooms used for one-to-one sessions with young people was addressed by the majority of practitioners as a concern when delivering programmes of intervention:

“on a practical level I have more children come in to see me than I ever used to do, and I don’t like that, because they come into a small little room, it’s not the right environment to work with young people, so that’s an obstruction. We put all new furniture in the interview rooms, at the end of the day, especially the 2 small ones, they’re like little prison cells, and you practically sitting on someone’s lap, and if I was a young person I wouldn’t feel comfortable being in there.”

Some would seek alternative space to conduct these interventions:

“I think our interview rooms downstairs can be problematic sometimes, because the other young people coming into the building can see who’s in them interview rooms so, I’ve found they’re ok for more general pieces of work, but when you want a young person to really focus and do something a little bit more detailed, or a little bit more personal then I’d bring them up here where nobody knows where they are. Or I see quite a lot of our kids at home, in the home environment.”
Some practitioners found the home setting a distraction when trying to deliver programmes of intervention:

“I’ve tried to do stuff on home visits, and so when you’re actually sitting on a home visit and trying to talk about anger management or drugs issues, and you know you’ve had to find a room where you can sit, and you’ll be sitting in the kitchen with the doors shut, and mums next door with two younger children and telly’s on, you just can’t do that. So home visits tend to be really just talking about them, and how their days been and talk to their parents and how the young person’s been in the last few days or whatever. I don’t typically do any work in home visits.”

6.5 What programmes and packages are delivered?
For the purpose of this discussion, programmes and packages refer to any manuals, worksheets, session plans or offending behaviour programmes that practitioners use in one-to-one sessions with young people at PYOS.

PYOS practitioners identified twenty-three individual programmes and packages they used; in addition a number of practitioners talked about the resource library. The resource library is a small room at PYOS which contains a number of materials, books, articles, multimedia, and worksheets which can be used by practitioners at the service. The items in the room are in no particular order and appeared unorganised; practitioners described it as “in a bit of chaos”, and “we’ve got a resource library that nobody knows where anything is”. An internal audit of programmes and packages found “little evidence that this resource is used in relation to setting up OBP” (Audit, 2004).

Practitioners acknowledged the resource library as valuable to the service, however, they raised concerns about its (lack of) organisation and in particular the amount of time practitioners had available to use the room for its intended purpose; to use materials to plan programmes of intervention:

“I think ive nabbed a few things and just keep them, things that have worked quite well, but absolutely not, when you’ve got one session which takes 50 minutes then a 10 minute break then a session afterwards where’s your time

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to plan? Ya know, if you’ve got a bit of time early on in the planning process you could perhaps have a look at that point, that’s probably the best thing to do but obviously you’ve got all of the other stuff at that point in time that you have to do as well. Its not easy, but you have to try your best, there’s no point in sitting there trying something that’s not been structured and not been targeted at that young person, you’re best putting a bit more time into the planning and then at least you know what you’re delivering is good quality and you have to go over that.”

Some practitioners stated that they had enough time to use the resource library, however indicated that they use the same programmes with different young people:

“quite often I would say, there’s some stuff that’s just, kind of your staple stuff that you do, so if you have different areas of intervention then you kind of know where you’re going with it because you’ve used things that’ve worked in the past. But then, if that doesn’t work with some young people, then I would use the resource library to kind of look for other options or different ways of doing things.”

It was evident that all practitioners had favoured programmes which they used during programmes of intervention, seemingly regardless of the individual needs of a young person identified through asset; a number of practitioners acknowledged that they probably “don’t use as many different resources as they should.” Although some practitioners claimed that resources are shared between staff, it was clear that the majority of practitioners kept certain resources to themselves and there was a lack of sharing of these resources; as a practitioner described “if you lend someone a worksheet or a programme you probably won’t get it back.” In addition, practitioners raised concern with the linking of assessed need to the delivered intervention sessions:

“Resources again, we do learning styles assessments and things to see how people respond, but we don’t then tailor our sessions to actually meet with that. We don’t have, even a way of having music and things in the room; it’s a real problem to get DVDs and things, so it could be better.”

6.5.1 Programmes and packages

Of the programmes and packages identified by practitioners the one cited the most was the core thinking skills programme. This is a 13-week programme, based on cognitive
behavioural therapy, which was developed internally by PYOS practitioners in 2009, to “add some structure” to programmes of intervention. This programme was cited by a number of practitioners as the main programme they used at PYOS. The majority of practitioners stated that the core thinking skills programme added much needed structure to delivering programmes of intervention, and was flexible in approach. However, some found it “too simplistic and repetitive” and had issues with the delivery of the programme. A key issue with the core thinking skills programme was that not all staff had received training to deliver the programme the way it was intended; these practitioners were the ones who raised concerns about the content and structure of the programme, and had concerns with young people’s engagement in sessions.

“I just find it very simplistic, for some young people its very simplistic and repetitive, for other young people they havent got a clue what it’s going on about, it makes far too detailed a reference to where the material has come from, its not very user friendly. Things like it introduces think or thoughts to preconditions of offending which normally would get a really blank look from most young people who are like what are you going on about.”

In addition practitioners identified a range of programmes and packages which they used during programmes of intervention, the most-cited ones were:

*Anger management* – two programmes, one of which was designed internally, and one which was bought-in, which provide a series of session plans to assist the case manager in leading a course of intervention to help individuals manage their problematic anger.

*Teen-Talk!* – Which is described by its designers as “a bank of hands-on resources for use with young people who could benefit from focused individual support. It provides a clear process of interaction and progression which helps promote productive communication and participation by young people and professionals in a one-to-one setting” (Anderson and Skeldon, 2011).

Other programmes cited were: targets for change; knife crime programme; conflict-resolution programme; Decision-making programme; CBT-based worksheets; Victim awareness programme; Jets programme; the internet; choose or lose; YJB videos on young
person’s experience in prison; self-esteem programme; restorative justice resources; racially-motivated offenders; motor vehicle offending programme; effective practice manuals; driving offences; big citizen programme.

As with the core thinking skills programme, it was apparent that staff received little or no training\textsuperscript{62} on the different programmes of intervention they talked about, and delivered. Whilst the current research cannot, and does not attempt to, evaluate any of the programmes used at PYOS, it is well documented in the research literature that a key factor of any programme of intervention is that it is implemented and delivered as it was designed to be (Dane and Schnieder, 1998; Durlak, 1997; Durlak and Wells, 1998; Fixsen et al., 2005; Gresham et al., 1993), as discussed in chapter three, inappropriate training will result in reduced accuracy and effectiveness of a programme of intervention (Baker, 2008; Lowenkamp, Latessa and Holsinger, 2004; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). It was widely evident that case managers were using their own initiative to set up programmes of intervention which they based loosely on the assessment, their experience of working with the different core asset areas and previous use of specific programmes, which practitioners would use again and again.

\subsection*{6.5.2 Structured programmes}
There was a clear lack of organisation to the order, storage and delivery of programmes and packages at PYOS, to which practitioners raised many concerns. As practitioners were predominantly using similar worksheets with young people there was duplication of programmes across PYOS with individuals during a particular programme of intervention. This was observed, and stated by many practitioners, and indicated that the planning of programmes of intervention, and the monitoring and supervision of the intervention was not adequate.

“There’s lots of duplication; I can say I like using that, and I can say to someone else ‘well actually have you tried that’, and they might try it, and we’re all using little bits of paper and sheets and things, and you’ll say to the young person I’ve got this, and they’ll say ‘oh, I did that with her, I’ve done that’ and I know you want a standardised programme, but it all seems very messy to me it doesn’t seem very well planned.”

\textsuperscript{62} See section 7.7 for a detailed discussion of training.
Practitioners expressed a lot of interest in having structured programmes, however raised the need for flexibility within such programmes.

“I think they’re [structured programmes] useful, but every young person is different, and every worker is different, so where you might get one person delivering a structured programme in one way to a young person, they might not get the same as someone else, so it might lose its effectiveness... I’d find some things a bit too rigid. I think you need to be a bit more flexible with them.”

Some practitioners further highlighted the unorganised nature of programmes of intervention, and indicated that structured programmes would be welcomed as way to monitor progress.

“I think they are useful in terms of the fact they are, because they are structured you can actually keep an eye where you are with it, because they’re structured, and because they’re based on evidence-based practice you can have some sort of a hope at least that there’s gonna be an impact. I do think they are useful, because they are structured, and so you know what you’re doing, I mean the problems they’re not individualistic it’s a one size fits all, so that’s a problem, but in terms of actually being able to deliver an anger management programme, although it’s a one size fits all programme, whilst the triggers might be different, the processes in anger management are the same, so if you can identify individual triggers you can use the same structured programme to effect change. So you can individualise it a bit, so yeah I think they are useful.”

It was further suggested by practitioners that the current system of sentencing young people to court orders which are too long or too short in length of time, contributed to the unorganised manner of programme of intervention at PYOS.

“we can get young people on referral orders for 3 months, and on paper, yes, their offence may not be horrendous, for example shoplifting or something, but actually when you delve deeper and realise how much welfare issues and things are going on, and how many problems and stuff that they need addressing, and you think I’ve got 3 months to do this in and that can be really difficult. And other times you end up with young people on orders where
they’ve got limited issues and you’re thinking right I’ve got an awful lot of time to fill, with a young person doing work, and you think well actually am I making the situation worse rather than actually helping them.”

A number of practitioners stated that they would prefer to be able to present in pre-sentence reports a menu of programmes which are of fixed length (e.g. six weeks), and have this taken into consideration during sentencing, and hence court orders reflecting the time the practitioner feels they need to address the young person’s offending behaviour with these fixed-length programmes. As one practitioner stated it was easy to put things off if an order was longer than they felt was required:

“I think it [structured programmes] gives you a framework of what your responsibilities are, and it also makes it clear to the young person, especially if you’re exploring people’s feelings about the way you work, one of their indications might be ‘I wanna know how long I’ve gotta come here for’, and sometimes you can lose that service user perspective in thinking well they’ve got a 12-month supervision order I’ll reschedule that. Whereas on the receiving end they might be looking forward to doing part 2 of their anger session or whatever, so I think they are useful.”

Some practitioners heeded caution with this approach however, as they saw this as a potential reason for some practitioners to commission somebody else (potentially another agency) to carry out the programme of intervention, as one practitioner explained:

“We just need to be careful about erm, who’s running them, and that that’s the best thing for that young person, rather than us just trying to get out of delivering it ourselves or delivering it in a different way and being a bit more imaginative in how it’s delivered.”

Practitioners also felt that the current set-up of delivering programmes of intervention in an ad hoc way lacked closure for the young person. There was a strong feeling amongst staff that sessions with young people would commonly end up being conversational and chats with them rather than delivering the session as planned. As one practitioner put it “they might as well go and chat with their nan sometimes”; further stating the desire for programmes which are proven to work:
“much more accredited programmes really, I mean I don’t know if there’s more now but erm, but certainly as I’ve been looking for things, as I’ve been doing sessions there’s just not been anything available, definitely more accredited programmes, more things that are proven to work, so rather than as a youth justice officer we sometimes sit here and they might as well be speaking to their mum, do you know what I mean? Whereas we’re here to do a job and what we say and what we do and the kind of behavioural experiments that we do out in the community it’s really important that they’re coming from the right perspective and ya know, that they’re gonna be valuable and the young person isn’t just wasting their time and we’re not wasting ours. It’s important that we know what we’re doing and I think we could have access to a lot more things that would help us do that, cos sometimes ya know I think we just go down and have a chat about it and it’s really not equipping them with any skills, I think it’s the skills training that’s the important bit.”

6.5.3 Inter-agency working

PYOS has a number of internal specialist staff who supports the work of case managers in the following areas: (1) Education Training and Employment; (2) Accommodation; (3) Sports; (4) Substance misuse; (5) Restorative justice; (6) Counselling psychology. In addition there were three volunteer streams at PYOS which further supported case managers in their role: Mentoring; Appropriate adults; Referral panels.

Case managers would identify in the intervention plan if a particular young person had requirements for one of the above services, based on the assessment process, and would invite the relevant staff member to the IPM to address the need. As practitioners described:

“It may be that the young people are referred to me by their case managers when they start, or it might be that at the end of a young persons order I’ll be chasing them saying look you’ve had all this time, you’re soon going to lose our support, can I not help you get into something before you finish with us. It depends, sometimes I’ll pick them up myself, but 9 times out of 10 they’re referred by the case managers. And especially now we have the intervention planning meetings, I’m invited to most of those so I’ll pick them up from there as well.”

(Specialist practitioner).

“More one-to-one with the case managers, then when they are doing their plan with the young people, I’ll then go to the meeting with the young person.
A lot of it is trying to show them something positive they haven’t done for a while. So it’s more meetings with the case managers and the young people that I will sit in with, or the case manager will come to me and say, we’ve have Joe Bloggs. So they’ll have a meeting I’ll come along and speak to him and find out what they want, and what they actually want out of it.”

(Specialist practitioner).

“They’re [young people] referred [to me] either through the referral order panel, and they say we want a recommendation to see me, or I do go to the intervention planning meetings and I’m part of that process as well. Usually it just comes through when they are filling in the asset and get that initial information, if it looks like there’s a need, they’re referred through, then I’ll feedback and I’ll go to the planning meetings along the way, if it’s an on-going piece of work.”

(Specialist practitioner).

Case managers highlighted the chaotic lifestyles of the young people with which they worked, and how their needs could suddenly change. For example, a young person could suddenly have unforeseen accommodation or educational needs due to loss of housing or expulsion from school, or the young person may suffer a bereavement or ill-health of a close-relative; Webster et al., (2004) refer to these events as critical moments. As the needs of the individual young person changed, the services they required may also change. As PYOS has a number of in-house provision covering welfare-related issues, case managers could approach the relevant staff member covering the specific provision, and arrange for the young person to be referred to that practitioner for work in the specific area of need. As one practitioner stated:

“When we have an issue with someone with education or housing we’ve got people in-house and that’s great, so there’s a lot of things we can do in-house.”

6.5.3.i Restorative justice
PYOS had introduced a restorative justice programme in November 2010, called SORTED. This programme targeted young shoplifters in Peterborough, supported by local retail outlets. A young person is eligible for the SORTED programme if he / she meet the criteria:
• has never previously committed an offence;
• it is a single shop offence;
• the young person admits the offence;
• the young person agrees to attend a restorative justice session at PYOS.

Once on the programme the young person and his / her parent / guardian work with a sessional worker from PYOS within seven days of the offence, and a conference between the young person, parent / guardian, PYOS sessional worker and the retail worker (from where the offence was committed). Following the conference a letter of apology is written by the young person to the victim (retail outlet) and a contract is written up and agreed and signed by all parties. The details of the restorative justice programme for the young person are then sent to safer schools team, parent / guardian of the young person and PYOS. This was a relatively new provision provided by PYOS and was not widely used. Practitioners were positive about the use of restorative justice and stated that they would like to see it used more widely:

“Using restorative justice is important; I don’t think we use that as much as we should.”

6.5.4 Multi-agency working
In addition to the in-house provision PYOS had access to; there were also external agencies and programmes which the service could access.

6.5.4.i Reparation projects
Reparation is highlighted in research on effective practice as a key component of programmes of intervention (Farrington and Loeber, 2001; Howell, 2003; Le Schied, 2000; Lipsey, 1995 and 1999; Lipsey and Wilson, 1998; Lösel, 1995; McGuire, 2002; McGuire et al, 2002; McGuire and Priestley, 1995; McLaren, 2000; NAO, 2006; RAND, 2006). PYOS had only one reparation option available, a programme called Froglife. Young people are referred by PYOS to the Froglife Active Conservation Team (FACT):

“FACT delivers practical conservation projects to young offenders, helping develop their basic skills whilst giving something back to the local community. The young offenders carry out practical conservation activities as part of their
reparation order (similar to ‘community service’). These tasks help develop their basic skills, including their social skills, practical skills, literacy and numeracy. Learning in this way helps to increase confidence and self-esteem and many participants develop a genuine interest and enthusiasm in the natural environment.”

(Froglife, 2012).

Practitioners at PYOS praised the work of Froglife. However, they raised concern about the lack of reparation projects available. As one practitioner put it “we’ve got Froglife, full stop”:

“Reparation would be something I’d change. Again, it would be nice to have a range of reparation projects to pick from, because it’s Froglife or die, I mean Froglife is good don’t get me wrong they do some great stuff with the kids and the people that run it are really good. But I think more reparation would be good.”

6.5.4.ii Other agencies

PYOS worked with a number of external agencies to whom young people could be referred to, or in some cases were already working with. The most cited external link was NACRO, a charity which aims to reduce crime through three broad areas of focus: crime prevention and early intervention; offender management; and resettlement. NACRO had an office which was conveniently across the street from PYOS, which brought the working relationship between the two services closer, as one practitioner described:

“if they’ve got somebody there who’s in until three or three-thirty and I’ve got an appointment at two, you’ll phone them up, and we work quite closely, I’ll phone them up and say ‘is so-and-so in’, and even on an adhoc basis ya know, I need to talk to him, ‘oh yeah he’s here’, and I’ll go across there and see them, or they’ll come across see me at a break. So we work quite close, and I think that has a good impact because one of the things that young people see is that we’re not working in isolation, and they can’t tell NACRO one thing and tell us something else because we talk to each other, so you see a nice bit of joined-up work I think.”

However, some practitioners believed that referral to this service was having a negative effect on young people from PYOS:
“We’ve had a group of young people, who they all go to NACRO together. One lad he started at NACRO, and as soon he started there he started to associate outside of school with these young people, its led him to commit further offences most definitely, and then these people became subject of a risk meeting because there was that many concerns about them. They call it contamination don’t they, such a horrible word.”

Practitioners also raised concern about external educational provisions for young people they worked with:

“One of the biggest problems we have is education, there doesn’t always seem to be enough places in Peterborough for young people, especially if they have been excluded from their mainstream school, then it’s an issue of funding from there where they go, is anyone willing to pay for them to go to pupil referral units; from what I understand at the moment there’s a backlog there and people are on a waiting list to go to pupil referral units.”

6.5.4.iii Social services

Many practitioners at PYOS raised concern about the relationship with children’s social care. As one practitioner bluntly put it “social workers that do their jobs, that would be helpful.” The general feeling was that there was a real deficit between the two services, who were not working together, and social workers were refusing to take on any young people that were YOS-involved:

“Access to services sometimes can be problematic, particularly in relation to children’s social care, it can be quite difficult to get them to take cases on, because the general feeling is well there involved with YOS so they don’t need to be involved with us, whereas actually, our roles can be 2 very distinct needs for that young person.”

(YJO).

“I think the problem is for other means, although we need to consider the welfare of the child, we’re not a welfare-based service, that’s social services, and what tends to happen is that a young person that perhaps has had a social worker or is open to the duty worker, as soon as we get involved that case gets closed. But our time ends, and when it ends that’s it there’s nothing, we can’t offer any outreach work, and it’s very difficult to get cases picked up again. Because that child might still have needs that we’re no longer, going to address and what happens is social services says well ya know they don’t really
fit our criteria anymore so nothing gets done, that kid can backslide and come back into the system.”

(YJO).

This was further highlighted in the core case inspection of PYOS in 2012:

“We were disappointed with the effectiveness of inter-agency work with children’s social care services. In many cases, YOS workers were striving hard to raise Safeguarding concerns with children’s social care services, but the two agencies appeared to lack a shared understanding about thresholds for social care involvement.”

(HMIP, 2012: 18).

6.6 Monitoring and supervision

The apparent unorganised manner in which programmes of intervention are implemented at PYOS has been presented in the previous sections. It is of further interest to examine how these programmes of intervention are monitored and supervised; how are programmes of intervention reviewed? How are individual sessions reviewed? What factors have an impact on a young person’s response to a particular programme of intervention?

6.6.1 Review of programmes of intervention

It was evident that there are two streams of review at PYOS which practitioners use; formal and informal.

6.6.2 Formal review

The formal review processes were predominantly reviewing changes to asset scores every three months of a young person’s order. This was reviewed at a three-monthly IPM review, which would bring together the same core group of practitioners that were present at the initial IPM at the start of the young person’s order, along with the young person and his / her parents / guardian. At this meeting, the case manager presents an updated version of the young person’s asset profile, with a focus on the change in the asset scores. During this meeting the young person is asked about his / her progress, guided by their case manager, and specialist practitioners discuss their particular area of work with the young person. The young person’s parent / guardian are also given opportunity to comment during the
meeting. Practitioners stated that this was the main form of review for programmes of intervention; asset scores compared to previous meeting(s) and a forum of discussion about the progress made, as well as future plans.

“we review as well, periodically, so 3-monthly review, and you would then look again, look at what you’ve done, look at where the young person is, what still needs to be done, so I suppose in that respect you can see whether what you’ve done is working or not, and then maybe you need to do something different.”

During observations of IPM reviews, it was evident that a number of issues arose in meetings. The young person would be asked to recall the work they had done in the last three months (since the last meeting); without prompt from the case manager and / or specialist practitioners, young people could not recount the work they had carried out. As previously discussed this may be that the young person does not remember, or that the young person is reluctant to speak openly in such a large forum of professionals. It was common for the young person to state “I don’t remember”; however, the environment was perhaps intimidating for young people.

Furthermore, whilst the IPM reviews appeared a great forum for practitioners to get together and discuss the work and progress for a particular young person, they tended to be dominated by parents / guardian who were mostly concerned with “will my son / daughter be breached” – this is when a young person breaks their order by not complying with the agreed conditions. In this instance a young person can be charged with breach, and faces the prospect of a custodial sentence, or an extended order length. This proved to be a challenge for case managers in IPM reviews, as the parents / guardian would repeatedly ask about the potential for their son / daughter being breached. This may have also affected the young person’s responses during the meeting. Some parents would make claims such as “I control [son / daughters] life”, and would dismiss some of the work carried out by the practitioners at PYOS.

PYOS had developed an end-of-order questionnaire to review the work carried out. This was given to young people and their parents / guardian once the young person’s order was completed, which practitioners also stated was the formal method of review. The end-of-
order questionnaire contained a series of statements regarding: relationship with workers at PYOS; how the young person will use the skills learned during the order; how supported the young person felt; young person’s view of the likelihood of reoffending; all measured on a Likert-scale of one to ten:

“We do a young person feedback questionnaire at the end, and they’re quite specific questions: how do you think you’ll use the skills from the sessions that you’ve just completed again in the future, and we do a score 1-10, so strongly agree to strongly disagree, and we also ask them what they think their likelihood of offending was at the beginning of the order and at the end, so they can grade that and see what the improvements are for.”

PYOS completed an internal-analysis of the end-of-order questionnaires in April 2011, which took in to account the period from October 1st 2009 to March 31st 2011; the response rate of end-of-order questionnaires over this period was twenty-five per cent out of 118 end-of-order meetings. Although the presented results were very positive, this only takes into account twenty-five per cent of those taking part in end-of-order meetings for this period of time, which does not provide rigorous conclusions regarding the work carried out during the orders as seventy-five per cent of people are not accounted for.

6.6.3 Informal review

In addition to the formal review procedures, PYOS practitioners identified a number of informal procedures which they used to determine whether a session or programme of intervention had been successful. With regard to a single session with a young person, one practitioner summed up the general thoughts of the majority of practitioners:

“Within that session, how well the young person is engaging in it; how well they remember what they’ve learned the following week; whether they are still coming; and whether they’ve stayed away from offending; whether they can use examples of what they’ve learned, in their everyday life; reports from parents; being reflective; in shifts in the young person’s attitude as they go through.”

In addition practitioners stated that they would speak to other organisations or schools:

“Other people that send in reports, ya know, the schools, sometimes I give the
school diaries and they can measure, ya know, how often they think the young person’s been kicking off at school and kind of reports from other organisations if its reduced and stuff.”

Practitioners, especially case managers who worked most closely with young people, were not confident in their description of how success was measured at PYOS.

“I suppose I’m evaluating by thinking about what I’m trying to achieve and what afterwards I’m looking back on what I’ve done and thinking well where did that go? Depends how you look at it, I mean when I go into a session and I go there I sort of know what I’m trying to achieve out of that session, and by the end of the session in my head I’m thinking of whether I’ve achieved that, I mean it does help that you’ve got a youngster who’s actually talking to you and engaging in the session.”

(YJO).

“We look at the asset score, hopefully that will have gone down. But other than that it’s entirely your own judgement I would say. We have referral panels which look at that kind of thing, and we have the intervention planning meetings to discuss that sort of thing, but generally it’s the asset and your own judgement.”

(YJO).

It was evident in the sessions that young people at PYOS rarely remembered the work which they had completed the week before. It was further evident that very little planning went into the sessions on the part of the practitioner. As the following case example highlights (although it is again acknowledged that this is only one example), sometimes young people forget the session they have undertaken very quickly. This example highlights some of the wider complex issues which practitioners face during the delivery of intervention sessions, whilst also raising important questions regarding the individual appropriateness of intervention sessions:
Case example 2: anger management session
The case manager drove to the young person’s (B) house (approximately a ten minute drive). B is aged seventeen, lives alone and is pregnant. On arrival at the house, at 11.00, B’s midwife also arrived; B had doubled booked appointments with PYOS and her midwife. The midwife arranged to come back at a later time, and the YOS session could go ahead.

The case manager recapped the last session (also anger management as part of a series of sessions), constantly needing to prompt B about what they did last week, and intermittently talking about current situations which B raised. B has a hostile relationship with her mother and father (the father has no knowledge of B’s offences); B’s boyfriend (father of the unborn baby) is currently in prison for violent offences, and likely to be in prison for two to four years (trial pending); the case manager has concerns about the relationship between B and her boyfriend’s brother, who was recently released from prison – the case manager is concerned that he has feelings for B which may cause problems between B, her boyfriend and his brother in future. B states that this isn’t the case, and he has been very helpful to her, stating that “[brother] has told him to look out for me innit”; B further states that “people I can respect is important”, and speaks of one friend in particular where there is mutual respect. B repeatedly said that she can withdraw from the peer group and “do my own thing, stay at home. It’s not harming anyone. It’s not harming me. It’s not harming them.” B displayed positive thoughts, and a positive attitude; however, struggled to put into words her thoughts and feelings, repeatedly saying “I don’t know.” With minimal prompting from the case manager, B appeared to get through the session well, and to understand what was being said by the case manager, although B used a lot of swear words during the session.

6.6.4 What factors have an impact on a young person’s response to a particular programme of intervention?
As it appears that determining the success of a session or programme of intervention is largely based on the judgement of the case manager, it is interesting to discuss what key factors practitioners believed were having an impact on a young person’s response to a session or programme of intervention. The responses of practitioners can be grouped into 4 key themes: relationship between the young person and the person delivering the session(s); setting of the session(s); learning style of the young person; motivation of the young person to attend the session. Interestingly only one practitioner mentioned assessment as a factor which may have an impact, despite such a heavy emphasis at PYOS on assessment, with the involvement of the young person, and reviewing this at three-monthly periods.
6.6.5.1 Relationship

As discussed in chapter three, the relationship between staff and the young person they are working with has been highlighted in research as a key factor to effective intervention (see for example Burnett and McNeill, 2005; Dowden and Andrews, 2004; Mason and Prior, 2008). As with previous research (see Burnett, 1996; McNeill, 2001; Rex, 1999), practitioners at PYOS stated that they believed relationships to be a factor affecting an individual’s response to a particular intervention:

“Who delivers those sessions is important; it’s important that the case-managers have rapport with that young person, and take the time to build that rapport at the start of any programme or any intervention that they deliver.”

(YJO).

“How they feel about the person that’s delivering it; whether they’ve got an interest in them; whether they’ve got faith in them; making them realise that you are there to support them and help them move forward, that’s the most important thing.”

(YJO).

“I think generally just your presence in a sense, different people have different characters, and I think different people may be perceived by young people as different roles, they might see me as uncle, or others like a mother, or a father, or grandfather... a positive role model... being aware of your character with young people... values about respect and optimism, I think that’s a big thing.”

(YJO).

6.6.5.2 Setting

Greenhalgh et al., (2004) identify key elements of the adopter or person implementing a programme of intervention, emphasising the appropriateness of the setting where the intervention takes place. Practitioners emphasised that “the programme is delivered in an environment that they [young people] feel comfortable in.” Some practitioners emphasised the PYOS office as fulfilling this as it had a “lack of distractions, so consequently I find working in the office is better than having sessions at home, usually.” For others, the PYOS
office had distractions which practitioners believed could have a negative impact on some of
the young people they worked with:

“There’s a lad I’ve seen at home for the entirety of his order because he’s quite naïve, young, and I wouldn’t want him to come in here (YOT) and become, sort of, entrenched in wanting to mix with other people, other offenders. But again, that can impact on the time you’ve got to go out to the home, and the home address may not be suitable.”

6.6.5.iii Learning style
The importance of individualised intervention has been asserted in research (see Mason and Prior, 2008; McNeill and Batchelor, 2002 & 2004). At PYOS the main programme of intervention used is the core thinking skills programme. This programme has a foundation in identifying the learning style of the young person receiving the intervention:

- visual (those who learn through seeing things)
- auditory (those who learn through hearing things)
- kinaesthetic (those who learn through experiencing / doing things)

Practitioners stated that for a programme of intervention to be successful it is important that it “matches their learning style, and is aimed at the right kind of level for them” and is “to their standard of learning, in their learning style that they can understand.” Practitioners highlighted the range of abilities of young people they worked with, and further emphasised the need to assess their individual learning style:

“ Their ability is a big issue, we get full ranges. We have a lot of people who aren’t in anyway interested in what you have to say which makes it a lot more difficult for everybody. We also have a lot of young people with things like ADHD so their concentration is very low, and trying to get them to sit still for a session can be difficult.”

(YJO).

6.6.5.iv Motivation
Practitioners highlighted the motivation of the individual to attend the sessions as a key factor to successful intervention. Young people “coming in and realising that actually they
can talk to you, some of them never want to talk to you, they just don’t want to do it, but I think that’s probably the main thing is getting the young person motivated to come in.” As discussed in chapter three, engaging young people in sessions is complex (see Mason and Prior, 2008), and practitioners discussed a number of methods they used to motivate the young person to attend and engage in sessions, including the use of rewards:

“in terms of motivating them to attend the sessions I think, I mean sometimes I’ve said if you go to school every day this week then for our next session we’ll go out and we’ll get a coffee, and we’ll do some work over at the coffee shop. We offer rewards really in terms of engagement, by early discharge if they’ve not reoffended, they’ve engaged in the work, and completed all their sessions, so that’s a big reward. Lots of praise, ya know, everybody likes to be told really well done, really appreciate you coming in and working hard today, I think that’s important.”

Other practitioners believed that young people should not be rewarded for their attendance at the YOS as it is court-ordered:

“I don’t think kids should have rewards for attending the session, I think the kids are involved with us because they’ve committed an offence, but they have to be coming here because that’s what the court has said, and I don’t think you should have to use any sort of reward basis in order to be able to get them in, and I think you’ve got to work with young people that makes them want to come. So, personally I think they need to feel that by coming in here they’ve gained something, but I don’t believe that taking kids out, spending money on them, buying them things is a way of pulling them in, I don’t actually agree with that.”

One practitioner described a previous system of rewards which was used at PYOS previously, which was stopped due to lack of funding:

“We don’t have any money so were not in a position to be able to reward anymore, we used to be able to, but not anymore. When we used to do group work in the ISSP centre, the young people used to earn points in a day, and those points were translated into a monetary value they could earn 50p a day or something for doing their work as we set it out for them and then they would get vouchers for that at the end of a month, so that used to help control them a little bit. They didn’t earn points for just turning up, they could
earn I think 6 points a day - 2 would be for attendance and time-keeping, the others would be for their behaviour and contribution to sessions, so it wasn’t enough for them to just turn up every day. They had to be engaging with what was going on.”

6.7 Conclusion
This chapter has highlighted and discussed the key stages involved in the process of intervention with young people when referred to PYOS. It is evident that practitioners at PYOS are aware of, and attempt to incorporate, each of the identified areas of best practice and what is effective when working with young people referred to the YOS. However, there are many constraints which affect the successful implementation of these factors: young people not attending sessions; lack of referral mechanisms to internal / external programmes such as reparation projects; the length of the order given by the courts may not be sufficient to work effectively with the young person.

More importantly there is evidently a strong emphasis on assessment at PYOS. This is identified in research and literature as a key precursor to identifying and delivering effective programmes of intervention, which meet the needs of young people in the criminal justice system (see Baker, 2008). Practitioners stated that they tend to have little time to plan, and repeatedly use the same programmes and packages with young people that they have prior experience of using, regardless of the individual needs of the young person. This raises an important question as to whether the needs of a young person are actually being met, if the programme of intervention which is delivered is not tailored to suit their individual circumstances. With this in mind, it is important to examine the motivation of practitioners and to examine the procedures in place at PYOS which support practitioners in the delivery of interventions with young people. Chapter seven will address these issues.
Chapter 7
Motivation and skills of practitioners

“Many of those working in day-to-day practice may not always have the relevant skills and training or motivation to fully carry out the programme or intervention as intended.”

(Wikström and Treiber, 2008: 21).

7.1 Introduction
The process of intervention has been examined and discussed in chapter six, addressing the key factors during the intervention process at PYOS. In particular, it has been highlighted that practitioners found themselves repeatedly using programmes and packages which they had previous experience of using, raising concern with the amount of time they have to plan programmes of intervention. This chapter will present an examination of support mechanisms for practitioners, in particular management oversight and supervision of practitioners at PYOS, and furthermore the motivation of practitioners at PYOS to carry out their role.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of management supervision of staff; both from the manager’s perspective and from the YJO / specialist staff perspective. The chapter will go on to discuss interactions between staff members on a day-to-day basis, particularly emphasising the environment and setting within which they work. Following this, the chapter will address the motivation of practitioners and examine the training and development processes which support practitioners at PYOS.

7.2 Management and supervision
“Informal supervision every day”

All practitioners stated that they had a supervision meeting, lasting one hour, with their respective manager once a month. It was apparent, as discussed in chapter six, that practitioners at PYOS were using their own initiative and judgment in the design and delivery of programmes of intervention, and their work is carried out under minimal supervision and direction from management. During discussions and observations with case managers, it became apparent that they would drop in on their manager at any time; this was described
by one case manager as “informal supervision every day.” This poses interesting questions regarding the environment and setting in which practitioners operate: what does this informal supervision consist of? Is this informal supervision the same for all practitioners? What affect does this have on formal monthly supervisions? Are informal supervisions recorded? These questions will be addressed in the following sections.

7.3 Supervising PYOS

“The squeezing and shifting sands”

PYOS is part of the wider children’s services department at Peterborough city council. The head of PYOS reports to the assistant director for family and children’s safeguarding at Peterborough city council who oversees the management of PYOS. Monthly supervisions are held between the two, which a senior practitioner described as “an opportunity to kind of touch base in terms of making sure that the decisions you’re making of a quite complex nature are gonna be supported.” Although there was a sense of distance between children’s services and PYOS as:

“the YOS is... in its own building, it’s got its own client group, so there’s a sense of it being quite separate I guess. Because it’s multi-agency, so from that point of view I think the challenge that I have is making sure that what we do here, is actually accepted and seen as being part of the wider children’s services process, whilst maintaining an independent function for it because obviously it isn’t city council it is a partnership. So there are those kind of tensions, and I think supervision allows you the chance to just get that agenda across.”

Despite the geographical distance, PYOS management felt that they had a good relationship with the management board:

“We have a good relationship with the management board, and we agree the targets with them and they listen to what we’ve got to say as professional’s about what we think is not an unreasonable level of targeting or service delivery.”

However, one manager stated that tensions existed between the strategic development and operational delivery of PYOS. In the past, these roles were split. The head of service would
manage strategic development, whilst a separate manager would manage operational delivery. Following the retirement of the head of service in 2009, both the strategic development and operational delivery became the responsibility of the new acting head of service.

“when [the head of service] retired, they merged those two functions, that was always gonna be a challenge, because you can’t simply take out all posts, and expect somebody who’s already got a whole post to do exactly the same, so there’s been some tension around that.”

Due to the new organisational structure, which had begun in late 2009, there were less managers at PYOS and responsibility for operational management was distributed to middle management, as the acting head of service was “drawn much more external to the service” in order to manage the strategic delivery functions. This was described by one manager as “the squeezing and the shifting sands” which will take time to settle. As a consequence of this, management time at the operational level had been reduced. This added further uncertainty to the operational management functions of PYOS:

“as part of the restructure we’ve reduced the amount of management time at an operational level anyway, so that’ll be interesting to see how that works and what impact that will actually have as we actually move forward in the next 12 months.”

The reduction of management time at the operational level and its impact on practice will be discussed in section 7.6.9.

7.4 Supervision

7.4.1 Management views on formal supervision of staff

Managers at PYOS all stated that they meet with the staff they supervise individually once a month, and the sessions are one hour in duration. Managers supervised a mix of YJOs and specialist workers, and described the planning and structure of supervision meetings in a similar way; an interactive process between supervisor and supervisee discussing cases, concerns, and development issues. However, it was apparent that managers did not receive any training or additional support with how to approach supervision sessions and there was
no fixed standard of running supervision meetings; each manager approached them in their own way. It was a common theme that managers described the process with uncertainty:

“On a good month, and there are many good months, I will do a file audit before supervision with your Asset audits before supervision, so we’ve got those to take to supervision for feedback. They’re specifically focused on one particular case, and from one supervision to the next I’ll make notes and will have a list of action points, and I literally photocopy those at the end of supervision, so that they can go away and do those. So we’ve kind of got an agenda there, I don’t particularly ask people to set an agenda before the meetings, the agenda will always be looking at what action points we set last time, going through any audits that I’ve done, and at the beginning of the meeting I’ll just ask if there’s anything that they’ve got for the agenda. As a standing thing we’d always ask generally about any cases of concern, I don’t necessarily go through every case, but those that the worker has got particular concerns about, or I’ve had a look at and I’ve got some concerns with, and I’ll always ask the question are there any specific safeguarding concerns or risk concerns with any of your cases that we need to discuss. At the end of the meeting we’ll talk about development needs or training needs, or leave, or personnel kind of issues. And that’s written up and brought to the next meeting.”

(senior practitioner).

“It’s a variable kind of process in that, I’ll look at what information is coming in from sources, so we’ll actually sort of produce that information for discussion, we’ll assess and address with people what information they want to talk about, we’ll then look at, see if there are any personal development issues or training issues that are around, and so we’ll actually sort of sit down and do that. I mean it probably takes around 20 minutes, but at the start of the supervision session we’ll then agree an agenda and then work through that basically.”

(senior practitioner).

“I record the actions from it really, just a brief - I do use a form but there’s not much to it really it’s just about recording actions from it and occasionally just other things that may pop up to make sure I’ve got confirmation that I’ve told that person that information. A lot of the time we talk about the young people they’re working with, because it’s a variety of different people it’s different, but with everyone I talk about the young people they have been working with.
We talk about plans for the future, what we can do to move things forward; every supervision we seem to talk about budget, in that we need to be careful, so we’re always thinking of different ways to save money.”

(senior practitioner).

“I’m really rubbish at planning them. I’ll go in with an agenda, for every kind of supervision session we will talk about management-y things in terms of just checking every, go through every single case. I’d go in with a team caseload list. With those who are doing additional training, like [practitioner 2], I’ll always speak to [practitioner 2] as part of the supervision, I kind of follow the same routine really; there’ll be a part of supervision where we’ll talk about where [practitioner 2] is up to with that, and what opportunities [practitioner 2] might need, and a plan for that really.”

(senior practitioner).

7.4.2 Practitioner views on formal supervision with managers

All practitioners stated that they had a once monthly individual supervision session with their manager lasting for one hour. There were mixed feelings from practitioners about the quality of the supervision sessions; however, it was apparent that the general feeling was that the supervision process was focussed on checking the recording of work, rather than the actual work undertaken. Ensuring boxes have been ticked, I’s have been dotted, T’s have been crossed was the common sentiment:

“YOIS is a really big system, and you might think you’ve done everything, but until somebody looks at it and goes he’s done this here, but he hasn’t ticked this box, he hasn’t put the date in, and closed this, and it’s a bit of monitoring to make sure the quality of what you’re doing in terms of recording is up to date.”

However, in terms of the quality of the work undertaken – the one-to-one sessions with young people, the actual programme of work delivered – practitioners felt that supervision sessions with managers were lacking in this regard, and due to the lack of structure these sessions would become a casual chat:

“I don’t think we’re good at bringing agendas to supervision, the managers certainly don’t bring any agendas to supervision, we don’t bring agendas to supervision, and that’s something that I’ve reflected on and trying to do a bit
more frequently, because then it’s just a free-for-all chat isn’t it, ya know if
you don’t put something down about what actually you’re gonna discuss.”

(YJO).

One practitioner was very dismissive of the supervision received:

“I think our supervision is a complete waste of time, our practice is not
supervised, there is no oversight from management in terms of personal
feedback on are we meeting national standards? Is our recording up-to-date?
Are assessments appropriate? Supervision tends to be you telling your
manager what all of your kids are doing, which I don’t think has any relevance,
yo know, why spend an hour explaining to someone what they can read on a
system, when they should be asking why is this young person not engaged
with this service, or doing this? So I don’t think supervision is a worthwhile
process in this organisation.”

Furthermore, practitioners felt that their own personal development was not addressed
satisfactorily through supervision sessions with managers:

“I think it could be better but I still value it, I think it could be better for all of
the managers, more structured, and more about personal development, if I
asked her a question she’ll do it, but there’s nothing about how am I gonna
move [practitioner] forward from this supervision today, ya know, and I think
about that in terms of, ya know, I’ve said to [manager] before, it’s almost as if
we’re your clients or we’re your young people, so I’ve got my caseload and
[manager’s] got her caseload, and I feel like I’m trying to move my caseload
forward, I’m moving them forward, whereas sometimes I think it’s just kind of
management, and really I think it’s the responsibility of a manager to develop
their staff, and have a look at things, ‘how am I gonna challenge her this
month’, or ‘how am I gonna support her this month’, ‘I’ve noticed in risk
assessment she’s not been particularly good in this, or she’s really good at this,
or how can I reward that or make it better’, and I think there’s not enough of
that, and again it’s down to resources and they’re so strapped.”

A number of practitioners stated that they would like to see clinical supervision (a structured
approach to supervision between two professionals, one with training in the skills of
supervision) introduced at PYOS, which they believed would add much needed structure.
“I’ve asked for years but they won’t spend the money, I think we should have clinical supervision, but we don’t get that.”

(YJO).

“We definitely need to have clinical supervision, but it would be useful to have more feedback and to know where you’re heading and where your areas of development could be.”

(YJO).

7.4.3 Management views on informal supervision of staff

In addition to regular monthly meetings, managers spoke of talking to staff on a daily basis:

“To be honest I sit very close to most of the people I work with. The way in which we function at the moment as managers I think we’re quite open to, the way we sit and everything, people can just approach us all the time about cases, so we don’t save it for supervision, if there’s something that’s a concern we’ll talk about it there and then, and we’ll write up on YOIS the particular decision we’ve made on that particular client. So daily pretty much with most of the staff. I don’t work full time; I’m only Monday to Wednesday.”

(senior practitioner).

“I chat to them all every day, it’s an ‘as and when’ really. With [Practitioner 9] we probably talk about cases 3 or 4 times a week, cos [Practitioner 9] is settling into the role and needs a lot of support. There’s no formal arrangement outside of the supervision, it’s an open-door policy.”

(senior practitioner).

7.4.4 Practitioner views on informal supervision with managers

Practitioners spoke about receiving informal supervision every day; a number of practitioners stated that if an issue suddenly arose, they could freely approach any manager and seek assistance with the particular issue:

“I can approach any managers at any point if I’ve got any issues.”

(YJO).

“She’s [manager] really good, she sits next to me, so we hardly need supervision and I’ve known her for a long time, so we tend to talk about
clients anyway, but I’m lucky with my line manager she’s always very available to me, no problems with that.”

(YJO).

Other practitioners had informal supervision with managers other than their own; as one practitioner stated, both she and her manager were part time and didn’t work on the same days:

“it’s more difficult because I work part time so actually I only have one morning a week in common with my line manager, but any other times I go to [another manager] if I’ve got any issues and that’s kind of the arrangement. So in terms of being able to just go and ask my manager a question, I don’t have that chance because we’re not here on the same days, that’s a little difficult sometimes.”

This informal supervision was observed on a regular basis at PYOS, and staff would frequently seek assistance from managers (not necessarily their own manager) with arising issues. A regular observation, for example, was that one particular practitioner would bypass her own manager and ask for advice from another. During discussions with this practitioner, she raised many concerns with her manager’s lack of ability, poor supervision skills and general lack of support toward her. All other non-management practitioners (seventeen out of eighteen) would seek out their own manager first, and if the situation was urgent they would speak with other managers if theirs was not available.

It is evident that managers and those they supervise have different views on the delivery of formal monthly supervision sessions. There appears to be a lack of clarity between management and practitioners as to what the purpose of the supervision sessions was; whilst managers describe a structured approach to supervision sessions, practitioners describe these as unstructured and as general chats, with a focus on recording issues rather than the actual work carried out and their professional development. The process described by managers at PYOS is one which practitioners say they do not receive, however they want to receive this. Informal supervision was described by managers and practitioners as occurring frequently outside of formal monthly meetings, which was an open door policy, with managers approachable at all times. Arising issues which required management oversight were addressed during these informal contacts; however there appeared to be a
lack of confidence from some practitioners and justification was sought from managers during these informal contacts on the work they were undertaking at any given point. These issues are addressed further in section 7.6.

7.5 The day-to-day environment

7.5.1 Setting
PYOS was located in Peterborough city centre in a four-storey building. Access to the building was security controlled by whoever manned reception at any given time. The reception area was small, containing six chairs for waiting visitors, and many posters advocating drugs awareness, sexual health awareness, violence and weapons awareness. Internally the building was also secured, with card access required to all rooms.

On the ground floor next to the reception were three meeting rooms, used for intervention sessions, and a communal staff kitchen which was also sometimes used for intervention sessions. Also on the ground floor was an open-plan office for sessional workers shared with some specialist staff; this room had workspaces set out for eight members of staff.

The first floor had two larger meeting rooms which were predominantly used for intervention sessions, referral panels, IPMs and also regular fortnightly team meetings. The second floor had two large open plan offices, approximately housing 10 – 14 staff in each at any one time; the core of PYOS workforce were based in these two offices. The resource library, which contained books and materials for practitioners to use in interventions, was also situated in these offices. The fourth floor of the building had another open-plan office space, which contained space for approximately six staff members and was used by psychologists and mental health workers; there was also another communal staff kitchen on this floor.

7.5.2 Cohesion and change
Within the open-plan offices, practitioners would regularly talk to each other freely. For example, a particular family were well-known to PYOS, and all practitioners seemingly had knowledge specifically of the mother (Mrs X) of the family. Her son was completing a court-ordered referral at PYOS, and Mrs X would telephone PYOS regularly to talk to various practitioners about her concerns. As one practitioner put it “to let us know she is in control”,

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and “if you think it’s her calling, you don’t answer your phone.” Practitioners would pass jocular comment about Mrs X, on her constant calling and demanding nature. When her name was mentioned, the office would almost completely grind to a halt, as each member of staff listened and contributed to the banter. If Mrs X was due to attend the office, for example for a review IPM, the lead case manager would receive a sympathetic, yet sarcastic, good luck from colleagues. This was typical interaction in the offices, with a humorous undertone to almost every conversation.

There were also many examples of practitioners seeking support and information regarding a particular case from colleagues in the office; particularly if other colleagues had previous knowledge of, or were currently working with the young person. The set-up of the offices allowed for practitioners to move and talk freely as necessary, and practitioners would interact on a regular basis, discussing cases and general personal conversation. There was an unofficial cake table in the offices, which would always be well supplied with cakes, biscuits and snacks which all practitioners contributed to. This provided a mini station for practitioners to leisurely stand by and chat, adding an apparent friendly and inclusive nature to the environment.

However, there did appear to be underlying tensions between practitioners within PYOS, as identified in previous research (see Burnett and Appleton, 2004a; Souhami, 2007). During discussions with practitioners, it was apparent that each had their own opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of individual staff members. Although some practitioners were cautious in describing the extent of this:

“I think sometimes staff here allow, accept more than they should, me included, in terms of the way you’re spoken to and, you know, it’s almost as if its part of the job that you’re called f’in d’head and I wouldn’t accept that anywhere else, I wouldn’t accept it in the street or from any other young person, but someone it’s almost, which I thinks wrong, but we don’t change that. I think everybody needs to be consistent and to be clear about what the boundaries are, because some people seem to accept somethings and others... and the word gets round you can go in there and you know... I mean, yeh, they’ve got issues, they’ve got problems, but that doesn’t give them the right to abuse other people and especially not here. And I think if we can’t sit here and say that’s not unaccepteable then you know.”
Others were not so reserved in their descriptions, speaking of the “shocking staff” that have been employed, and being able to “get rid of the ones that are rubbish... without all policies that are involved” would improve the service. However, when practitioners discussed external agencies they spoke of PYOS practitioners as a collective *us*, regardless of occupational background or professional differences. This painted a picture of strong cohesion between practitioners at the YOS, whilst there was clear underlying and competing tensions within.

A further layer of tension as previously discussed in section 7.4, was that between practitioners and managers. Practitioners talked about lacking respect for managers, and professional boundaries being blurred:

“I don’t think that the staff have a great deal of respect for management in the way that management are not really respected for their own kind of knowledge and ability because they are very much the same as everybody else, but there is a divide, ya know, managers are not really trusted in the organisation. It’s kind of a weird environment to work in, there’s no confidentiality, if you go to your manager with something the whole management team will be aware of something within 24 hours, it’s a very weird organisation in that sense. Managers want to be your friend more than your manager; the professional boundary is quite blurred.”

The competing nature of these tensions was further emphasised by the political and structural issues occurring within PYOS and wider youth justice. This was evidently a time of uncertainty with the reduction of budgets, loss of staff and potential abolishment of the YJB, all pre-occupying the minds of staff at PYOS. As with Souhami’s (2007) discussion of cohesion and change, albeit from a youth justice team to a youth offending team, PYOS was experiencing its biggest reorganisation since it transitioned from a youth justice team in 2000. Staff numbers were at their lowest for almost eight years, and the previously settled nature of the service was being disturbed. The following section examines the motivation of practitioners at PYOS.
7.6 Motivation of practitioners

“It’s only when you say you’re gonna leave... you feel valued.”

As discussed in chapter three, the motivation of the person(s) implementing a programme of intervention is important to the successful implementation, delivery and ultimately desired outcome(s) of that programme (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Indeed as Wikström and Treiber (2008) point out, many individuals working in day-to-day practice may not have the relevant skills and training or motivation to fully carry out the programme or intervention as intended. As part of the discussions with practitioners at PYOS, motivational factors were addressed. Questions were framed around the challenge of the role; recognition received; feedback received; and enjoyment of the role. In addition questions centred on any perceived problems or difficulties in carrying out the role, and how attainable practitioners thought the work they carried out was; these areas are addressed by Vroom’s (1964) theoretical writing *Work and Motivation* and further developed by Green’s (1992) practical application to organisations through the belief system model. This model emphasises three principals:

- motivation problems caused by a lack of confidence.
- motivation problems caused by a lack of trust.
- motivation problems caused by a lack of satisfaction.

The following sections discuss these areas in more detail.

### 7.6.1 Challenge of the role

PYOS practitioner responses to the challenge of their role can be broken down into two main groups:

1. **Organisational**: the challenge to improve through training, skills and promotion
2. **Day-to-day role**: the challenges presented by daily tasks

#### 7.6.1.i Organisational

Practitioners felt that there was no challenge with regard to the organisation itself, as opportunities for personal development were lacking:
“The biggest issue with this organisation is there’s no development, I mean I personally don’t want to be a manager, but some of my colleagues would like to, or would like to be able to move up the scale in some way, and there’s just no way, there’s absolutely no way in this organisation. I don’t think anyone has actually had a promotion within the organisation for 8 years. I think that’s demoralising for people because ya know, there’s some brilliant staff here and they’re not gonna stay if there’s not some routes through in terms of their careers. And we’ll lose them and it would be a shame to lose all of their skills really.”

There was a feeling from practitioners that they were not valued by management within the service:

“I don’t think management value a lot of their staff in the way that they could do, I don’t think that they utilise the skills within the team that they have, or that they recognise, there are people who want to progress within the organisation who are not being given the opportunity to do so.”

Some practitioners sought to challenge themselves as it was not forthcoming “from others, I try and get it from myself, I try and challenge myself, and pat myself on the back when I think I’ve done good.” Challenges come mainly from the young people and colleagues as one practitioner emphasised:

“In some ways yes, in some ways no; I love my job, but I think that the kind of the challenge and the feedback that you get from your job comes mainly from the young people that you work with, and from colleagues rather than from management.”

7.6.1.ii Day-to-day role

In contrast to organisational issues, practitioners were very positive about the challenges presented by their day-to-day role as one practitioner described “definitely. Not all the time, but the main thing is I’m here to work with young people, as long as they get something out of it, that’s what you want.”

Practitioners were further dismissive of the challenges presented by the organisation, and it was common for practitioners to state their love of working with young people which they felt outweighed the lack of personal development challenges within PYOS:
“Yes; simple as that. This is the best job I’ve had, honestly. I never get up on a morning thinking oh god I’ve got to go to work. It is challenging and it’s a different challenge every day. When I’m at court, ya know because I do court two days a week still, there’s the challenges of court, and you never know what’s gonna walk in through the door, with the new offences that are coming in, you’re on your feet all the time, ya know, thinking on your feet. Up in the cells, you’ve got to assessments on the young people to see whether or not we can manage their risk in the community, and it’s really challenging. And of course if the court doesn’t think we can manage their risk in the community and they get remanded in custody, you’ve then got to do risk assessments on them to try and keep them safe, because especially if they’ve never been in prison before. It is very challenging; I think that’s why I enjoy it so much.”

7.6.2 Recognition

In general, practitioners felt that recognition of their work was lacking at PYOS. There was a feeling, as discussed previously, that although the new system of IPM’s had increased the recognition practitioners received, this still was not perceived as an adequate amount:

“at the planning meetings it’s a little bit better because ya know people do see what you’ve been doing, and you can measure your progress and your asset scores can come down and you think yeah brilliant, ya know, really really good. I think there’s a number of really good staff here, and they’ll struggle to keep them if they don’t do a bit more of that.”

This was emulated by other practitioners who portrayed feelings of demotivation, low confidence, and low morale:

“You hardly ever get told that’s a good report, that’s good the way you worked with that young person. But on the other hand, were not highly criticised, but I think you need a pat on the back, you don’t get that very often, and also because when you work with young people and the way were working, and we spend so much time doing admin, you get lots of stuff drained out of you and that’s got to be put back by someone. So no I don’t think we get enough recognition, I don’t think its deliberate I just think it’s because everyone is so busy.”

One practitioner summed this up describing recent experience of almost leaving PYOS:
"I was gonna leave my job... to go and do my social work training but it was only when I said I was doing that, that I realised how much I was valued... it’s only when you say you’re gonna leave that you actually realise that people actually value what you do, they don’t want you to leave."

Other practitioners felt they received recognition through the use of programmes they had developed in-house. The recognition they stated came from “seeing other people using it has been a really positive experience.” There were some practitioners who felt they received recognition from their managers, although there was a degree of uncertainty of the quality of this recognition: “My manager is quite good at certainly letting you know you’re doing well.”

On the whole, it appeared that practitioners felt that the recognition they received from their managers was not adequate, and that the work they were carrying out was not being appropriately acknowledged. Further, recognition was sought from other colleagues, in particular colleague feedback on programmes which had been developed internally by PYOS practitioners.

**7.6.3 Feedback**

Feedback, similarly with recognition, was spoken about in a negative tone by practitioners. Feedback from managers tends to be focused on recording which hasn’t been done rather than positive feedback on recording that has been completed, or indeed positive feedback on performance:

“I get told if I’ve got assets that need to be updated, or I’ll get told if I’ve missed a risk management plan. Positive feedback is much harder to come by.”

It was common for practitioners to attribute the lack of positive feedback to managers “not having enough time”. This created somewhat of a divide between practitioners and managers:

“Often managers haven’t got time to kind of say you did that really well, or have a look at some of the work you’ve done and give yourself some really
good feedback, they do audit something’s occasionally, but it’s definitely for what you’ve not done, rather than what you have done well.”

Furthermore, practitioners felt that this feedback, as previously discussed with monthly supervision meetings, was not structured unless they specifically asked for it. The feeling was that if things were getting completed, no feedback was required (this was further evident with training at PYOS, discussed in section 7.7):

“I don’t think they provide you with structured feedback, unless you ask for it. The only reason they would look into it is if you dropped something really bad, then they would probably look into it, but otherwise if things are ticking along ok then they just leave you alone.”

Senior managers at PYOS felt that feedback was offered and given to practitioners regularly, and raised concerns that some practitioners needed more specific feedback than others; the feeling from managers was that feedback was given as required:

“I think feedback is one of those things which some people need more of, some people need in a very specific way, and ya know I talk to managers about how they feedback to their staff, and they certainly will do that.”

There is a clear disconnect between the perceived feedback that practitioners feel they receive and that which managers feel they are delivering. Unsurprisingly, there is variety from one practitioner to the next; however the general feeling supports a conflict between managers and practitioners views. This leads to the next motivational area, enjoyment of the role.

7.6.4 Enjoyment

Enjoyment of the role, as with recognition and feedback, brought with it negative tones from practitioners. Some practitioners insisted that they enjoyed what they did, referring to working with young people. However, many stated that they were not getting the level of enjoyment they would like from their role; “Yeah, I do get enjoyment, or else I wouldn’t come here every day, not as much as I would like.”
The majority of practitioners highlighted the increased workload as a reason for the decreased enjoyment of their role. One practitioner, who had recently had her caseload reduced, described this as significant in increasing her confidence:

“I now feel as if I could conquer the world, because honestly I feel so much better and I’ve got so much energy again. So it just tells me that it’s about your workload, and I would be able say here [manager] I’ll sort out all those resources out in that room for you, that needs to be done, because I’ve got that energy now, so it’s kind of really the impact on workload.”

This would suggest that the workload has a direct effect on practitioners enjoyment of their role. However, it is also important to take into consideration the skills of the practitioner when deducing such conclusions, which will be discussed further in section 7.7. It was further evident that the recent restructuring, which for some practitioners had been taking place for the last couple of years, was having an impact on staff enjoyment, and ultimately their motivation to carry out their role. One senior practitioner described how the past couple of years had been a case of “doing what was required for the service.” As described in chapter five, due to reductions in staffing numbers, some practitioners who would not usually manage cases effectively took on a case manager role in addition to their everyday role; this led to frustration and de-motivation of practitioners as the service became stretched:

“I’ve done what was needed of me the last couple of years, at times its quite demotivating for me, I came in here with a certain set of skills that I wanted to use, and ended up using skills that were really more akin to an admin manager.”

One practitioner re-emphasised the issues of reduced staffing levels and uncertainty which surrounded the service regarding the future employment of all staff, describing this as “at the moment probably I’d say, if I’m honest, the unhappiest I’ve been at youth offending.” Further, asserting that “enjoyment at the moment, at an all-time low!” This was attributed to “losing people through redundancy, it’s been a really tough sort of few months and just having to reorganise ourselves and being responsible for all that, it’s just not been good.”
7.6.5 Attainable and problems or difficulties

“It’s like taking a bag of tennis balls and throwing them all up in the air, and juggling with them to see which ones you can manage.”

When asked if they felt what was expected of them was attainable, and if they had any problems or difficulties with their role, practitioners raised five key themes: (1) the level of recording required compared to delivery of programmes of intervention; (2) influences external to PYOS; (3) part-time working; (4) management priority shifts; (5) reduction of staffing and increased caseloads. These areas will now be discussed in further detail.

7.6.6 Recording versus delivery

It was again apparent that practitioners were anxious about the level of recording (primarily on YOIS) that required completing compared to the time spent working on the actual delivery of programmes of intervention and face-to-face contact time with young people. Some practitioners took the stance that the young person would always come first for them, even though this sometimes meant they did not complete their recording on time and risked being sanctioned by management:

“I might not have updated YOIS in time, but to me that’s not as important as making sure a young person is safe, but I know it’s got to be done, so you’re constantly having to juggle all the time, and a lot of its down to you and your values, you know what you believe you should be doing, it’s not very often I don’t feel I haven’t done enough for my client. But that creates problems for yourself.”

Another practitioner summed this up as a juggling act:

“The problem is it’s like taking a bag of tennis balls and throwing them all up in the air, and juggling with them to see which ones you can manage, that’s the problem. And if you care about what you do, and you want to do your job properly it’s very frustrating, because you have to compromise all the time to try and achieve what is expected of you, and that’s not in the best interests of young people, that’s what youth justice board want us to do.”
References to “targets being met”, and “recording being up-to-date” were extremely common in discussions with all practitioners. The frustrations of not being able to achieve the identified needs were also apparent throughout:

“Sometimes I feel that from management our report writing and stuff can be seen as a priority rather than actually working with the young people that we’ve got on our caseloads.”

For some there was an attitude of that’s just how it is:

“You’re identifying a need that that young person has but you’re not being able to fulfil it, and that’s quite difficult. But we have met the target of 80% so I guess in that respect we’re doing what we need to do really. We’re never gonna get all of them but that’s just the way it goes. But yeah, it’s certainly possible I don’t feel like I’m aiming for something that can never be done, but there’s always that little bit more that you want to do.”

Whilst other practitioners pointed toward the achievement of key performance targets, despite the reductions in the budgets and reduced staffing:

“I think the answer to that is, in terms of goals, in terms of performance measures, I think the answer is yes because we’ve hit the targets... the budgets gone down quite a lot and performance continues to improve, so thinking in that kind that way, the expectations are not unreasonable.”

### 7.6.7 External influence

Practitioners raised further concern with external influences on their day-to-day practice. In particular there was much concern over the sentencing of young people and decisions made by courts which have a direct impact on PYOS practitioners work. A practitioner described a recent event involving the adjournment of a case by the crown court which placed a strain on the service:

“Sometimes you have outrageous kind of expectations, I mean we had the other day a crown court judge who adjourned the case, the young person remanded in custody, and he sort of says yeah I’ll report for next Friday. He adjourned it yesterday [Wednesday], in [town] Crown Court, and of course the
YOT officer said it’s not possible, we won’t be able to do that, and he said ‘I don’t care’. So we’ll do our best to get it, whether we will or not I don’t know.”

An issue which was addressed further by practitioners was the duration of court orders which young people were given, and the strict time limits set by national standards:

“I think in some cases there’s nothing we can do, ya know. In some cases there’s issues that are never gonna be resolved, and for some young people they’re so rigid, it’s really difficult to move them in the time that we’ve got, ya know. Our interventions are short, and we’re time limited, limited to the time set by the courts.”

Practitioners also addressed external factors such as appropriate referral to support the core work carried out at PYOS. In addition having the support of families, schools and local education provision was regularly highlighted as problematic. Funding from local authorities was also spoken about with concern. One practitioner summed this all up with optimism, however:

“Sometimes you feel like you’re trying to change things that you can’t but you just have to work closely with the young people to find the best option for them really I think, rather than worrying about the things that you can’t change just have to concentrate on the things that you can.”

7.6.8 Part-time working

PYOS had a number of staff, including managers, who were working part-time. This was raised as a point of concern, as a number of practitioners – those working full-time and part-time – stated that it was sometimes difficult to adjust to those working part-time, for example, synchronising meetings for days which were compatible with all relevant staff. As one senior practitioner described:

“I think if I worked full-time I could just about manage everything. I hope I’ve got it in terms of the support of staff, being there to talk through cases with and making sure they’ve got that management oversight. I’m doing so many audits a month, when you’re supervising staff and working 3 days a week, and there’s other things that you’ve got to do as well, so I find I haven’t quite got the time to get all of that done, so probably the answer to that is no, and we’re gonna have to look as a management group at what goes, what are our
priorities, at the moment I’m trying to jiggle lots of stuff and not necessarily keeping up with everything.”

This feeds into the shift in priorities of managers at PYOS.

7.6.9 Management priority shift
It was acknowledged by management that there had been a shift in the way they carried out their role due to increasing pressures of quality assurance and performance indicators. There had been further tension, as previously mentioned, as senior management had not been replaced and were now effectively working two roles in one; strategic management and operational management. This inevitably resulted in less manager-practitioner contact time on a daily basis, which had further led to tensions between management and core practitioners:

“It’s essentially everyone’s been kind of pulled up, whereas some of the team leaders would do some practice, ya know, can’t do that anymore, you really can’t see kids you’ve got to be focused on management, you’ve got to think about that, and I think ya know, the drivers around quality assurance agenda and those kind of things is also quite challenging in terms of fitting that in, because the staff have been used to managers who’ve been available, who’ve been willing to share and discuss, or help and reflect on case work or whatever, but that’s now gonna shift away because they’re just not gonna have the capacity to do that, because we’re gonna have to do more quality assurance work, so we do less of that, and more of that, shifting sand and stuff.”

7.6.10 Reduced staffing, increasing caseloads
It became a recurring theme for all practitioners to raise concern with the decrease of staffing and the consequent increase in case loads, as the caseloads of those who left the service were distributed amongst the remaining practitioners. As one practitioner described it was difficult to achieve success with every young person with an increased caseload:

“It’s almost like you’re diluting yourself to cover a bigger area, so the more concentrated you could be, the more effective you’d be I think.”
It was observed during the time spent at PYOS that many staff worked beyond their contracted hours, some regularly staying in the office until nine o’clock at night (usual working hours were 0900 to 1700).

“Well if you did everything that was expected of you now with all the admin we do, I mean I never work 9 to 5, and to do your job properly I don’t think you can do it 9 to 5, but that’s at the moment. The problem is for the last 3 years we’ve had lots of people leaving and not being replaced, so it’s really difficult to know we’ve got half the staff that we had in a lot of ways, whether you achieve your goal in a normal, I don’t know what normal is anymore, do you know what I mean, you have so many tasks to do that you have to adapt whether you can achieve it or not.”

Furthermore, practitioners raised concern with the length of individual sessions with young people. The expected length of an individual session is between forty-five minutes to one hour. As discussed in chapter six there were many occasions where young people would turn up late for appointments causing lost time to sessions. However, many practitioners raised concerns that a lack of time to plan, due to increased caseloads and recording pressures, meant that some sessions had to be reduced:

“when we’ve got shortages of staff its very, very difficult to keep the standards, to keep those standards up, and to see the young people as often, and the time spent doing the intervention reduces. So where I would say normally 45 minutes to an hour, that can be done down to half an hour, it can be 20 minutes, that’s where the young person loses out. They still get the assessment, the assessment is really good but the intervention I thinks the bit that then gets lost.”

7.7 Training and development

“you’ve been around, you can work it out”

Research and literature as highlighted in chapter three, suggests that training is a vital proponent to those implementing programmes of intervention with young people (Baker, 2008; Grimshaw, 2008; Mason and Prior, 2008; Sherman et al., 2008; Wikström and Treiber, 2008). During discussions with practitioners at PYOS it quickly became apparent that training was a point of concern. The following sections analyse historical and current approaches to training at PYOS, and highlight practitioner perceptions of the training they receive.
7.7.1 Approach to training at PYOS

Historically, training at PYOS has been facilitated by the workforce development officer. This role is filled by a practitioner seconded from the YJB on a part-time basis, who fulfils the workforce development role for the entire Eastern region comprising of ten YOTs. The aim of the workforce development advisor is to be the “focus lead on workforce development, looking at YOTs to see if they are managing to change, train and skill up their staff appropriately and effectively, to improve outcomes for young people at the end of the day.” The process of identifying training is that “staff tell heads of service, training and development wise they need, and then [the workforce development officer] looks at either providing it or commissioning it, or looking at other avenues for getting it.”

All practitioners received training in child protection and safeguarding issues and were expected to complete the (K208) professional certificate of effective practice:

“It’s very important that all our YOT staff have those basic minimum requirements, erm, and access to various tools that children’s workforce development counsel use, and also to ya know, get their opinions and thoughts views across about workforce development terms.”

The Open University runs courses for YOT staff, which can be accessed through the Youth Justice Interactive Learning Space (YJILS). This is not mandatory at PYOS, a lot of the training is undertaken in-house (discussed in further detail later in this chapter). As one senior practitioner explained, every YOT in the Eastern region, and indeed the country, has different expectations with regards to the YJILS courses and training requirements:

“some YOTs have said right its part of your job, you have to do it, and they’ve set time aside where you’ve got half a day a week to do it, and you’ll be supervised doing it; other YOTs have said well now we’re gonna do lots of in-house training because we’ve printed the materials off and we’re gonna do it as a group altogether, so we know you’ve understood it, but it’s there afterwards if you want to access it, and that’s very much each YOT’s been different.”
It was stated that there is much variability between YOTs across the Eastern region, and indeed across all YOTs in England and Wales:

“in some YOTs its very much you will do this course, you will do that course, other YOTs its not tied to your job and it’s not tied to your specification.”

YJILS has a number of different courses and tools which can be accessed by YOT staff, providing that particular YOT has signed up to YJILS; PYOS is signed up to YJILS. A senior practitioner stated that YJILS contains:

“KEEPs, K524 which is the YRO and skilled practice one. There’s an introduction to youth justice on there which is K523, which, all the YOTs in the Eastern region have as part of their induction programme, so if you start in a YOT you have to do that and you have so many weeks to complete it in. Majority of volunteers tend to do that course as well as it gives some kind of an opener to where YOTs came from, what YOTs do, and why they do it.”

A number of other tools are accessible to practitioners for training and development purposes:

“the one tool; share stream; skills for justice are primarily focused on things like national qualifications framework, to do with national occupational standards in youth justice, so it’s NVQs”

However, it was stressed in discussions with senior practitioners that funding was an issue to accessing a number of tools and programmes of training:

“in our area we don’t tend to do NVQs, because it’s not the designated qualification that the youth justice board promote, and I don’t think it’s been terribly well received by YOTS, shall we say, because it can be quite time consuming as well as, practitioners who have to have assessors, we haven’t really got an assessment centre in the Eastern region, so if we wanted to look out at to another region doing that it would probably cost, ooh about £1500 per person to do an NVQ, which is a lot of money. YOT managers would say they want practitioners with experience and observation, very similar to social work, health practice, where people are observed, as a pose to ‘well I know they can put things in a portfolio’. Again, it’s about getting the funding for it, and at the moment for a development award it’s costing the same as a whole NVQ, so were working with that, how we get grants, how we get budgets.”
Following discussions with practitioners involved in the facilitation of training and development of staff at PYOS it became very clear that there was recommended training and guidance from the YJB; however, it was up to the individual YOT to decide what training was made available to staff, whether this was mandatory or optional, and how this was to be delivered. At PYOS, there was a seconded workforce development advisor (as discussed above) and a training manager – this was a senior practitioner whose primary role was as a team manager. Time dedicated to the training manager role was very little, or as was described as “in my tea breaks.” The role did not have any structure or performance targets attached to it; described as more of a “training co-ordinator role”. The creation of this training co-ordinator role meant that some order was given to the training of staff at PYOS. A database was started which was used to record a log of all staff’s training at PYOS, the idea was that if everything was recorded on a central database then gaps in training could be identified and appropriate provision provided:

“let’s get everyone on paper, exactly where everyone is at, what everyone’s done, what they can remember, let’s go to every person in this team and get some idea of what they’ve done and when they did it, and then we can look at what the gaps are. Then the idea is that via the appraisal process people give me what their training need are, and I can point them in the right direction, communicate training courses that are available.”

Furthermore, resource meetings were scheduled at the beginning of 2010:

“I put together a plan just so I could get my head around and rope people in to talking about using the skills we’ve got in the team, getting people involved in actually the delivery of some of these and sharing the knowledge on those ideas, the gaps that we’ve got to try and fill those and I probably got up to the summer, got it all booked in with people, everyone knew what they were doing, and then the communication trust offered that training, so it was like oh we don’t need to deliver all those cos they’re gonna do it for us.”

Training is predominately conducted in-house, although where possible external agencies are brought in to deliver specific training packages. An issue raised by practitioners during discussions was that the workforce at PYOS had a number of people with skills and knowledge which were not being appropriately shared with the team. The above is an
example of how on this occasion an external agency was used instead of an internal staff member, who had designed a training package which was not used:

“I think training is a big issue, lots of people within the team have been here a long time, and have the wealth of knowledge in certain areas, I think it’s something that should be shared a lot more.”

As the training manager described, “the way training is delivered is quite complicated, I’ve got my head around it - there are 4 places you can get training from, ones PSCB [Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Board], ones the Children’s Services training brochure, YJILS, and yourself, whenever possible external agencies are favoured.

Analysis of training records at PYOS identified over two hundred different training sessions at PYOS between 2000 and 2011. Further analysis of training records shows that, due to poor recording and updating, it is very difficult to know what training individual practitioners have received, and when they completed it. For this reason, the analyses of the training records is not reported in detail here, as they provide unreliable records of what training has been undertaken by staff at PYOS. To this end practitioners views of training at PYOS are now discussed.

7.7.2 Practitioner views on training

Following discussions with practitioners, there was evident concern expressed about the quantity of training received, and more importantly, the quality of that training. Specifically, during the last couple of years:

“training has been a bit lax over the last 18 months, 2 years, because of finances, I think it’s important for us all to do some proper training like I said the different programmes, accredited programmes - training on things like that I think would be really worthwhile.”

(YJO).

“YOS training had taken a bit of a back seat, they’re concentrating on safeguarding and things like that... we’ve had quite limited training over the last couple of years.”

(YJO).
As a result of this reduction in training, a number of practitioners stated that they felt less confident in delivering intervention sessions:

“I mean I’ve had a 3-day training on cognitive behavioural therapy, but in terms of the actual work that we should be delivering its very much left up to us to find the resources and to work it out, and deliver it, we don’t really get a huge amount support in that actual kind of area.”

(YJO).

“It’s important that we know what we’re doing and I think we could have access to a lot more things that would help us do that, cos sometimes ya know I think we just go down and have a chat about it and it’s really not equipping them with any skills, I think it’s the skills training that’s the important bit. It would be really helpful for us all to have more training... I think some of that is not particularly well targeted.”

(YJO).

“My knowledge base of how to use them [resources]... I still feel very inadequate about, I’ve said this all along, I just don’t feel I’ve got the skills personally I just find it very difficult in delivering interventions.”

(YJO).

It was common for practitioners to express concern that a culture existed at PYOS of “you’ve been around, you can work it out”, with a lack of support in carrying out their work within the service.

“Since doing the case management, I’ve had no training at all, it’s been a case of ‘you’ve been around, you can work it out’, and I have been able to work it out but I don’t think I’m as effective as I could have been if I’d have had the proper training, particularly in terms of delivering the interventions, I’m just blagging that and that’s not a good thing, and everyone says you’ll get better as you go along - I will, but that doesn’t help me at the beginning, so those young people I’m working with now I don’t know how much difference I’m making, in a year, yes, but not so much now. So training is the big issue.”

7.8 Conclusion
This chapter has presented the structural support mechanisms for practitioners at PYOS, and discussed the motivation of practitioners to carry out their role. It is evident that there is a
lack of clarity between managers and practitioners in the YOS regarding the purpose and format of supervision sessions. Informal supervision, which allows practitioners to approach their manager at any time to discuss any issues or concerns, was described by managers and practitioners, and observed regularly at PYOS during the research. However, practitioners generally felt unsupported by managers and this appeared to affect their overall motivation in terms of viewing their role as a challenge with room for personal and professional development. Furthermore, practitioners stated their love of working with young people, but were less positive about working for the YOS due to the perceived lack of development opportunities and support. This was further apparent when examining training and development processes at PYOS, which were severely lacking and appeared underdeveloped.

This raises a key concern of the influence between political, structural and cultural elements at PYOS. It is clear that policy changes at both the national and local level are influencing structural change to the YOS. As funding is reduced and staff redundancies within PYOS add strain to day-to-day practice, senior managers are increasingly being diverted from an operational role within the YOS, to more strategic roles within the council’s children’s services department. In turn, middle managers are increasingly required to work on senior operational objectives, resulting in a reduction of more intricate micro-management of practitioners. Furthermore, this appears to affect the overall culture of the YOS, and create sub-cultures within. The lack of clarity between management and practitioners was somewhat alarming at PYOS, and appeared to decrease the morale and motivation of practitioners. In addition there were many practitioners who would raise concern about the abilities of their colleagues, some attributing this to poor recruitment and selection decisions by managers.

The following chapter will discuss practitioners views of young people and further examine what their views on practice if there were no restrictions on resources.
Chapter 8
Practitioners views on young people and effective practice

8.1 Introduction
Previous chapters have highlighted the characteristics of PYOS, what processes are used to implement programmes of intervention and how these programmes are delivered. Furthermore, chapter seven examined the mechanisms of support for practitioners, and discussed the motivation of practitioners. This chapter will present practitioners views and perceptions of young people and what is the most effective way of working with young people referred to youth justice crime prevention programmes.

The chapter will begin by addressing practitioners views and perceptions about the behaviour and needs of young people in contemporary society. Following this, practitioners views about why young people offend and the impact PYOS has on young people’s behaviour will be discussed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of what practitioners would do with unlimited finance, resources and time; ultimately what would be the ideal situation if they could have it.

8.2 Views on young people
8.2.1 Views on behaviour of young people

“The majority of young people behave within society’s expectations.”

The overwhelming view of practitioners was that the majority of young people do not offend, and that the minority who do offend get substantial media coverage which contributes toward the majority of young people being labelled as bad:

“I think the majority of young people behave within society’s expectations. I think there’s a small minority that don’t behave within society’s expectations, but that minority are openly talked about, and made to seem a lot bigger than what they are. The media and stuff play a massive part and ups young people’s anti-social behaviour and offending, and I don’t actually think it is as bad as what a lot of people make out.”

(YJO).
“I think that the attitude toward young people in the general population are coloured by media representations of a very, very small minority of young people.”

(YJO).

“I think they get a pretty raw deal actually, I think they get labelled as being bad, and they’re not; I don’t think they’re understood. And I think, even the young people we work with when you’re working with them one-to-one, they’ve all got something good about them, there’s something if you can find that you’re there, than if you actually, some of their past history you can understand why they’ve behaved as they’ve done or they do, yeah, I think they get a lot of bad press.”

(YJO).

“I think it’s really unfortunate the young people get labelled as having certain behaviours and things, when actually they’re our future generation and we should be encouraging them, and actually there is a lot of successful young people out there.”

(YJO).

Labelling of young people was commonly cited by practitioners as a reason for “increases in anti-social behaviour”. Labelling theory has received much criticism, summed up somewhat dramatically by Akers (1967: 463):

“One sometimes gets the impression from reading this literature that people go about minding their own business, and then "wham"-bad society comes along and slaps them with a stigmatised label. Forced into the role of deviant the individual has little choice but to be deviant. This is an exaggeration, of course, but such an image can be gained easily from an overemphasis on the impact of labelling.”

Bohm (1997: 117, cited in Bohm 2010) offers further critique “if the delinquent label is so stigmatising, why do most delinquents not engage in adult criminality.” Practitioners asserted that as they work for the YOS they see young people who have committed offences on a daily basis, which means they “get a skewed picture here because everybody we work with is an offender.” Another practitioner stated that “there are a lot of young people who behave very well... I think the problem working here is that you do get that negative view... a bit cynical in here [YOS] I think.”
There was a feeling that “young people are criminalised too early, for minor things” and that they get a “rough time” as “they’re not just criminals they’re often victims of their own circumstances themselves.” As one YJO stated “many, many, of mine have got mental health problems, and have had serious abuse when they were younger.” Furthermore, “some of them appear to be confused with what focus they’ve got in life, they’re not very clear on what they are doing or what is needed.” Lack of expectation was also commonly cited by practitioners:

“I do think sometimes we’re getting kids who don’t really know what’s expected of them anymore, there’s lack of boundaries of expectation, maybe the family home, I don’t know in some families. I don’t think kids know what being a young person, being a young adult, is, they are very confused.”

Family support was viewed as a key factor in reinforcing behaviour, values and beliefs in young people. Practitioners raised frustration with the amount of one-to-one contact time they spent with young people, regarding “the amount of time people spend with them and help them realise what they can achieve and what they can’t achieve” as critical:

“I think families have got a big responsibility to try and keep their children under control, and I think the family work which is particularly up and coming, specifically MST and things like that is really powerful. We’ve done lots of work where we involve the families, and I do think that’s often more productive, ya know. If you can kind of speak with the parents and make sure that they’re reinforcing the behaviour at home, because a lot of kids off the rails, a lot of kids it’s the result of poor boundaries and stuff at home and I can understand that.”

One practitioner summed this up as “the big difference between the people that we see, and the people we will never see... is often family, a supportive family.”

8.2.2 Views on needs of young people

“They’re completely different for different people.”

8.2.2.1 The basics in life

The needs of young people is a complex topic, “depends on family circumstances, it’s very difficult.” Practitioners talked unanimously about the “basics in life”, “some sort of loving background, family support, somewhere to live, food, education.” Maslow’s hierarchy of
needs (1943) was cited by most practitioners. Maslow’s developmental psychology theory focuses on human motivation and development of stages in human growth, which he terms physiological (for example, breathing, food, water), safety (for example, security of body, employment, resources), belongingness and love (for example, friendship, family, sexual intimacy), esteem (for example, self-esteem, confidence, achievement), and self-actualisation needs (for example, morality, creativity, spontaneity).

8.2.2.ii Young people who offend

Regarding the young people who practitioners work with at PYOS, their needs “completely change... they’re completely different for different people and we need to look at them individually and make sure that we don’t ya know treat everybody the same.” Practitioners viewed Asset as the most efficient way of identifying an individual young person’s needs: “We do an assessment, a full assessment, and that’s to look at that specific person and what their specific needs are.” However, a number of practitioners believed that boys had additional needs than girls, particularly the need for a positive role model:

“I think they need good role models, particularly boys, well and girls, but particularly I see boys do. I think in society now there are a lot of young boys who, there’s an absence of a father figure in their life. A lot of people are divorced but they still have a strong male role model, be it a father from another family or an uncle or a step-, so it doesn’t have to be their dad, but I just think there is a lot of young people I see particularly in this service that don’t have that, and it’s quite sad really.”

In section 6.2 practitioners reservations regarding the use of Asset, particularly the time they spent collecting information and inputting this into a computer, was discussed. In addition, practitioners asserted that they had little time to plan programmes of intervention, due to the time dedicated to the assessment process. There is a seeming paradox here, as practitioners indicate that Asset is the most efficient way of identifying an individual young person’s needs. Whilst previously asserting the limitations of Asset, practitioners seemingly display an attachment to it. This indicates that practitioners are viewing the young people they work with through the risk prevention model, to which they see no alternative.
8.2.2.iii Positive activities

Practitioners also highlighted the lack of things for young people to do, in Peterborough:

“I think Peterborough as a city doesn’t offer young people a great deal, in terms of positive activities to do. And until they’ve reached the point of they’re coming to us and we can then signpost them to things, which I think it’s probably a little bit too late, for the general population of Peterborough there is not a great deal out there for a teenager to do, which is not helpful in terms of keeping them out of trouble and giving them constructive things to do.”

Furthermore, where there are activities for young people in Peterborough, these are not easily accessible for all young people:

“I think there needs to be more resources for them, I think there needs to be more stuff for them to do out in the community, ya know, things cost so much money, so if you come from a low-income family you’ve actually got no chance of being able to do normal activities that more well-off kids can do, so things like the ice-skating rink, the bowling alley, the cinema, it all cost so much money, and draws young people out on to the streets, there’s no youth clubs and things, ya know, things like that don’t really exist really anymore. So there’s nothing really for young people to do, and I think that that’s a real shame, because that’s what ends up with young people being involved in anti-social behaviour, drinking, taking drugs, cos they’ve got nothing else to do.”

8.2.2.iv Clear boundaries

Clarity of boundaries was a concern for practitioners, with the majority stating that unstable home life added to young people’s chaotic lifestyles. This presented “mixed messages” to young people and increased their confusion about what is expected of them:

“Ultimately they need clear boundaries, ya know, because with a lot of our problematic young people is that there are mixed messages at home, which is why they need to get very clear messages when they come here, but it’s true for any other young people in the general population, they’re getting mixed messages all the time, and I think that’s something else, growing up these days there’s so much choice and so much going on. The world is ever-changing, people are always trying to find ways to keep up with it, so stability I think is another thing for young people as well.”
8.2.2. Cultural influence

Concern was raised by practitioners of a perceived influence from young people “coming to Peterborough from London”, particularly in relation to “gang culture”:

“I think there’s a concern with the locality where we are, were not that far from London and I think sometimes things from London it does affect, it does filter through, and I know there’s been issues in terms of gangs, I’m aware of that culture slowly filtering across from London, certain areas, people being located to Peterborough and that having an impact on some of the more impressionable young people in Peterborough. Being taken out of a gang culture in London, placed in Peterborough to try and break it up, although really Peterborough’s only an hour away, it’s a direct train journey it’s not that far, and that’s brought that kind of person, or that culture, there’s been people who’ve have been brought into, there’s been that opportunity for them to see again about this immediate sense of, if someone upsets you, you cause them serious harm. Or whether its substance use, whether it’s just thefts, or mobile phones crimes, or whatever. So I think that has an impact as well.”

8.2.3 Views on why young people offend

“There’s so many different reasons”

“Put them all in a big pot and stir it up”

Practitioners unanimously stated that “there’s so many different reasons” and “so many different criminogenic reasons” which contribute toward a young person committing an offence.

8.2.3.i Parenting

Among the most commonly cited views was parenting and the way a young person is brought up. Stating that “a lot of it is to do with parenting” and “linked to what relationship that they’ve got with the family, a lot of young people ya know are asked to leave the house, their home, when they’re 16, or have parents who aren’t particularly interested in them.” Furthermore:

“I think it would be fair to say that a lot of the young people we see here who offend have had very difficult upbringings with lots of welfare issues, whether its parents that have previously offended or have got issues themselves, and
Unfortunately it had led them down the same kind of path. I think some young people think that there’s no alternative but to offend.”

One practitioner claimed that young people “pick the wrong parents”, before going on to state:

“They don’t choose the wrong parents obviously, but I think it’s they offend because they see offending as in some way resolving for them, or giving them a short term solution to the problems they are facing at any given moment. Whether that be shortage of money, no work, or things that are more emotional, reflection of some kind of unhappiness or frustration they feel, wherever that’s come from, it could be anything from history of sexual abuse to having a poor relationship with parents, to having very low self-confidence and not quite seeing how they can change it into a life with some direction.”

8.2.3.ii Values and beliefs
Alongside parenting, “the values that they’ve learnt, the belief systems that they’ve got” were viewed as important contributing factors to offending. “Some young people have just been brought up so they think it’s ok to do certain things, they don’t seem to have that basic sort of moral values that you need for you to know what is accepted and not.” This is due to “entrenched family values, where it’s acceptable ya know, that’s the way you make your way in life you go and steal.” In addition, one practitioner summed this up as “learned behaviour, they’ve learned that to actually achieve something this is your way of doing it, so that might be family attitudes and beliefs, and family core values, or it might be from their peer group.”

8.2.3.iii Peer pressure
Peer pressure was another common response from practitioners. The influence of peers, particularly during the teenage years, was viewed as critical. One practitioner stated that “there’s a large group of young people, especially boys, when they’re going through their teenage years their peers are the most important people to them that they spend their time with, and I think people can be heavily influenced by other people.” Another practitioner spoke of group identities, particularly in Peterborough as having an influence on young people’s behaviour:

“It seems to be so important to have some sort of a group identity for young people as opposed to having their own individual identity and being satisfied they feel as if they have to be a member of a group. You can walk from the
Queensgate [shopping centre in Peterborough] and I can guarantee a group of young people, certainly during the school term at lunch time, you can see a bunch of, I’m thinking girls specifically, I’ve noticed many a time half-a-dozen are walking through the Queensgate, they’ve all got their hair coloured the same colour, styled exactly the same way, they wear their uniforms the same way, and they all sort of they’re just clones of each other, and there seems to be, I don’t know if that’s an anxiety thing where people don’t want to stand out and you have to protect yourself by being one of the crowd, that’s another sort of issue I think.”

8.2.3.iv “I haven’t been caught before”

A number of practitioners spoke about young people they worked with who claim to have offended multiple times without getting caught:

“I think ya know a part of it is about people perhaps offend because if they don’t get caught first time, I’ve had several young people here who are quite prolific, saying ‘yeah I got caught, I got a 4 month detention training order but ya know in the whole scheme of things I’ve done 200 other things that ive never got caught for, so ya know I’ve actually done alright, weighing up the balances’, so I think that’s part of it.”

This issue is raised by Wikström et al., (2012) who highlight that young people in the PADS study committed on average one hundred and forty offences before being caught by the police. Practitioners further asserted that “there always needs to be more of a focus on prevention, because once you’re in the criminal justice system it’s almost like it’s a step too far”, especially with some of the “high end young people who I really don’t think no matter how much intervention they have they would, that would stop them from offending. Which is quite sad, it’s only a small minority.”

Overall practitioners believed that offending rarely occurs where there is only one factor affecting the young person; there are a multitude of reasons why young people offend, “and I think all those things, put them all in a big pot and stir it up, sort of, but there’s lots of reasons why young people offend.”
8.2.4 Views on the impact of PYOS

“I would hope that we make a difference.”

Practitioners generally stated that they believed PYOS had a positive impact on the young people with whom they worked with. However, it was apparent in all discussions with practitioners that they spoke in more uncertain terms: “I would hope that we make a difference”, “I’d like to think that we do have impact”, “I think it’s a real mix”, “there’s lots of other external influences, and it’s quite hard to say well yeah the YOS was responsible for that, or was that because of things like educational provision.” Most practitioners spoke in terms of performance measures: “certainly our figures suggest that we’re pretty good in terms of re offending”, “the evidence suggests that we’re doing a fairly good job”. Yet, as one practitioner stated “we do see a lot of young people coming back as well, so that can be quite frustrating.” Others believed that the service had little impact on behaviour, “in the general scheme of things I don’t think we have a massive effect on the behaviour of young people.” Furthermore, there was concern raised regarding first time entrants (FTEs) to PYOS:

“One of the areas we don’t perform particularly well in is first time entrants, it seems disproportionately high compared to other areas, but it’s difficult for us to have an impact on that because it’s almost like the universal services that are around before they get to this stage to actually try and prevent some of that... but if we’re looking at young people in general, then there needs to be a bit more of a focus there.”

Further concern surrounded high-risk offenders where “we don’t see much success and that’s awful. But with my client base I tend to work with the really high-risks that tend to keep coming back, very often their family life, and their upbringing, things like that you struggle to make any change in.” These young people were described by one practitioner as “there are some people you work with and you know they’re gonna be in the system their whole lives, which, that’s quite sad.”

Interestingly, some practitioners were more negative about the perceived impact of the service on young people’s behaviour, suggesting that young people make the decision to stop offending themselves:
“I think we have some impact, I don’t know if its necessarily the impact we want to have, I don’t know that we are really driving down peoples offending, I think that we’re giving them, we’re highlighting the things that they can do differently and trying to support them to do different things, but how much the changes in their behaviour is a direct result of the work that we do I’m not really sure about, I think a lot of young people just decide they’ve had enough, that they’re gonna stay out of trouble and that’s what happens.”

Other practitioners were further unsure of the impact of PYOS on young people’s behaviour, “I’d have to say that most young people you only see for an hour a week, out of their entire life, so I’m not sure how much impact we have.” However viewed the work carried out as part of the bigger picture:

“If we can then access things that they haven’t got in their life for them like education and training and jobs things like that, I always look at it like a jigsaw, and if we’ve got a couple of bits to put in and other things are there in their personal life, all what they do with their life outside all of the time, then I think we partly can have an impact on young people.”

General feeling amongst practitioners at PYOS was that no “youth offending team solves all the problems.” This was attributed further to time spent undertaking assessments: “I think also because we spend so much time doing assessments and so much less time doing one-to-one work with young people I’d have to think what impact are we having? Some young people I only see for half-an-hour a week. Not good.”

8.3 What would you do with unlimited finance, resources, and time?
In previous chapters the research and literature regarding effective practice has been examined, and to what extent this is evident in practice at PYOS. This section discusses practitioners’ views on practice if there were no restrictions on finance, resources and time. At the end of every interview, each practitioner was asked what would you do with unlimited finance, resources, and time? In response to this question over one hundred and thirty options were offered by practitioners. The most common responses centred on programme development, staff training and development, and improved education, training and employment opportunities for referring young people. The responses of practitioners can be broken down into nine general areas, which are discussed below, beginning with the most common area:
8.3.1 Programme development

Practitioners most common practice enhancement would be the development of programmes of intervention for young people. As discussed in chapter six, practitioners raised concern with the number of programmes available at PYOS. During discussions regarding this section, practitioners were unanimous in highlighting their desire to develop programmes:

“I think I’d spend a lot more time developing more programmes for young people... that yes staff are still gonna have to be flexible with, but just having a few more that they can they can have the confidence in being able to deliver.”

Within the development of programmes there should be variation in what is available to young people:

“I would like to see a lot more variation in the programmes that are offered to young people. It dismays me that all the young people we seem to work with believe that they’re only going to have a career in certain industries, so they think they’re only going to be brick layers, they’re only going to be motor vehicle mechanics, and things like that. I would really like to see a greater variety of activities that they could get involved in.”

Furthermore, facilities within the place of work should incorporate areas where young people can “drop-in and socialise in a positive environment”:

“I would like to work in an environment which is like when I do youth work, when we had facilities for kids to drop-in, play pool, ya know, socialise in a positive environment, so we’d have the right building, we’d have loads of resources, we’d be able to get, there’d be training schemes for many kids disaffected from school, because most of the kids that are disaffected from school don’t fit in and they want to do practical things. And go a bit back to basics really.”

There should also be in place more sophisticated programmes to suit the needs of young people who accelerate through the more basic programmes and packages currently available to PYOS practitioners:
“In terms of programmes, there are off the shelf programmes but none of them are ever perfect and none of them are ever quite right. Most YOTs use, we bought in Teen-Talk, I look at it and think what!? I know it’s just a basis, but to me that is really low-level stuff and we should be doing more sophisticated stuff. But people don’t ever get the time to study or plan or get the proper training, than if they were a qualified social worker or a professional qualification like that is useful, I’m not saying that people definitely have to have that qualification.”

Referral opportunities should also be increased, which will enable practitioners to refer young people onto programmes which can be run by specialists, whilst also increasing post-YOS services to enable young people to continue engaging in activities and programmes when their court-order has ended:

“I would buy in more specific, I’d probably get more people involved in interventions, we do refer to substance misuse workers etc. already, but I’d get people in to deliver anger management much better than I am able to do it. Go much bigger on the positive activities definitely. Spend a lot more time sort of almost teaching young people in a different way, getting into things that they can continue to do post-YOS. Focusing a lot more on the future as well, and also ensuring as a service to refer into post-youth offending. A lot of the people if they’re not offending they don’t get any support at all, and that’s not a good message to send. There are supposed to be other services, but resource them properly and actually give them a chance to work with young people that aren’t offending.”

The majority of practitioners spoke of their desire to “do more work outside of the office-setting”:

“I would do much more outreach work with the young people rather than dragging them into the office to sit them in a room doing worksheets and stuff, I’d do much more work out and about, more hands-on, much more practical experiences. I think the more kind of practical, out of the office, activity based stuff is more important.”

(YJO)

“Perhaps just take it out there a bit more, and rather than just talking about consequences, so still doing the bit where you talk about consequences, but actually experiencing, cos I think some young people come into this system
because they have limited skills about how to deal with difficult situations, and again you can talk about that but you don’t always get the opportunity to get out there and test theories and, even if it’s just walking to the shop and getting a coffee, ya know erm I think they’re quite important experiences to reflect back on that, what happened, or maybe nothing happened or, so I’d do that. I’d probably, id have more time for cognitive behavioural, real theory-led training, but that is gonna, that ends in tangible resources, so you’ve created something, that you’ve got a very clear way of applying that, you can play with that, and you’ve got something tangible, because I mean I’ve done some cognitive behavioural training here and its really interesting but there’s not any real, you need to take time then to make it meaningful for young people so I do that.”

(YJO)

8.3.2 Staffing & Training
The need for increased staffing levels and training development was identified by staff as an area of concern, as discussed in chapter seven.

“I would have more YJOs, because at the minute we’ve got YJOs and a load of resource workers and I would rather have a load of YJOs. They would all be intensively trained on what works based on research.”

(Senior practitioner)

“I think we’d have more feet on the ground. I would have more youth justice officers, who would have more caseloads, which would mean you’ve got more time to give to individuals in your caseloads, that’s the main thing.”

(YJO)

In addition, management should maintain a staff development focus and a more strict structure for enhancing the skills and knowledge of staff within the service:

“Superb supervisors and managers, that have really got development in their mind, ya know, are gonna push their staff forward, and get rid of the ones that are not interested, get rid of the ones that are rubbish, able to get rid of them without all policies that are involved.”

With regard to practitioners who were perceived to be not so good at their job, some practitioners stated that the recruitment procedure should be improved:
“Better interviews... because we’ve employed some shocking staff, we have. Maybe there’s, I don’t know, we need to do something different with that, because who seems to be good at interviews don’t seem to be good at doing their job, it’s weird innit. So how do we find somebody, ya know design an interview process, I mean we get young people involved, we see how they engage with young people, but then they go and do the job and they’re just not particularly good.”

Although, it was further highlighted by a number of practitioners that the job of a YJO in particular was complex, and required a vast set of skills and knowledge. To enhance this training was viewed as the precursor to increasing confidence, which in turn would enhance the efficiency of YJOS:

“More confident members of staff who are properly trained... you have to be good at so many things to be a good YJO. That’s how we structure it here, whether others have court officers who go to court, are just good at court, you have to have good skills in all of those, and it’s quite hard to find people who can juggle all of that, who are successful and resilient. You have to want to work with these young people and see beyond the behaviour, and I think the people who have worked here who’ve struggled with that, who’ve just seen the presenting behaviour as them being little... you can’t have people like that working here. Some people are really good at process, you might look at their Assets and their recording and think yeah they’re on top of everything, but actually the quality of what goes on with young people, which is what we’re here for, it’s actually quite difficult to see what is really happening. Same as any organisation you get some people who are good at some things and not so good at others. I do think case managers have got a particularly difficult job, and it’s definitely not suited to everyone.”

Fully certified training in CBT was viewed as a key element to the role of a YJO by most practitioners, especially YJOS:

“I would train everybody as CBT practitioners, everybody that came in I’d send them, if there was absolutely no time constraints, I’d send them to the Oxford CBT training in London, and I would make them proper CBT practitioners, I would increase the numbers of staff so that caseloads were much lower so they could deal with families rather than individuals, so they could take on families and do much more preventative work with the younger children within families.”
With regard to the size of a caseload, practitioners had different ideas about the ‘best size’. For some a “10 maximum caseload” was enough, which would encourage a culture whereby “if they get more young people they’d have to go and recruit somebody to, rather than the other way round.” For others, the number of cases managed was irrelevant, the focus of need within that caseload was most important in terms of managing the cases effectively:

“I think it’s really hard to say in terms of numbers, because on paper it doesn’t really matter the number of young people you’ve got, it’s in terms of what their needs are and how much time it takes to meet their needs so, I think that’s, there’s obviously got to be a tool to be able to spread the cases out, but that’s where the case management falls down, because you get allocated points for a PSR or referral order but, or a youth rehabilitation order but you can have a first time entrant on a referral order that has got a huge amount of issues and that you’re seeing loads and loads and loads and doing loads of work for, and then some of the YRO that you’re not having to spend as much time on, so I don’t think there’s is really an ideal number.”

8.3.3 Education, training and employment (ETE)

Evidence suggests that being out of mainstream education is a significant risk factor for offending behaviour (Hutchings and Levesley, 2008). ETE provision at PYOS for young offenders required enhancement:

“I don’t think we’ve got good enough education, in terms of when the young person’s having to leave school, getting kicked out of school, 16-18s a key age we’ve got nothing in terms of employment and training, resource-wise we could have all the resources we could have.”

(YJO)

“A lot more in terms of education options that’s a big issue there isn’t enough options in Peterborough. It’s almost a problem if they’ve got a higher level of ability if we haven’t got the resources to give them the kind of education that they need.”

(YJO)

Increased finance was seen as a potentially useful option to remove the perceived barriers by some practitioners to achieving the ETE needs of young people:
“Build the education services that they’ve got, I would chuck money at a school and say, the best school that met their needs, and say take them, I’ll pay you. Employers, id chuck money at them and say give them a job... this is what this young person needs, and if you did get a barrier ya know, then maybe a bit of finance would overcome that, cos we get so many barriers. We know a young person needs a job and that’s the reason they are persistently nicking bacon from their local shop, ya know, because they can’t afford breakfast, ya know they desperately need a job. So get them out there and get them a job, link with employers.”

It was highlighted by some practitioners that the type of education provision in particular which they spoke of, already existed, however was not readily accessible to all young people who came into contact with PYOS:

“I think one thing I would certainly look at is how young people’s education is provided. I think, ya know, education is certainly increasing these days is such a key element to success... there’s a school at Wisbeach which takes some really challenging kids, really good kids, and they do an absolutely brilliant job with those kids, I went to visit Oakhill and senior training centre a couple of weeks ago and went through their education provision, again taking on these kids, working with them, ya know kids who haven’t a hope of surviving in mainstream education but the kids attend, they learn, they develop, they improve their social skills, they improve that kind of whole process, and so it’s, I would certainly want to think about how we can improve the quality of provision for young people who are essentially excluded from mainstream, because I think at the minute it’s not very effective and it doesn’t necessarily allow youngsters to fulfil their potential, so that would be one area I would really want to focus on.”

Furthermore, employment opportunities, particularly through training schemes, were viewed by practitioners as important to engaging young people who otherwise cannot or do not attend school or college:

“I’d make sure all of the young people had some kind of education provision, and I think its key... or even employment to be honest, a lot of them would benefit from more training schemes in an employer’s environment, that would be the best thing for them and someone who’d be able to understand them and give them a bit of leeway. The best thing I think would be to get some training, apprenticeship system set up where young people can work in an
environment where you can grow that over a period of time, there’s not an expectation that they’re gonna be attending 9 to 5 Monday to Friday at college, so then you could grow it.”

8.3.4 Funding
Funding was very topical in the current climate of youth justice, with cuts being made right across children’s services and youth justice throughout England and Wales during the time this research was undertaken. As discussed in the previous chapters, it was evident that this was firmly in the minds of practitioners on a day-to-day basis at PYOS. Many were concerned for the future of their employment. It is perhaps surprising, that in relation to unlimited finance some practitioners made reference to this being of little influence on practice:

“I don’t think finance and resources would make a huge difference to the work that I do, I don’t think I need more money, or resources to do my role better. Money might be handy for better accommodation, or employment training or that kind of stuff. In terms of time, it would give me the time to think more about the work that I do, explore more the work that I do, research more the work that I do, and hopefully therefore be better at doing it.”

(YJO)

“I think sometimes unlimited resources isn’t the answer, the answer is what you’ve got and how you use it, and I think how brave you are as well about taking some of those risks... I mean the answer is really you know, society is to take a far greater responsibility for the young people that live in its communities and I think in a way that you can’t really do that by chucking money at it.”

(Senior practitioner)

This view was not shared by the majority however, who viewed unlimited finance, or “sufficient finance”, as key to achieving the success they were required to at PYOS:

“I think we can demonstrate over the last ten years that youth offending teams up and down the country have been able to have an impact on the offending rates of young people, and that takes time, and it takes people, and it takes money to do that, and the problem is its short-sighted of the government to bring in all these cuts where actually it could have an impact on your ability to maintain that. If we were to go on as we have been, we might have been able to reduce it, when I say we I don’t mean we as just us here in Peterborough as a service nationally, could actually bring that further
down. But yeah, that’s my problem, they want to do everything on the cheap, and its short-sighted and it’s a false economy, because in the long run what we have achieved is manageable and we could sustain that change, but with the resources that we’ve lost, and the staff that we’ve lost, the chances are that the stuff that we’ve been doing to try and stop the young people coming into the criminal justice system is gonna start to flounder, and the cost of them being in the criminal justice system is much, much, higher than the cost of running a YOS, so that’s just a false econ.. but being government ministers they’ll blame that on somebody else.”

8.3.5 Joined-up work
As discussed in chapter six, practitioners raised concern regarding the working relationship with social services; this was further highlighted in the core case inspection (HMIP, 2012). Practitioners re-emphasised this as an area for improvement:

“I think more for all the agencies to be more joined-up in what they do, we’re quite lucky with youth offending being multi-agency, there’s a lot of other people outside and other agencies who don’t fully understand what we’re doing. And social care are not as joined-up as what they should be with some of the kids that we work with.”

(YJO)

“More investment in the actual on the ground, what we’re doing, in terms of the actual programme delivery, although I quite like that we can be flexible, as a team we’ve got access to psychologists and mental health workers and social workers and substance misuse workers and that works perfectly. But links with social services we would need, locally.”

(Senior practitioner)

One practitioner stated that decisions were being made by professionals which did not have the needs of young people at the core of the changes:

“Social workers push it all on us now, so we’re doing loads of things, that ya know, we’ve got too much to do. It’s just the same old thing really, everything’s based on money in the end, social services, kids, accommodation, decisions that are made by social services about accommodation, ya know, I need to say this, decisions that are made by professional people based on, and this is not this organisation necessarily, money and they’re not in the interest of the young people, and at the end of the day when you look at why the
decisions are made they’re all about resources and money and not about the needs of young people.”

8.3.5.i Restorative justice

Restorative justice was receiving increased attention at PYOS, particularly through the SORTED programme, as discussed in section 6.5.3.i. Practitioners highlighted work with victims as an area of importance to them, “using restorative justice is important, I don’t think we use that as much as we should.” Increasing the involvement of victims in programmes of intervention, where appropriate, was emphasised by many practitioners, especially YJOs, who perceived restorative justice conferences as “really effective” and “quite powerful”, whilst acknowledging that there are potential barriers to involving victims, “obviously if the victim doesn’t want to take part then that’s sometimes the barrier.”

8.3.5.ii Reparation

Reparation was a cause for concern for practitioners at PYOS as there was only one reparation option accessible to practitioners in Peterborough, *Froglife*. Practitioners emphasised the need for more projects which offered a range of options to the young people which they worked with:

“Much better reparation projects... if a young person has committed a crime it’s very difficult especially if they’ve got learning disabilities or are not particularly good in terms of their understanding, it’s hard for them to see in terms of them going down to froglife is punishment or community payback for their offence, ya know... reparation schemes should be much more creative, ya know something that really meets their needs.”

Practitioners were cautious in their approach to reparation however, whilst stating that reparation was needed, especially with specific links to the offence committed and needs of the young person involved, there were safety issues to consider:

“I’d probably do more specific reparation to the crime and try and work with the community a bit more, perhaps, if it was safe.”

8.3.5.iii Mental health

Practitioners emphasised the need to “involve child and adolescent mental health services much more” as there are “so many mental health problems now” and it is important to
“make sure the ones that need the referrals to mental health diversion, are diverted to them, because a lot of the kids are quite angry, so need that help.” It was stated by a number of practitioners that in the past there were so many young people with substance misuse issues, whereas now:

“mental health has kind of taken over, and there are so many learning disabilities, and so much depression, and so much social anxiety, and all of these are impacting on young people’s offending. Even schizophrenia, we’re seeing signs of that, psychosis is quite common as well and I think it’s really important to build those mental health services so that they’re getting a really good service early on, then maybe we wouldn’t see the adults with the really entrenched mental health problems.”

8.3.6 Setting

A common criticism from practitioners was that the setting of the programme of intervention was sometimes perceived as inappropriate to have an effective impact. Many talked about having “a nice building with proper spaces within which to work with young people, that we’re well equipped.” The work of positive activities, particularly through sports was highlighted as an area for high praise from all practitioners, further emphasised in discussions regarding unlimited resources:

“It would be fantastic if we could have everything in-house. If we had workshops, a big sports hall, gym in there, everything you need, because we literally have to ship them out to NACRO and go to different places and they’re not always ideal. But if we could have something where the young people could actually come to us, and we could say we’ve got a music workshop going on here, we’ve got the gym there, we’ve got this there, and they could stay with us, they’re not gonna go to mainstream school. So if you had brick-laying in-house, and music dj-ing, you could get people in to do courses, outside you could have an astro-turf. That to me is how it would work in youth offending in the real world. That’s what I’d do.”

The development and addition of up-to-date technology was also highlighted as an important adaption if resources were not restricted:

“It would be very nice just to have some more effective and modern technology within this particular service. I mean some YOTs have got some quite good access to technology, and some parts of children’s services have
got good access to technology as well, and ya know, social workers can work from home, can access things from their vehicles, and of course from here were very much stuck. I would like to do something to allow more flexible working for staff, because it’s a pain in the arse to have to come into work all the time, when in fact you can be more effective maybe doing it somewhere else, so some investment around that.”

8.3.7 Administration
Administration was addressed by all practitioners as cause for concern, and the separation of their role and administrative work was highlighted as an important change. “Well ideally we’d have admin people to do all of the admin work, so that you wouldn’t have to do any of that.” As one practitioner emphasised, “doing admin is a pain in the backside, it’s a bit of a waste really of my skills.” One practitioner summed up how this might be set up:

“I think it would be really good to set up 2 teams as such, one to write-up the reports and do the assessments, and one to do the one-to-one work. I’m not saying people should stick to them teams but rotate round them, because it’s hard to juggle both, and if you were able to concentrate for example 6 months on delivering the actual sessions and the work with the young person, and doing the assessments and writing the reports, then both areas would be much better met. Without good assessment the work we do is pointless, we don’t always have the time to do the good assessments so I think that would be really good.”

8.3.8 Family
Working more closely with the family and building services regarding family support were raised by a number of practitioners as a key area of development:

“Build parenting services completely, I think that’s the way forward, I mean, what we give to young people in supervision sessions is that one hour a week, or two, or three hours maximum really, ya know, if we did more work with the parents that’s all day every day, that that young person’s got that support, so I would definitely, definitely build that.”

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, practitioners highlighted the beliefs and values of young people as a key factor in committing offences and being drawn into the criminal justice system. This was further advocated by practitioners:
“I would have bigger involvement with families, because I think quite often when we’re working with young people here, if they’re going back to a family environment where the belief and value system is actually contrary to what we’re trying to do here, that just it takes away everything you’ve done, and the family is stronger than we are, so ya know I’d do an awful lot more with families.”

8.3.9 Decrease use of custody
Increased community-based programmes which would replace the use of custodial sentences were advocated by some practitioners:

“Lots more so they don’t have go to prison, I think prison is not working for particularly young people, ya know, build a lot more services in the community that are gonna be comparable in terms of the kind of punishment level that they would get in prison, and the money that they saved on that could pump into, paying off employers to get them better jobs, yeah lots of different things, lots of activities.”

Although, maintaining a form of discipline was deemed very important by a number of practitioners:

“I’d have them set up some form of, not bad lads army as such, but that kind of set up where young people have discipline and, as opposed to perhaps custody. They actually have to get up early and do stuff to, that kind of thing.”

8.4 Conclusion
This chapter has highlighted practitioners’ views and perceptions of young people in contemporary society and what they would do in practice if there were no restrictions on resources. It was the overwhelming view of practitioners that the majority of young people do not offend in society, whilst acknowledging that working with offender’s on a daily basis presents a bias view of young people generally. In relation to those who do offend, practitioners believed this to be a complex process with many different factors, each unique to individual young people; however, positive family support and upbringing which provides young people with boundaries and expectations, and reinforces values and beliefs, was viewed as a critical factor. It is clear from the response of practitioners that their views are underpinned by the risk factor prevention paradigm, as all of their highlighted reasons for young people offending related directly to the areas of risk identified on the asset tool.
Practitioners were hopeful in their assertion that PYOS has a positive impact on the young people it works with. Whilst claiming that “no youth offending team solves all the problems”, practitioners were cautious on what impact they were having, as they felt they did not have enough one-to-one time with the young people. Furthermore, practitioners spoke with regret at the number of young people they see returning to the service once an order is complete, due to reoffending.

In response to having unlimited resources, there was very clear agreement between practitioners responses as to the key areas of focus: programme development, staff training and development, and improved education, training and employment opportunities for referring young people. Practitioners further expressed that they did not believe money to be the answer, despite the current climate of budget cuts which has led to staff losses and increased caseloads for many practitioners at PYOS. Of course, unlimited resource is a dream situation, and highly unrealistic. However, it allows for an open-field and allows practitioners to think about the most ideal situation. It is somewhat compelling to see that none of the practitioners interviewed spoke of endless money, rather they focused on having high quality programmes, with a high standard of referral mechanisms both internally and externally, which joined up agencies more coherently. Furthermore, staff development and training was high on the agenda for practitioners, not only for current staff but a more rigorous recruitment process which would enable the best practitioners to be appointed.

The proceeding chapter will draw together the key arguments of this research, and reflect on the research questions to provide concluding thoughts, and future direction for research, policy and practice.
Chapter 9
Practitioners in the youth justice system

9.1 Introduction
The scarcity of research which addresses micro-level accounts of practitioners working in youth justice was the foundation for this case study of PYOS. There is very little understanding of how knowledge and research of effective intervention(s) with young offenders is applied in practice. This study has argued that knowledge (what is known about effective practice) is not applied effectively in practice. Practitioners face many challenges and obstacles in youth justice to carry out their work efficiently, within the risk factor prevention approach. Questions are raised regarding the use of professional discretion and the accountability of practitioners working with young offenders, within a perceived managerialist process which neglects individuals’ needs in favour of achieving targets and performance measures (see section 2.5.1). Furthermore, the use of standardised assessment tools has received much criticism, as they increase accountability whilst reducing practitioners professional discretion (see section 3.4). It is argued that high accountability and low discretion constrain practice (Eadie and Canton, 2002). The findings of this study support this view. In addition, this study raises questions challenging the risk factor prevention approach underpinning youth justice practice, arguing that it creates confusion between the correlation and causation of risk factors and offending behaviour, and does not address the underlying causes of offending behaviour (see section 2.4).

Furthermore, previous studies of YOTs focusing on organisational analyses (see section 2.5) have highlighted the importance of understanding the fluid interaction between political, structural and cultural elements on practice within the YOT environment. These studies further advocate the importance of understanding these elements from the perspective of the practitioner, who is active in constructing their own environment within.

This chapter will revisit the research questions and present a discussion of the empirical chapters (five to eight). In addition, the practical implications of the research will be discussed along with some concluding thoughts.
9.2 The application of knowledge in youth justice practice: the need to address the causes of crime

9.2.1 Application of knowledge in the youth justice system

Research suggests that effective interventions are based on: careful assessment; linked to established need and are individually appropriate; have some focus on cognitive skills; are multi-modal; contain an element of reparation; are delivered as designed; and have long-term contact and engagement time (see section 3.2). This thesis has argued that the risk factor prevention model is not applied to youth justice intervention as the research literature suggests. Whilst practitioners were aware of the identified elements of effective practice, there were many constraints which obstructed the successful implementation of these factors, most notably assessment procedures.

Conducting assessment took up a significant amount of practitioners time (see sections 5.4.3v; 6.2). For one individual case, practitioners could spend days trying to get in touch with young people and their parents to undertake initial assessment interviews. Depending on the number of reports which needed to be completed for an individual case, practitioners could spend an entire day, per case, inputting the information into the computer system (YOIS). Practitioners spent the majority of their time completing administrative tasks; collecting information for reports, contacting agencies, consulting with staff in-house, reviewing any previous records held about the young people, arranging appointments, sending reminder letters, SMS messages, or phone calls to young people, and chasing up missed appointments. In contrast, the time spent planning programmes and packages of intervention, and working face-to-face with young people were minimal (see section 6.3). This was further confounded by young people not attending intervention sessions, leading practitioners back into the administrative trail of getting in touch with them to rearrange appointments; contributing to poor delivery of programmes and packages of intervention (see section 6.4). This supports the argument that professional roles in youth justice are becoming increasingly de-skilled and professional discretion is being reduced, which constrains practice (see section 3.4).

Research suggests that CBT is an effective method of offender-oriented intervention (see section 3.2). Practitioners spoke of using CBT-based intervention at PYOS. However, training in CBT and programme and packages which had CBT foundations were lacking at PYOS (see
Furthermore, PYOS had access to only one reparation project (see section 6.5.4i), which restricted practitioners' ability to build-in reparation elements to intervention plans. Practitioners raised issue with sentence lengths as prescribed by the courts, which they believed were invariably too long or too short in duration, having a direct impact on intervention planning and managing the challenges and obstacles they faced throughout (see chapter six). Ultimately, this leads back to the question of whether the needs of young people are being met by such intervention (see section 3.5.2). In practice, it appears that individual needs are not being met, due to the poor implementation methods adopted. In addition, practitioners constantly met obstructions throughout the process of intervention (as discussed in chapter six and seven). Practitioners' work was further confounded by performance measurement issues, discussed in more detail later in this chapter (see section 9.3).

**9.2.2 Practitioners views on unrestricted practice**

As part of the interview schedule, practitioners were asked what they would do with unlimited time, finance, and resource (see section 8.3). There was clear agreement between practitioners’ responses as to the key areas of focus: programme development, staff training and development, and improved education, training and employment opportunities for referring young people. Despite the current budget cuts which resulted in organisational restructuring and staff redundancies, practitioners stated that unlimited money was not the solution to improving practice. Rather, they saw improvements to structural mechanisms being the foremost proponent of positive change. For example, improving the referral mechanisms both internally and externally; more coherent working with other agencies; staff development. Practitioners’ responses also aligned with some of the deeper cultural issues which were apparent within PYOS. Calls for a more rigorous recruitment process, which would enable the best practitioners to be appointed, was advocated by many practitioners. This appeared to be rooted in the criticism of colleagues’ skills and abilities (see section 7.5.2).

Whilst practitioners addressed a number of ways they would work with young offenders if there were no restrictions, the foundations of the work carried out by practitioners, and whether the work they were doing was actually targeting the underlying causes of offending behaviour, was not addressed. This further supported one of the key arguments of the
thesis, that knowledge about the differences between correlation and causation between risk factors and offending needs to be communicated to practitioners efficiently.

9.2.3 Practitioner views on young people

Practitioners were asked about their views on young people’s behaviour, needs and reasons for offending, and the impact they felt PYOS had on young people’s behaviour (see section 8.2). The general view of practitioners was that the majority of young people do not offend, and that it is only the minority that commit offences. Reasons given by practitioners, as to why young people commit offences, were framed within the risk reduction model. Practitioners described this as a complex process involving many factors, although positive family support and upbringing which provides young people with boundaries and expectations, and reinforces values and beliefs, was viewed as a critical factor. This is highlighted in the risk factor literature as a key predictor to future offending (see section 2.4), and is one of the assessment areas identified by asset (see section 3.4).

Practitioners were cautious in their responses to the impact PYOS has on young people’s behaviour, referring to the lack of time spent working one-to-one with young people, and the disappointment of seeing a number of the young people return to the service for further offences. Practitioners were hopeful that PYOS was having an impact, however they remained doubtful that much success was being achieved. These issues are discussed in the next sections.

9.2.4 Rethinking risk factor prevention in the youth justice system

This study has indicated that the risk factor prevention paradigm underpinning youth justice practice is not addressing the root causes of offending behaviour (see section 2.4). The research evidence suggests that youth justice practitioners cannot be expected to have a significant, positive impact upon a young person’s offending behaviour if the interventions they are delivering are not founded on a model which identifies the causes of offending behaviour. A leading expert on risk factors, David Farrington, has advocated that “little is known about the causal processes that intervene between risk factors and offending” (Farrington, 2003: 207). Correlations between risk factors and offending fail to address the underlying causes, and provide explanation (Wikström, 2007). Of course, even if such causes were known, any intervention which follows would have to be carefully designed,
implemented and delivered in accordance with those identified causes, to ensure what is being targeted is actually being addressed in an intervention (see section 3.3).

For the process of intervention in youth justice to be successful it is crucial that knowledge of the *causes of crime* is taken seriously. This knowledge should be applied in consultation with key academics and researchers, policy-makers and practitioners, to ensure that programmes and interventions have a sound theoretical underpinning, are proven effective through appropriate evaluation procedures, and are implemented and delivered as they were designed. Youth justice intervention *must* address the causes of offending behaviour in order to change that behaviour.

### 9.3 National standards and professional discretion: more recording, less work with young people

It has been argued in this thesis that while youth justice practitioners are guided by national standards during the design, implementation and delivery of programmes and packages of intervention with young people, the lack of professional discretion appears to dominate practitioners work. As Eadie and Canton (2002: 19) state, “effective work with young offenders requires much more than managing, improving and accounting for performance levels.”

A key finding of this study is that the pressure on practitioners to record, and be accountable for, their assessments and reports on YOIS, detracts from the practical work they carry out with young people. Practitioners raised issue with not having enough time to work with young people, attributing this to the amount of time spent completing assessments and inputting information into YOIS (see section 6.2). This was a time-consuming task, as with some cases there are many reports to complete. In addition, pressure from management on practitioners to keep YOIS updated, led practitioners to focus their energy on the recording side of their role. The result of this was that the same amount of time was not spent on planning, designing and delivering programmes and packages of intervention with young people. Arguably the most important part of the role, the face-to-face contact time with the young people, was secondary to recording information on YOIS.
Despite the huge emphasis placed on the assessment process, practitioners relied on ad hoc programmes and packages for intervention, due to the reduced time they had to plan (section 6.5). This again raised the question of whether the individual needs of the young person were being met by the selected programme or package of intervention. Practitioners were evidently working within a system which placed more emphasis on ensuring what they were doing was recorded (on YOIS) appropriately, and less concerned that the needs of the young person were being addressed. This supports the literature asserting that a managerialist culture in youth justice is compromising practitioners professional discretion (see section 2.5.1).

However, this does not mean that practitioners did not care about the needs of young people they worked with. Practitioners were unanimous in expressing their desire to work more closely with young people and address their needs more efficiently (see chapter eight). The nature of the intervention process, through a strong emphasis on assessment and management pressure to ensure all work was recorded on YOIS, placed a lot of pressure on practitioners. Ultimately increasing the accountability of their work, and reducing their professional discretion.

Yet, management paid little attention to the practical work which was being undertaken by practitioners, and what this work was or was not achieving. It is of further concern that this may be driven by inspectorate measures. Core case inspections undertaken by HMIP focus on recorded data, not the practical aspects of delivery. Inspectors spend only a few days with the YOT, and review case files (see section 5.3.1). However, much emphasis was placed on the results of such inspections, as they affect both funding and external perception of the YOT. As one senior manager stated “I always have one eye on the media these days”, relating to the potential damage bad press could do to the service, particularly after an inspection. There were evidently political and structural pressures being placed on management, which affected the culture within the YOT.

**9.4 Political, structural and cultural influence on YOT practice**

Political, structural and cultural concepts are extremely broad in nature, and this thesis cannot fully address the complex mechanisms which interact both within, and between them. However, this research has argued that PYOS practice was at its most strained since
being introduced in 2000, due to national and local policy changes, which affected the structure and culture within the YOS (see chapters five, six and seven).

PYOS faced budget reductions of twenty four per cent, the largest the YOS has ever faced (see section 5.5). As a result of the budget cuts, PYOS had been forced to restructure and reorganise its workforce. Enforced staff redundancies contributed to staff numbers dropping to their lowest since 2003 – 04 (see section 5.4.3). The restructure further forced specialist workers and management into case management roles, as the number of YJOs had reduced. In addition, senior management was drawn further away from the operational management of PYOS and diverted to focus on the strategic development of the service (see section 7.3). Furthermore, operational functions of PYOS were distributed between middle management, some of whom were working part-time and also managing cases. In sum, this resulted in the micro-management of practitioners being significantly reduced, as managers became stretched between broader operational management, supervision and case management. The structural support mechanisms for practitioners at PYOS were evidently weakened (see section 7.4). Practitioners increasingly felt unsupported by management, which negatively affected their motivation for carrying out their role (see section 7.6). Reduced opportunity for personal and professional development within PYOS represented a further demotivating factor for practitioners. Furthermore, training was disorganised and severely lacking within the service (see section 7.7).

The lack of clarity between management and practitioners in the YOS was a real cause for concern. Managers were increasingly focusing on recording issues and performance measurement, whilst practitioners were frustrated by the lack of direction and support provided for the practical elements of the work they carried out. There was an attitude of “you’ve been around, you can work it out” which appeared to further increase the growing divide between managers and practitioners, and create a split culture within the YOS (see sections 7.4; 7.7). This also contributed to apparent sub-cultures within PYOS, whereby practitioners did not share the limited programmes and packages or resources that they had, and increasingly raised concerns about the abilities of their colleagues, attributing this to poor recruitment and selection decisions by managers (see section 7.5.2).
Whilst the current study provided a case study of PYOS from the perspective of the core practitioners, predominately YJOs, it would be desirable to embody the wider political, structural and cultural context in more detail. For example, the wider children’s services setting, within which the YOT is a part. Furthermore, community partnerships and external agencies should be researched in deeper detail.

9.5 Practical implications
The current study has focused on one YOT, which allowed for detailed analysis of the professional environment and practitioners day-to-day work. Furthermore, a number of the themes discussed here are generalisable to other YOTs, as they examine the system underpinning practice, which is rolled out nationally to all YOTs. The limitations come with regard to the local context. As the governance of YOTs becomes increasingly localised, it is important to understand and interpret localised contexts, to generalise the implications of this research to a national level.

This study has argued that knowledge (what is known about effective practice) is not applied consistently or effectively in practice. A more accurate and consistent application of this knowledge suggests a significant increase in effective practice (as highlighted in chapter three). The most appropriate method of connecting this knowledge to core practitioners is through training. Training should be conducted by certified trainers with knowledge and expertise in the area of focus, with additional booster sessions which ensure periodic and continuous education and training programmes for practitioners and managers (see section 3.6). Practice can be positively influenced and shaped by well-informed staff with the requisite skills, knowledge and expertise to delivering a high standard of service. In a climate of uncertainty for the youth offending service (YOS), in which doubts about the future of the youth justice board are frequently raised and increasing cuts are made to YOS budgets, there is increased need for well-informed and skilled practitioners to be working with young people who offend.

Important questions have been raised by this research about the risk prevention model underpinning youth justice practice, and the success it can expect to have on young people’s offending behaviour. This is a major issue for future policy and practice, which needs addressing efficiently if any improvement to the current youth justice system is to be made.
When the fundamental model is reformed to address the underlying causes of young people’s offending behaviour, changes can then be made to the structural mechanisms to deliver it.

9.6 Concluding comments

Empirical research addressing youth justice practice from practitioners perspectives is sparse. This thesis adds to the small number of empirical studies conducted (see sections 2.5.1; 2.5.2; 2.5.3). Questions are raised regarding the extent intervention should be made into the lives of young people who break rules. The assumption is that intervening in young law breaker’s lives makes a positive difference, through which prevention of further offending can be achieved. The current study identifies the issues of the risk prevention model underpinning youth justice in England and Wales. The focus is on managing the risk of offending behaviour, and not addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour. In addition, practitioners face a multitude of obstructions to their work with young people. Many of these obstructions seem to be rooted in the prioritisation of recording information and meeting targets, which results in less time attributed to planning and delivering interventions. Consequently, ad hoc programmes and packages are used, which raises further questions as to whether the needs of young people are being met through such intervention. It is vital that policy-makers acknowledge a fundamental change in youth justice policy and practice, which not only addresses the underlying causes of offending behaviour, but takes into consideration the detailed accounts of practitioners working with young people in the youth justice system.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Letter of proposed research

Daniel Marshall,
Doctoral Researcher,
Institute of Criminology,
University of Cambridge,
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge.
CB3 9DA

Tel: +44 (0) 1223 767364
Mobile: +44 (0) 1234567890
Fax: +44 (0) 1223 335356
Email: djm210@cam.ac.uk

(Name)
Head of Peterborough Youth Offending Service,
13 - 15 Cavell Court,
Lincoln Road,
Peterborough,
PE1 2RJ

11th March 2009

Dear (Name),

I am contacting you with regard to a new study of young people’s needs in the youth justice system, which I am undertaking at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge.

The proposed research is towards my PhD thesis and will be based within the Peterborough Adolescent Development Study (PADS+), providing independent data / information on the effectiveness of criminal justice interventions in young people’s offending, in Peterborough. Numerous research and commentary, most specifically recently the YJB, highlight the lack of research on staff characteristics; therefore it appears essential for future research to focus on this area. The proposed research will explore the needs of young people who have offended, and to what extent current policy and practice supports young people’s specific criminogenic needs. After recent communication with [practitioner], it became apparent
that Peterborough YOS is particularly keen to develop practice to effectively support young people’s needs; furthermore, the Peterborough Youth Justice Plan 2007/08 outlines the commitment to training. The proposed research aims to address these issues and would fit well with Peterborough YOS’ vision.

In order to achieve the aims of the proposed study, it is essential that certain access and information is available. I propose that the following information and details would be invaluable in order to advance the research as soon as possible:

- A plan of the workforce structure for Peterborough YOS
- Information regarding the funding / resources for Peterborough YOS
- Information regarding staff turnover (as far back as possible)
- Information regarding staff details (employment, education histories – possibly from CVs / application form)

In addition to these details, from September / October 2009 it would be extremely beneficial to the research if the following were accessible:

- The possibility of being present at meetings / interventions with young people – possibly videoing sessions
- The possibility of attending staff meetings
- Interviews with staff (as many as practicable)

I envisage these elements of the research taking up to 12 months (October 2009 to September 2010); although I will endeavour to be completed before this date. The final write up of my PhD thesis is projected to be October 2011.

I am keen to come and meet you to discuss the research in more detail, and how Peterborough YOS could be involved, including the potential benefits to the team. I can be contacted at the above address / telephone / email; or alternatively through the PADS+ team. If you have any questions regarding this please do not hesitate to get in touch with either myself or my supervisor Professor P-O Wikström pow20@cam.ac.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Daniel Marshall
Doctoral Researcher,
Institute of Criminology,
University of Cambridge
Appendix 2
Letter of informed consent

Interview Information and Consent Form

**Researcher:** Daniel J. Marshall, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge. CB3 9DA

Tel: +44 (0) 1223 335360  
Mobile: +44 (0) 123456789  
Fax: +44 (0) 1223 335356  
Email: djm210@cam.ac.uk

**Supervisor:** Professor P.O. Wikström, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge. CB3 9DA

**Purpose:** The research, towards my PhD thesis, will explore the needs of young people who have offended, and to what extent current policy and practice support them; looking specifically at the processes and resources used by the Youth Offending Service (YOS), the views of practitioners, and the views of the young people who are the recipients of programmes of intervention in the YOS.

**Requirements:** It is essential to speak to those people who have direct contact with young people at Peterborough Youth Offending Service, those who are involved in the intervention process, and others who are connected with training and resources. Interviews, conducted in a private office, can last between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, dependent on the availability and interest of the participant. Interviews will be audio-taped, with your permission. The tape-recorder may be turned off at any point during the interview at your request.

**Access:** The researcher (Daniel Marshall) will require access to staff records (i.e. initial application, C.V., Human Resources records, case diaries), this is in order to extract statistical and case data.

**Confidentiality:** All information provided by the participant will be treated with strict confidentiality; anonymity will be protected at all times. Data will be used in publications and conference presentations; no individual will be identified at any point. Recordings and transcriptions will only be seen by the researcher (Daniel Marshall) and supervisor (Professor P.O. Wikström). Interviews are coded and names are never associated with responses.
Storage of Data: Data, recordings and transcriptions, will be securely stored at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. Access will be bestowed upon the researcher (Daniel Marshall) and supervisor (Professor P.O. Wikström) only. Once transcribed, recordings will be immediately destroyed. The study will adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Potential Benefits: The research may prove useful in allowing staff to reflect on their practice, and the way resources are used in the YOS; potentially improving future practice.

Right to Withdraw: Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study for any reason, without penalty of any kind.

Questions: Please feel free to ask any questions before, during or, after the interview. Please contact the researcher using any of the contact details above.

Consent Agreement: I am taking part in this confidential research interview on a voluntary basis. It is my decision to participate. I have read and understood the information form above, and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

__________________________________________
Signature of participant Date

__________________________________________
Signature of researcher (Daniel Marshall) Date
Appendix 3  
*Demographic information and organisational commitment questionnaire (given to all interviewees)*

Participant No: ..............  
Date / Time: .................

**Section A: Demographic information**

The following information is needed to help with the statistical analyses of the data. This information will allow comparisons among different groups of employees and comparisons with similar employees in other organisations. All of your responses are strictly confidential; individual responses will not be seen by anyone within this organisation. Your help is much appreciated in providing this information.

Please answer each of the questions below by marking the number next to the description which best fits you or by writing in the correct information.

1. **Are you – (tick one)**  
   [1] Female  

2. **What is your current marital status?**  
   [1] Married  
   [3] Separated  
   [4] Divorced  
   [5] Never Married

3. **How old were you on your last birthday?**  
   ________ years

4. **Is your income the primary source of financial support for your immediate family?**  
   [1] Yes  
   [2] No

5. **How many dependents do you have (others who depend on your income for financial support)?**  
   ________ dependents

6. **When did you first come to work for Peterborough Youth Offending Service?**  
   ________, ________  
   month       year

7. **When did you start your current role for Peterborough Youth Offending Service?**  
   ________, ________  
   month       year
8. What is your role title at the YOT
   [1] YJO
   [2] Resource Worker
   [3] Team Leader
   [4] YOT Manager
   [5] Other

Please Specify........................................................................................................
.....................................................................................................................................

9. Where do you mainly meet with young people: at their home, at the YOT, or at other locations?
   – (Please tick all that apply)
   [1] Home
   [2] YOT
   [3] School / Pupil Referral Unit or educational establishment
   [4] Other location (external agency / public premises)

Please Specify........................................................................................................
.....................................................................................................................................

10. How many cases do you have ongoing at present? (If leaving organisation, number of cases in the past month?)

    ________ cases

11. Which of the following salary ranges is nearest to your total income from your job last year?
   [1] Under £,4,000
   [2] £4,000 - 5,999
   [3] £6,000 – 7,999
   [4] £8,000 – 9,999
   [5] £10,000 – 12,999
   [6] £13,000 – 15,999
   [7] £16,000 – 19,999
   [8] £20,000 – 24,999
   [9] £25,000 – or more
## Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
<th>Other Ethnic Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other British</td>
<td>White and Black African</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>White and Asian</td>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Any other Black background:</td>
<td>Any other:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other white background:</td>
<td>Any other mixed background:</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Any other Asian Background:</td>
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</table>

12. Which of these qualifications do you have? (Please tick all that apply)

- 1+ O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades)
- 5+ O levels, 5+ CSEs (grade 1), 5+ GCSEs (A*-C), School Certificate
- 1+ A levels/AS levels
- 2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate
- First Degree (eg BA, BSc)
- Higher Degree (eg MA, PhD, PGCE, Post-graduate qualification/diplomas
- NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ
- NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ
- NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ
- NVQ level 4-5, HNC, HND
- Other Qualifications (e.g. City and Guilds, RSA/OCR, BTEC/Edexcel)
  Please Specify...................................................................................................................

No Qualifications

Section B: Organisational commitment questionnaire


Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organisation for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the Peterborough Youth Offending Service please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the four alternatives next to each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel very little loyalty to this organisation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find that my values and the organisation’s values are very similar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar.</td>
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<td>This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.</td>
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<td>It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation.</td>
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<td>I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.</td>
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<td>There’s not too much to be gained by sticking with this organisation indefinitely.</td>
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<td>Often. I find it difficult to agree with this organisation’s policies on important matters relating to its employees.</td>
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<td>I really care about the fate of this organisation.</td>
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<td>For me this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.</td>
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<td>Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.</td>
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</table>
13. Can you tell me about your background? How you came to work in the role you do now?

In the table below please state your previous employment, starting with the most recent (current employer). Additional sheets are available if required.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Employer:</td>
<td>Dates from/to:</td>
<td>Position held:</td>
<td>Brief Outline of Duties:</td>
<td>Reason for leaving:</td>
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14. What training have you received since joining this service?

In the table below please state your previous training, starting with the most recent (any current training). Additional sheets are available if required.

<table>
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<th>TRAINING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Provider:</td>
<td>Dates from/to:</td>
<td>Training Title:</td>
<td>Brief Outline of Training:</td>
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Appendix 4

Interview schedule (YJOs and specialist staff)

Section C - Intervention Planning and Young People

1. Do you complete an Asset for every young person?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

2. Typical time taken to complete an initial Asset?
   _______ Minutes / hours

3. How do you typically put intervention plans together?

4. What are the typical uses of Asset when putting together intervention plans?

5. How do young people typically contribute to their intervention plans?

6. What typical obstacles do you encounter when planning for supervision sessions?

Packages and programmes refers to any manuals / worksheets / session plans YOU have for use on a one-to-one / group sessions with young people at PYOS

7. What resources (packages and programmes) do YOU have to address the needs of young people? Which ones do you use? Which ones do you rarely or never use?

8. What factors do you think have an impact on a young person’s response to a typical intervention?
   a) Prompt: for example, who runs it,
   b) Prompt: who else is involved?
   c) Prompt: where the intervention/programme is held,
   d) Prompt: access/distance/transport,
   e) Prompt: offering rewards or qualifications?

9. How do you typically determine whether a session (or series of sessions) has been successful in terms of their stated aims?

10. What are your thoughts on the behaviour of young people in contemporary society?
11. What impact do you think PYOS has on young people’s behaviour?

12. What do you think the needs of young people are?

13. Why do you think young people offend?

14. Do you think that you have sufficient time to work effectively with young people? What (if any) factors obstruct this?
   a. Prompt: caseloads,
   b. Prompt: travel,
   c. Prompt: administration,
   d. Prompt: length of interventions

15. Do you think you have sufficient tools to address the full range of needs being presented by the case load? What (if any) problems are there with existing tools? What (if any) tools would you like to have?

16. Do you think there are any key gaps in the available services and programmes at PYOS? What (if any) do you think these are?

17. How useful do you think structured programmes are?

Section D - Your PYOS Role

1. How has your current role changed in the time you have been in the post?

2. What do you believe are the key goals of your role?

3. Do you think that what is expected of you is attainable?

4. Do you see any problems in doing what you are being asked to do?

5. Are you getting the challenge, recognition, feedback, and enjoyment that you want from your job?
Supervision

6. How often do you have formal supervision sessions with your line manager?

7. How do you plan for supervision sessions with your line manager? What is covered? Structured?

8. Typically how often do you meet with your line manager beyond the formal supervision sessions? How is that structured?

9. If you had no restrictions on finance, time, and resources what would you do with the money, time, and resources?
Appendix 5
Interview schedule (Managers)

Section C – Supervision, Intervention Planning and Young People

Supervision
1. How many members of staff do you supervise? How many of these are case managers?

2. How often do you have formal supervision sessions with your team members?

3. How do you plan for supervision sessions with members of your team? What is covered? Structured?

4. Typically how often do you meet with members of your team beyond the formal supervision sessions?

Intervention Planning
5. How should intervention plans typically be put together?

6. How do you typically contribute to intervention plans?

7. How should young people typically contribute to their intervention plans?

8. What typical obstacles are encountered when putting together intervention plans?

Packages and programmes refers to any manuals / worksheets / session plans YOU have for use on a one-to-one / group sessions with young people at PYOS

9. What resources (packages and programmes) are available at PYOS to address the needs of young people? Which ones do you use? Which ones do you rarely or never use?

10. What factors do you think have an impact on a young person’s response to a typical intervention?
    f) Prompt: for example, who runs it,  
    g) Prompt: who else is involved?  
    h) Prompt: where the intervention/programme is held,  
    i) Prompt: access/distance/transport,  
    j) Prompt: offering rewards or qualifications?

11. How should case managers typically determine whether a session (or series of sessions) has been successful in terms of their stated aims?

12. What are your thoughts on the behaviour of young people in contemporary society?
13. What impact do you think PYOS has on young people’s behaviour?

14. What do you think the needs of young people are?

Why do you think young people offend?

15. Do you think that your team have sufficient time to work effectively with young people? What (if any) factors obstruct this?
   a. Prompt: caseloads.
   b. Prompt: travel.
   c. Prompt: administration.
   d. Prompt: length of interventions.

16. Do you think your team have sufficient tools to address the full range of needs being presented by the case load? What (if any) problems are there with existing tools? What (if any) tools would you like to have?

17. Do you think there are any key gaps in the available services and programmes at PYOS? What (if any) do you think these are?

Section D - Your PYOS Role

10. How has your current role changed in the time you have been in the post?

11. What do you believe are the key goals of your role?

12. Do you think that what is expected of you is attainable?

13. Do you see any problems / difficulties in doing what you are being asked to do?

14. Are you getting the challenge, recognition, feedback, and enjoyment that you want from your job?

Supervision

15. How often do you have formal supervision sessions with your line manager?

16. How do you plan for supervision sessions with your line manager? What is covered? Structured?
17. Typically how often do you meet with your line manager beyond the formal supervision sessions? How is that structured?

18. If you had no restrictions on finance, time, and resources what would you do with the money, time, and resources?