DEVELOPING THE WORK OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST IN A YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM.

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Educational Psychology
in the Faculty of Humanities

2013

Helen Wyton

School of Education
# List of Contents

List of Tables .................................................................................................................9  
List of Figures ..................................................................................................................9  
Abstract ..............................................................................................................................10  
Declaration ..........................................................................................................................11  
Copyright Statement .........................................................................................................12  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................13  
Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................14  
Chapter 1 Introduction ......................................................................................................17  
  1.1 Background and Context ..............................................................................................17  
  1.2 Aim of the Study ..........................................................................................................19  
  1.3 Structure of the Thesis .................................................................................................22  
Chapter 2 Youth Offending Teams ..................................................................................24  
  2.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................24  
  2.2 Youth Offending Teams: Who are They and What Do They Do? ............................24  
  2.3 Asset ............................................................................................................................26  
  2.4 The Youth Rehabilitation Order and the Scaled Approach ........................................29  
  2.5 SEN and Asset ............................................................................................................32  
  2.6 The Role of the Education Worker Within YOTs .........................................................34  
  2.7 The Role of the Educational Psychologist Within a Youth Offending Team .............36  
  2.8 Summary and Conclusions ..........................................................................................37
Chapter 3 Prevalence of Special Educational Needs .................................................39

3.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................39
3.2 Definitions ........................................................................................................39
3.3 Prevalence of Special Educational Needs Within the Criminal Justice System .42
3.3.1 Learning Disabilities .....................................................................................42
3.3.2 Special Educational Needs .............................................................................47
3.4 Conclusion .........................................................................................................52

Chapter 4 Consultation .............................................................................................53
4.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................53
4.2 Consultation: Development and Definitions .....................................................53
4.2.1 Eco-Behavioural Consultation .......................................................................55
4.3 Consultation in Educational Psychology ...........................................................57
4.4 Evaluation of Consultation ................................................................................60

Chapter 5 Methodology ............................................................................................64
5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................64
5.2 What is Action Research? ..................................................................................64
5.3 Structure of the Study .......................................................................................69
5.3.1 Phase 1 Seeking the Views of YOT Workers ...............................................69
5.3.1.1 Role of the Facilitator ...........................................................................71
5.3.1.2 Ethical Considerations in Focus Groups ..............................................72
5.3.1.3 Focus Group Selection .........................................................................72
5.3.1.4 Running the Focus Groups ...................................................................73
List of Tables

Table 1 Showing the Make-up of the three Focus Groups..................................................75
Table 2 Summary information of the consultations including presenting concern or issue and main conclusion ...........................................................107

List of Figures

Figure 1 Mind map of the dominant themes relating to Focus Group 1 .........................82
Figure 2 Mind map of issues raised in relation to SEN by Focus Group 1 .........................86
Figure 3 Mind map of the main themes describing the work of Focus Group 2...............90
Figure 4 Mind map of the main themes from Focus Group 2...........................................91
Figure 5 Mind map of the main themes from Focus Group 3.........................................98
Figure 6 Mind map of the main themes relating to consultation......................................116
Abstract

Over the past 10 years there has been increasing awareness and concern that a significant number of young people either in, or deemed to be at risk of being in, the criminal justice system have identified or unidentified special educational needs. Youth offending teams were set up to address young people’s offending behaviour but knowledge among professionals working in the teams of teaching and learning and, more specifically, about special educational needs is not a necessary prerequisite for gaining employment. There is therefore a potential role for educational psychologists to support youth offending workers so that they can take account of and respond to the special educational needs of the young people for whom they are responsible.

This research was divided into two phases and used an action research methodology in order to explore the development of the role of an Educational Psychology Service within a Youth Offending Team (YOT). Phase 1 explored the views of the YOTs using three focus groups on issues relating to special educational needs and their views on if, and how, educational psychologists (EPs) could support them in their delivery of services to young people. Although views differed across different teams there was a general perception that overall the knowledge base in relation to SEN within the service was limited. Other key themes related to relationships with schools and other professionals as well as issues around confidence and working with conflicting time scales.

Potential areas of work were identified by the three focus groups and, in particular, the usefulness of being able to have direct access to an EP. Consultation was chosen as model of service delivery as, not only is this a growing model of service delivery for EPs, it also met the YOT’s request for direct access in that there was no threshold that needed to be met before they could access the service. Phase 2 of the study therefore consisted of the implementation and evaluation of a pilot consultation service.

In phase 2 seven consultations with YOT staff took place which focused on how they could develop their work with individual children for whom they were responsible. Findings indicated that the presenting difficulties experienced by the young people varied as did the ‘type’ and ‘degree’ of their special educational needs. In relation to the content of the consultations, the emphasis was often on ‘increasing engagement’ by the young person in the work they had to do. Interestingly the range of difficulties experienced by the young people was no different from those raised by schools in their regular work with EPs. Although the sample was small, all of the consultees perceived positive outcomes to the consultations. However, potential barriers were also identified in relation to the continuation of the service.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
Copyright Statement

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.

ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.

iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.

iv. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/policies/intellectual-property.pdf), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations) and in The University’s policy on Presentation of Theses.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Youth Offending Team (YOT) who participated in the project as well as the YOT management for their support.

I would also like to thank my tutor Peter Farrell for his advice and guidance. His insight and encouragement were invaluable.

Thanks also to colleagues in the Educational Psychology Service for their support and encouragement.

Finally thanks to Sam for his patience. I may finally make it out of the study before he leaves school.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>Assessment, Intervention and Moving On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASBO</td>
<td>Antisocial Behaviour Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBIC</td>
<td>British Institute for Brain Injured Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPVS</td>
<td>British Picture Vocabulary Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF</td>
<td>Common Assessment Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Cognitive Behaviour Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBC</td>
<td>Eco-behavioural consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>Educational Psychology Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIP</td>
<td>Family Inclusion Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICD-10</td>
<td>International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPM</td>
<td>Individual Planning Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Looked After Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Educational Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NLP  Neurolinguistic Programming
Ofsted  Office for Standards in Education, Children's Service and Skills
PA  Personal Adviser
PARE  Pupil at risk of permanent exclusion
PEPs  Principal Educational Psychologists
PLACS  Pupil Level Annual School Census
PRU  Pupil Referral Unit
RFPP  Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm
SA  School Action
SA+  School Action plus
SEBD  Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SEN  Special Educational Needs
SENCOs  Special Educational Needs Coordinators
SFBT  Solution Focused Brief Therapy
TOAL  Test of Adolescent and Adult Language
TROG  Test of Receptive Grammar
VABS  Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale
WAIS –R  Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Revised
WAIS  Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale
WASI  Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence
WISC  Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children
WORD  Wechsler Objective Reading Dimensions
WRAT  Wide Ranging Achievement Test
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YIP</td>
<td>Youth Inclusion Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YISP</td>
<td>Youth Inclusion Support Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YJB</td>
<td>Youth Justice Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YRO</td>
<td>Youth Rehabilitation Order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Media descriptions of the so called feral youth who are out of control, lack discipline and are a scourge on society abound and are also reflected both in political rhetoric as well as policy. Furthermore, the 2011 summer riots in some of the country’s major cities saw the re-emergence of public and media concern for a lack of law and order and the development of a lawless underclass disconnected from society. These perceptions are not new, for example Jack Straw has described youngsters who are in custody in the following way:-

*Most young people who are put into custody are aged 16 and 17 – they are not children; they are often large, unpleasant thugs, and they are frightening to the public. In my judgment, the courts have been quite right to ensure that they are locked up, and locked up for a long time where they have committed grievous offences.* Jack Straw, Minister of Justice, 10th June 2008 (Straw, 2008)

It is within this context that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), made up of multiagency professionals, were set up to become the key service charged with supporting young people who came into contact with the youth justice system and with reducing reoffending by addressing their offending behaviour. They were also seen to have a role in preventing offending. The YOT workers themselves come from a variety of professional backgrounds including youth work and social work and, within the Youth Offending Team individuals undertake a number of different roles. They are usually part of the local council and are separate from both the police and the courts. In addition, they work with a number of partners including the police and probation services, health, housing and children’s services as well as schools and education authorities (GOV.UK, 2012).

It is widely acknowledged that children and young people who become known to the youth justice system are more likely to be at risk of some form of disadvantage including social, emotional, educational and mental health difficulties. In addition there would seem to be growing acknowledgement that a significant number of young people in the youth justice system have identified or unidentified special educational needs (e.g. Loucks, 2006; Talbot, 2009).

Although the YOT are made up of multiagency teams, the knowledge base within the teams in relation to education and learning and particularly special educational needs is limited (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). YOT workers have also suggested that children and young people who offend and who also have special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to receive a custodial sentence than offenders who do not have SEN (Welsh
This report also found a lack of routine screening and assessment to identify SEN within YOT teams, together with a poor understanding of how SEN can impact on behaviour (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). This in turn can impact on young people's ability to engage in interventions that have been put in place to help address the offending behaviour. This indicates a possible role for supporting YOT staff who work with young offenders with SEN.

This study developed from my work as an educational psychologist (EP) employed by a North West Local Authority. Traditionally, the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) had been placed within the Education Directorate of the Local Authority. However, during a local authority re-structuring exercise, the service was moved from within its historical place within the Education Directorate and placed within the Social Care Directorate. Although the rationale for this move was never articulated, the members of the EPS looked upon it as an opportunity to begin to loosen their traditional connection with schools and to begin to forge new links with a number of partner services. For some time the EPS had been aware that there were a number of young people with problems outside of the school system who were more difficult to reach because the majority of work came via schools and reflected their priorities. This meant there were potentially groups of young people who could possibly benefit from access to the EP service but who would not necessarily be prioritised by schools for our involvement. These might be pupils out of school (for whatever reason) and/or pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who were being dealt with by the pastoral system in schools rather than the special needs system. The move to social care provided us with a rationale to make links with other services which, it was hoped, would enable a wider group of children and young people to access our service. As a result EPS were allocated to a number of other services that included the Looked After Children Team, Fostering and Adoption, Residential Care and Social Work Teams as well as the YOT and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Through my generic work as an EP working with our pupil referral unit, I had become increasingly aware of the number of young people being placed at the PRU primarily for behaviour difficulties who also had, or appeared to have, underlying learning difficulties. There were a significant number of young people with whom I had worked who had social and communication difficulties, literacy difficulties or general learning difficulties. At around the same time I became aware of a number of research papers that were either looking at the prevalence of behavioural difficulties amongst the population of pupils with learning difficulties or the prevalence of learning difficulties that may or may not have been identified in pupils labelled as having Social and Emotional Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD) (e.g.
Willner, 2005). There was also increasing evidence of higher than expected levels of a broad spectrum of learning difficulties within the youth offending and prison populations (Loucks, 2006).

In the local authority where I work there are around 200 young people who are known to the Youth Offending Team, either because they have offended or because they are deemed to be at risk of offending, and the YOT’s own anecdotal information supported the view that a higher than expected proportion of the youth offending population are on the SEN Register either at School Action, School Action Plus or with a statement of SEN. Part of the work of the YOTs is to deliver interventions designed to address aspects of young peoples’ behaviour with the aim of either stopping first time offences or to stop reoffending. Information gathered from youth offending workers suggested that, although some individuals felt they had an adequate knowledge of the education system that partly depended on their qualifications and previous experience, in general, the majority were less informed in relation to education generally and SEN in particular.

Taking all of these factors together there seemed to be a role for EPs in supporting youth offending workers to develop their skills and knowledge around SEN in order that they could better meet the needs of their client group. Initial work began through liaison with the YOT’s education worker, and focused mainly on information sharing, helping her to identify any pupils who were known to our service and taking on some individual casework. With a change of education worker came a request for the EP’s to deliver some initial training to groups of YOT workers after first gathering some data about their knowledge base in relation to SEN. However, at this early stage the work of the EPS with the YOT was somewhat ad hoc and did not reflect a systematic plan to involve the EPs in a structured way.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The overall aim of the study, which was divided into two phases, was to look at how the EP service offered could be developed in collaboration with the YOT. Each of the two phases has a different methodology but falls broadly within an action research framework. Robson (2002) suggests that a widely adopted version of action research is viewed as cyclical, involving planning a change, acting and then observing what happens following the change, reflecting on these processes and then planning a further cycle. Waters-Adams (2006) comments that although a number of writers (e.g. Ebbutt, 1985; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992) have elaborated on the process, the basic structure remains a cyclical approach to
action and reflection. The two phases of this study follow one cycle of planning, acting and reflecting and are outlined below.

**Phase 1**

The first part of the study explored the type of work undertaken with young people by members of YOT, the level of knowledge and understanding they had about SEN and the identification of ways in which the Educational Psychology Service could offer support to them in their work.

Data for this phase was generated from three focus groups with members of the YOT. The focus groups comprised three separate broadly homogeneous groups i.e. Caseworkers and Support Workers, who work with young people who have offended and members of the Prevention Team, who work with young people identified as being at risk of offending. Focus Group attendance was voluntary, though agreement for participation had to come via team managers.

Phase 1 of this research project therefore addressed the following research questions:

1. What work do youth offending workers undertake with young people?
2. What knowledge do youth offending workers have about SEN?
3. What views do youth offending workers they have about how the EPS might support them in their work?

Using thematic analysis from the focus group data a number of possibilities for the EPS to work with the YOT emerged which fell broadly into three categories. The first was for the EPS to provide more training. The second related to workers having access to an EP to discuss individual cases. The third category contained a number of suggestions that, whilst of possible benefit to the YOT, were not really deemed to be within the remit of the Educational Psychology Service, for example, rationalising their resources.

Although the first possibility is currently being pursued, it is the second of these possibilities, having direct access to an EP, that was explored in detail in phase 2 of this study.

**Phase 2**

The second and more substantial part of the study explored the development of a consultation model of service delivery to the YOT. A number of different options or models
of service delivery that would allow direct access to an EP could have been adopted, for example a direct referral model. However, consultation was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it is a form of service delivery with which I am familiar; secondly, previous service evaluation of consultation in schools had yielded positive findings and, thirdly, it offered the YOT direct access to an EP without having to go through a third party or having to complete any referral forms. Finally, consultation as a form of service delivery for EPs has become more popular in recent years with increasing numbers of Educational Psychology Services across the UK adopting consultation as a method of service delivery (Kennedy et al., 2009).

Although there are many models of consultation, one often quoted definition is that of Wagner (2000). She describes consultation as ‘voluntary collaborative non-supervisory approach, established to aid the functioning of a system and its inter-related systems...’ (P 11). Kennedy, Cameron et al. (2009) suggests that a more transparent definition is that of Sheridan Kratochwill et al. (1996). They suggest that consultation is ‘an indirect problem-solving process between a consultant and one or more consultees to address concerns presented by a client’. Kennedy, Cameron et al. (2009) suggest that this definition makes explicit the indirect nature that service delivery can take and that it highlights the triadic relationship between the consultant (in this case the EP), the consultee (the YOT worker) and the young person.

The consultation was offered over a six-month period. Initially three one hour slots were offered on a weekly basis which was later reduced to three sessions every fortnight. Over this period there were seven consultations discussing 6 young people. One young person was discussed in two consultations by the same caseworker, one caseworker discussed 2 young people and one young person was discussed with both a caseworker and a support worker. One of the young people was discussed with a caseworker and the last young person was discussed with a support worker.. Each consultation lasted for approximately 1 hour and was followed up with written feedback in the form of the consultation summary form (Appendix 1).

In order to evaluate the service, following its implementation, a further focus group was held with individuals who had accessed the service. The main research questions here were: -

1. What are the range of difficulties that are brought by YOT workers to discuss with the EP?
2. Can a consultation model support YOT workers in their work with young people?
3. What are YOT workers views of consultation?
4   Is a model of consultation in evidence?

5   What are the facilitators and barriers to this method of service delivery?

Studies often consider whether the researcher is considered to be an insider or an outsider. As a researcher who is also employed by the local authority but also working within the YOT, my position in this study was not clear cut. There are advantages and disadvantages to both positions. For example, insider researchers are possibly more sensitive to issues and have more background knowledge than an outsider may have time to acquire (Robson, 2002). On the other hand with the insider researcher, comes greater familiarity which can lead to things being take for granted and the development of myopia (Mercer, 2007).

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with the literature review which has been divided into three chapters reflecting different aspects of this research. In chapter 2, the work of the YOTs is explored. It begins by reviewing some of the contextual background before moving on to provide information on their composition, key roles and responsibilities. This chapter also includes a review of the literature about two key elements of the work of YOTs. The first of these is in relation to assessments that they carry out. There are two tools/instruments that are seen to be the primary assessment methods for use by YOT workers. The first of these is Asset, which is used with young people who have offended. The second is Onset, which is used with young people who are at risk of becoming involved in offending. The literature review focuses primarily on Asset as the issues it raises are similar to those in relation to Onset. The second key element relates to the Youth Rehabilitation Order which is now the 'generic community sentence' that came into effect in England and Wales in 2009. The implications of this together with the Scaled Approach to sentencing are explored in relation to young people who have SEN. As Asset is the main assessment tool used by YOT workers to identify risk, its ability to identify potential risk in relation to SEN is also explored and the lack of depth this assessment has in relation to SEN is discussed. The chapter then moves on to a review of one of the specific roles within the YOT team, that of the education worker, before concluding with a discussion about the possible role of the EP with a YOT.

The next chapter, chapter 3 explores some of the issues around the prevalence of SEN. These include revisiting well known difficulties with definitions, before moving on to examine some of the research relating to the prevalence of SEN within the youth offending population.
As phase 2 of the study involved piloting and evaluating a consultation service to the YOT, chapter 4 reviews the literature in relation to this type of service delivery. It begins by examining some of the various models of consultation before focusing more on consultation specifically in educational psychology looking at models used and on their evaluation.

The overall methodological approach used in this study fits within an action research paradigm. Chapter 5 begins by providing some of the key elements of action research as well as exploring the issue of the insider researcher (Mercer, 2007; Robson, 2002). This study consisted of two phases and the chapter goes on to describe each of these in turn. Both phases used focus groups as the method of data collection and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Chapter 6 presents the results and discussion of phase one of the study. It considers each of the three focus groups in turn, outlining the major themes for each. The final two sections of this chapter look at the main conclusions from the focus groups and the next steps in the study which led to the identification of piloting a consultation service.

Chapter 7 presents the results and discussion from the consultations and the focus group (Phase 2). The chapter is divided into three sections. The first gives a brief synopsis of the consultations, the second explores the results from the thematic analysis of the focus groups and the final section explores the extent to which the consultations that took place reflected a theoretical model of consultation.

Chapter 8, the final chapter, summarises the main findings and explores some of the potential implications for the YOT service in light of current political landscapes. It also examines some personal reflections in relation to the study as well as suggesting possible avenues for future research.
Chapter 2  Youth Offending Teams.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins in section 2.2 with an overview of YOTs - what they are as well as describing their main functions and duties. One of the primary assessment tools used by YOTs is Asset. The content and use of this tool is described in section 2.3 and its relationship to the new Youth Rehabilitation Orders and the so called Scaled Approach, is explored in section 2.4. There are particular implications for young people who have identified or unidentified SEN and this is discussed in section 2.5. The next section, 2.6, in this chapter considers one of the specialist roles within the YOT, that of the education worker with section 2.7 moving on to look at the role of EPs in YOTs. A summary and conclusion to the chapter is provided in section 2.8.

2.2 Youth Offending Teams: Who are They and What Do They Do?

As part of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 YOTs were established in every local authority in England and Wales between 1998 and 2000 (YJB, 2010b). Within the teams were professionals from a number of different disciplines including police, probation, social care, education and health. YOTs might also include people from other agencies and organisations such as housing and other community departments and contributions from those working in the area of drug and alcohol misuse was encouraged (Fielder et al., 2008). The purpose of YOTs was to provide the organisation through which the principle aims of the Crime and Disorder Act aim of preventing offending by children and young people could be discharged. An interdepartmental circular on establishing YOTs (YJB, 1998) set out the following objectives:-

- the swift administration of justice so that every young person accused of breaking the law has the matter resolved without delay; confronting young offenders with the consequences of their offending, for themselves and their family, their victims and their community, and helping them to develop a sense of personal responsibility;
- intervention which tackles the particular factors (personal, family, social, educational or health) that put the young person at risk of offending and which strengthens ‘protective factors’;
- punishment proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of offending;
- encouraging reparation to victims by young offenders; and
- reinforcing the responsibilities of parents.
The duties of the YOTs were to include carrying out assessment work, providing reports to courts and acting as supervising officers for community sentences and after release from custody. As well as working with offenders, YOTs were also seen to have a role in prevention, working with those young people identified as being at risk of becoming offenders.

The YOT that is the focus of this study sits within a larger organisation that provides a range of integrated and targeted services to young people including the career guidance service, teenage pregnancy strategy, substance misuse service and the young carers support service. Unusually, it is not part of the local authority, but part of a charitable trust commissioned by the local authority. The Centre, through which all the above services are delivered also houses a number of partner services including: CAMHS; a generalist nurse and assistant practitioner team; counselling services; housing advocacy and mediation services and the After-Care duty team from Children’s Social Care.

This is a medium-sized YOT employing in the region of 45 staff that are managed within 2 of 4 directorates. These two directorates are referred to as Targeted Services and Prevention Directorates. The focus of the Targeted Services is to deliver the statutory post-court function for young people of the authority through the YOT; however the Targeted Services also includes the young people’s substance misuse service so provides a more integrated approach to working with vulnerable groups including young offenders. Targeted Services also delivers a range of family based projects which have a focus on ‘high risk’ young people and their families.

The YOT oversees young people who are subject to a wide range of pre-court and post-court disposals as well as young people subject to custodial sentences. The length of involvement with the YOT will therefore depend on the length of the orders given. The YOT aims to reduce reoffending by children and young people aged 10 – 17 and the team works with individual children and young people aged 10-17 (and their families) to assess their risk of committing further crime, their risk to others, and to put in place interventions aimed at addressing their offending behaviour. Young people are seen both at the Centre and away from the Centre depending on assessed need and risk. The number of contacts also varies depending on the details of their order.

The “prevention” function is managed as part of a Prevention Services Directorate. There are about 20 staff whose work includes Youth Inclusion Projects (YIP), the Triage Service in the police custody suite, a Challenge and Support Team (comprising of police officers and youth workers), alongside an intervention delivery arm - ‘Kickstart’. Kickstart is a community
education project in the local authority in which I work where ‘hard to reach’ young people work on vehicle maintenance and the focus is on developing opportunities as well as prioritising social inclusion and diversionary activities. The project offers a range of accredited motor vehicle related courses to young people aged 13 to 16, with courses taking place during both term time and during school holidays.

There are eight YIPs located throughout the borough. These projects work with young people who have been causing concern in their communities, they may have been involved in anti social behaviour or low level crimes and referrals to the YIP can come from a number of professionals. However, the programmes are voluntary and the young person and their parent(s) need to want to join the programme which will allow them to take part in a range of positive activities, and to access a programme of education and support. The usual length of involvement is about 6 months.

2.3 Asset

The needs of each individual referred to the YOT are identified through the use of a national assessment tool called Asset (Appendix 2). This assessment tool is intended to identify specific problems that lead a young person to offend as well as to gain some measure of the risk they pose to others. The results of the Asset assessment are then used to identify appropriate programmes to address specific needs with the aim of reducing repeat offending. YOTs also work with young people who have been identified as being at risk of offending. Here they use the assessment tool, Onset. This assessment tool is used to identify possible needs and to establish whether the young person would benefit from participating in prevention programmes aimed at reducing the likelihood of them committing an offence. Both tools serve a similar purpose and are similar in design. However, as Asset is the tool used with those who are offending it, rather than Onset will be discussed in more detail.

Asset is seen to be based on a Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm (RFPP) (Bateman, 2011; Case, 2007). RFPP is underpinned by the longitudinal study carried out by West and Farrington (1973) and the social development model (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996), both of which claimed to identify a group of psycho-social risk factors that increase the probability of offending (Haines & Case, 2008).

The Asset tool covers 12 core domains which are described below. These domains reflect a range of potential risk factors and represent a shift away from traditional goals of
rehabilitation or retribution to managing offender behaviour through the minimisation of risk (in Bateman, 2011; Feeley & Simon, 1992).

The development of Asset was commissioned by the Youth Justice Board in 1998 and should now be used by all YOTs. This risk/need assessment tool was designed to provide a common, structured framework for assessment of factors that may be contributing to the young person's offending (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). A further aim of Asset was to encourage the targeting of interventions at those factors identified through the assessment as being closely linked to the young person's offending. Following its commissioning the actual development and design of Asset began in 1999 and was undertaken by the Probation Studies Unit of the University of Oxford (Baker, 2005). A number of key requirements for the assessment tool were identified as follows:

- the identification of key factors contributing to a young person's offending
- identify the risk of reoffending
- look to identify those young people who may present a risk of harm to others
- identify situations in which the young offender is vulnerable to harm
- identify areas where a more in-depth assessment would be required. (YJB, 2006a)

The Asset is made up of six sections – Core Profile, Risk of Serious Harm, What do you think?, Intervention Plan, Final Warning Profile and Bail Supervision and Support Profile. The first section, the Core Profile is made up of static factors (for example criminal history) and dynamic factors (Baker, 2005). The core assessment profile is divided into 12 sections but overall addresses the following issues:

- offending behaviour
- living arrangements
- family and personal relationships
- education, training and employment
- lifestyle
- substance use
- physical health
- emotional and mental health
- perception of self and others
- thinking and behaviour
- attitudes to offending
- motivation to change
Each section contains a number of questions requiring yes/no/don't know responses together with providing some written evidence. At the end of each section a 4 point scale is used to rate the extent to which that particular area is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

The second component of the Asset is Risk of Serious Harm which can be used to help practitioners explore any concerns that have been identified in relation to possible harm to others. The young person’s views are ascertained using the third component ‘What do You Think’. Baker (2005) suggests this not only enables the young person to express their views but also provides an opportunity to compare views between the young person and the practitioners. The fourth component is the Intervention Plan. The Asset guidance suggests ‘This standardised Intervention Plan aims to promote consistent practice in translating the problems identified in Asset into realistic programmes of work’ (pg 83, YJB, 2006a). This includes a Risk Management Plan for those identified as medium risk or above on the Serious Harm Assessment and a Vulnerability Management Plan for those identified as medium risk or above on vulnerability measures. The 5th component is a shortened version of Asset for those on a final warning and the 6th component is a Bail Supervision and Support profile. The Asset document itself contains both an English language version and a Welsh language version. In total the English language version is 78 pages long.

Asset, therefore, is seen to represent a comprehensive and detailed assessment of a young person who has been referred to the YOT. The main focus of this study is in relation to young people known to the YOT who may have SEN and although SEN is referred to within the document, it only makes up a small fraction (fewer than one quarter of a page of a 78 page document) of the overall assessment. For example, within the educational attainment section there are some questions relating to SEN. These are:-

- Have special needs (SEN) been identified?
- If yes, does he/she have a statement of SEN?
- Does he/she have difficulty with literacy?
- Does he/she have difficulty with numeracy?

The guidance on completing the section on education, training and employment states that if there are concerns about possible SEN but no definite identification by an EP or other
qualified practitioner, then the no box should be ticked. It does qualify this by stating that YOT workers completing the form may wish to give some details in the evidence box. The definition of SEN will be explored in some detail later, but it is perhaps worth noting here that this could lead to an underestimation of the number of young people with SEN being recorded on the Asset form. The Asset form makes reference to statements but makes no reference to the earlier stages of the Code of Practice - School Action and School Action Plus. Pupils at School Action Plus are likely to be seen as having SEN as there will be, by definition, involvement from external agencies who will fall into the category of ‘other qualified practitioner’. What is not so clear is whether pupils at School Action would be seen to fall into the category of SEN based on a definition of having had those needs identified by a qualified practitioner. Hence, there appears to be a restricted definition of SEN. This could therefore exclude a number of children and young people who have SEN but who do not fall within this definition.

The Youth Justice Board acknowledges that a number of young people known to youth offending teams will have SEN and suggests that arrangements should be made with the local authority to ensure copies of statements and the last annual reviews be made available to the YOTs in order to help make professional judgements about appropriate provision. In addition it suggests copies of statements should be sent to secure units to help with the planning and delivery of education whilst the young person is in custody. Whilst online information from the YJB (2011) suggests that ‘as a matter of course, all education information should follow the young person into secure provision and that this should include the SEN statement, if applicable, together with the last annual review’, little emphasis appears to be given to those young people who may be at an earlier stage in the Code of Practice.

2.4 The Youth Rehabilitation Order and the Scaled Approach

Following the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, the Youth Rehabilitation Order came into effect England and Wales in November 2009 (YJB, 2010d). The Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) is a generic community sentence for young offenders and replaced the number of community sentences including a curfew order, a community punishment order, an attendance centre order and a drug treatment and testing order amongst others.

The YRO is now the standard community sentence used for the majority of children and young people who have committed an offence since November 2009. The YJB states that it simplifies sentencing for young people, whilst improving the flexibility of interventions. The
Youth Justice Board go on to state that the YRO represents ‘a more individualised risk and needs-based approach to community sentencing, enabling greater choice from a ‘menu’ of requirements’. (YJB, 2010d).

The following requirements can be attached to a YRO:

- Activity Requirement
- Supervision Requirement
- Curfew Requirement
- Electronic Monitoring Requirement
- Exclusion Requirement
- Prohibited Activity Requirement
- Local Authority Residence Requirement
- Drug Treatment Requirement
- Education Requirement
- Residence Requirement
- Mental Health Treatment Requirement
- Programme Requirement
- Unpaid Work Requirement (16/17 years)
- Attendance Centre Requirement
- Drug Testing Requirement
- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (based on the current ISSP)
- Intoxicating Substance Misuse Requirement
- Intensive Fostering

At the same time as YROs were launched, the YJB rolled out its ‘Youth Justice: The Scaled Approach’ (YJB, 2010c). Although this is non-statutory, Bateman (2011) suggests that as it was issued to coincide with the implementation of the YRO, even though it is not a logical concomitant, it has been described as being seen by many practitioners as the other side of the same coin. Indeed this link is emphasised by the YJB’s own publication ‘The Scaled Approach and the Youth Rehabilitation Order’. In the Scaled Approach young people receive interventions and levels of supervision differentiated according to assessed risk (Sutherland, 2009). Bateman (2011) suggests that the use of Asset has changed with the introduction of the Scaled Approach. Until this time information gathered from Asset was used to identify areas of risk to inform interventions designed to address identified need (Baker, 2005). However, in terms of the length of any intervention, this was determined by the seriousness of the offending behaviour and decided by the court (Bateman, 2011).
With the introduction of the Scaled Approach the assessed risk of reoffending, or of harm to others, as assessed by Asset should now be used to determine both the level of intervention as well as its content (YJB, 2009). Depending on the Asset score young people fall into one of three categories of intervention: - standard, enhanced and intensive. An asset score of zero to 14 and a low risk of serious harm equates to a standard intervention level. Here the minimum number of contacts per month for the first 12 weeks would be 2. An enhanced level of intervention would be given for asset scores between 15 and 32 or medium risk of serious harm. At this level of intervention there would be a minimum of four contacts per month for the first 12 weeks. Asset scores of 33 to 64 or, high to very high risk of serious harm, fall into the category of intensive level of intervention with a minimum number of 12 contacts per month for the first 12 weeks. This move away from proportionality where interventions are justified on the basis of what a child has done, rather than what he or she might do, leads to the potential for inequitable outcomes (Bateman, 2011; Sutherland, 2009). Bateman suggests that this potential is most obvious in two young people with identical previous convictions who are co-defendants. A number of issues associated with risk beyond a young person's control (living in a deprived area or having criminals as relatives for example) will score more highly on Asset thus resulting in a significant discrepancy in the disposal for the same offence. Someone with an asset score of over 33 would be required to attend six times more frequently than someone gaining an asset score below 14 for the same offence. If this difference was based on gender or ethnicity, there would be more interest in and objection to this type of approach (Sutherland, 2009).

Further, it is likely that those young people who score most highly on the Asset assessment are those with the fewest skills and resources to manage high levels of intervention. There may be particular difficulty with compliance for a variety of reasons: chaotic lifestyles, learning difficulties or just the ‘impulsivity and rebelliousness associated with normal adolescence’ (Hart, 2010) which will be compounded as the level of intervention increases from standard to enhanced to intensive (Bateman, 2011).

With non-compliance comes the risk of breach and is highlighted as a problematic feature of the Youth Justice System (Bateman, 2011; Hart, 2011). Hart (2011) refers to a study by Gyateng et al. (2010) which, amongst other things looked at the key predictors of breach. A key finding was that:

…the likelihood of breach increased significantly in line with the number of requirements imposed on an offender (Gyateng P 5, 2010)
A breach is deemed to have occurred when there are three unacceptable or unexplained failures to attend and a decision is then made as to whether the young person needs to be referred back to court (YJB, 2010a). This means that there is an increased risk of breach for those young people on intensive interventions simply because they have a high number of contacts required. As Bateman (2011) points out a young person on a standard intervention can miss 2 out of 6 (i.e. 1/3) of their appointments over a three-month period and not be in breach but in contrast a young person on intensive intervention who misses three appointments will be in breach even though he could have attended for over 90% of his contacts (i.e. 33 out of 36).

Some of the views of youth offending workers gathered from focus groups in a study by Talbot (2010) echo this sentiment with some of the participants expressing the concern that the Scaled Approach to sentencing was likely to escalate more rapidly for those young people with SEN. It was suggested that YRO’s were unlikely to take into account individual support needs and abilities leading to an increase in the possibility of non-compliance and subsequent breach. Talbot (2010) also reports that a similar stance has been expressed by the Standing Committee for Youth Justice.

Young people suffering the most disadvantage, with the least parental or adult support, can experience reduced educational and other opportunities, and will – as a direct consequence of the Scaled Approach – be subject to higher, more intrusive, levels of criminal justice intervention. There is, implicit in the approach, a risk of discrimination against the most deprived children (Standing Committee for Youth Justice, 2009).

2.5 SEN and Asset

The completion of Asset accurately then is clearly an important aspect of the YOT’s work. It is used to formulate a measure of risk of reoffending, and the level of intervention required to address that risk as well as informing specific areas for intervention. However, there are concerns that these assessments are not always completed consistently and adequately (Baker et al., 2003). For example, although YOT staff believed 52% of young people lacked qualifications and skills, only 29% were identified as having difficulties in the areas of literacy and numeracy (YJB, 2006c). The authors of the report suggest this may well be a significant underestimation as other studies have found indications that those completing the Asset are often unaware of the difficulties with literacy and numeracy that many young people face. The authors also report that this lack of awareness was borne out on their census survey. Only 27% of those who reported on Asset that the young person had no literacy or numeracy difficulties were aware of any screening or assessment having taken
This study also examined the Asset information provided on the SEN status of the young people in the sample. From the sample 3134 were 'not thought to have SEN'; 774 were identified as having ‘SEN with a statement’ and 258 were identified as having ‘SEN without a statement’. Interestingly, there were 1492 ‘don’t know’ or ‘no’ responses. Overall the authors report that SEN was perceived to be present in approximately 25% of the sample where information had been completed on the Asset form of which just over 75% had a statement of special educational needs (YJB, 2006c). For a significant proportion of the sample the status of SEN was unknown or unrecorded and that therefore it has been suggested there was an acknowledgement that there was variation in the quality and quantity of information in relation to young people across different agencies (EdComs, 2008). Potentially then, there could be a large number of young people passing through the youth justice system with unidentified or unacknowledged SEN.

EdComs (2008) concluded that research suggests three possible reasons for this. First is a lack of expertise and understanding around SEN and what needs to be recorded by YOT staff. Second is that statementing may not have commenced or have been interrupted as a result of young people not attending school for some reason and the final suggestion is that YOT staff may not record SEN for young people over school leaving age as any special provision is unlikely to be made (Echo Tech Research and Consulting (2001) in EdComs (2008)).

The usefulness of Asset in relation to special educational needs has also been questioned in the research document ‘Analysis of Support for Young People with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the Youth Justice Sector in Wales’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). In this study a number of YOT managers were interviewed. The authors report that YOT managers felt that Asset was of limited use in identifying young people with SEN. This was because the YOT practitioners completing the form may not have had expertise in SEN and as such any support needs were seen to be subjective and based on the workers perception (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009).

Talbot (2010) found that around one fifth of YOT workers who participated in the study cited Asset and Onset as tools that could be used to identify a range of difficulties including learning disabilities specific learning difficulties communication difficulties literacy levels ADHD and autistic spectrum disorders. However, both tools were primarily designed to
assess risk in relation to offending and were not designed to screen for or assess learning difficulties (Talbot, 2010).

A further difficulty with Asset, also highlighted by Talbot (2010) is that the Asset process itself relies largely on verbal mediation and that if the child has communication difficulties then the assessment can be undermined.

2.6 The Role of the Education Worker Within YOTs.

As has been stated earlier, YOTs are made up of multiagency professionals who have different roles within the team. On specific role is that of the education worker which will be explored in the next section.

Each YOT should have at least one education worker although there is no necessity for the education worker to have a background in education. An unpublished study (Games, 2004) found that the majority of YOTs (approximately 64%) had only one education worker.

The focus of the YJB in relation to education workers seems to be around the interface with education rather than in relation to the delivery of interventions to young people. In their guidance to YOT educational practitioners they suggest that it is crucial that educational specialists do not act as generic caseworkers. Rather these education specialists should work alongside YOT caseworkers to develop mechanisms that enable the most needy to be prioritised. Education specialists should focus on the development of strategic links to enable young offenders to access mainstream provision (YJB, 2011).

The YOT practitioners' role is therefore seen to be primarily about brokerage. The steps involved in this brokerage process are outlined in the Youth Justice Board's guidance document ‘Key Elements of Effective Practice’ as

- assessment of the young person's needs
- planning with the young person how any identified needs can be met
- liaison with agencies and providers, asking about appropriate provision, being an advocate for the young person and negotiating with others to give appropriate provision
- informing the young person and their family and the service of the provision that is to be provided (YJB, 2008).
The distinction between education and youth offending teams seems further emphasised by the YJ B’s stipulation that it is not effective for youth offending teams to employ teachers to teach young people under YOT supervision. They go on to say

*It is not appropriate, since local authorities have a statutory duty to provide education and have the resources to do so. Any YOT employing teachers to deliver programmes of education will need to consider that their service could be subject to an Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection (YJB, 2011).*

Education then is seen to be the domain of the Local Authority. However, in the delivery of interventions from YOTs there are clear educational learning objectives where knowledge of teaching and learning would seem to be one of the key priorities.

YOT workers come from a variety of backgrounds but having a background knowledge of education and teaching and learning is not essential. As has been indicated earlier this also applies even to the specialist education workers. Games (2004) found only approximately 43% of respondents to her survey held some form of teaching qualification and only around 7% held any SEN qualifications. A further 14% held qualifications that were related to education (for example connexions diploma, education and welfare officer, careers adviser). A total of approximately 33% had either no, or non-educational qualifications.

In a more recent piece of literature Talbot (2010) found that of those who responded to a question related to qualifications slightly less than one quarter (23%) said they had a member of their YOT staff qualified in SEN, though the nature of that qualification was not specified.

Although it could be argued that since the education workers’ role is seen to be one of brokerage of services rather than delivering the services or interventions directly, a background in education and learning is not essential. However, this would seem to leave a skills gap within the YOTs with no one specifically dedicated to having an understanding of teaching and learning generally and more specifically in the area of SEN.

Whilst it is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that young people of statutory school-aged are placed in schools or other full-time provision, the YOTs themselves do deliver a number of interventions based on Asset information. The Youth Justice Board Education Training and Employment Source document does outline the need to be responsive to individual differences when delivering interventions and offers advice on effective learning environments (EdComs, 2008). However, in order to achieve this for young people, some of whom have SEN, will, at times require more specialist knowledge around teaching and learning. Nevertheless this may well be outside the knowledge base of
the specialist education worker. This would seem to make the case for YOTs to have access to specialist support around working with young people with whom they may be struggling to engage and who may have identified or unidentified SEN.

2.7 The Role of the Educational Psychologist Within a Youth Offending Team.

Although specific prevalence rates remain difficult to establish, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, there is a growing acknowledgement within the literature that there are significant numbers of young people who come into contact with the youth justice system who have identified or unidentified learning difficulties. YOT teams who are charged with working with these young people come from a number of professional backgrounds but relatively few have qualifications in education generally or SEN specifically. This has implications for YOTs ability to both identify and address appropriately the SEN of young people that they may work with. Educational Psychologists would seem ideally placed to be able to offer support to YOT in relation to young people that staff may have concerns about and although the majority of EP work is with schools, working with other agencies for example CAMHS, Services for LAC and YOT amongst others, is not uncommon (Farrell et al., 2006). In relation to YOT specifically this study found that 39% of principal EPs who responded indicated that EPs were involved and a further 62% said EPS should be involved.

In another study, 34% of YOT staff who responded said their YOT had access to an EP. A further 23% suggested that they had access but that this was indirect via schools or other agencies. The authors note that some respondents qualified their answers, saying that pupils needed to be in education and that this support was not available for older pupils (i.e. 17 years plus) (Talbot, 2010). This study also found that EPs are only seen to be involved with approximately one third of YOTs in a formal way and only one in ten YOTs indicated that there was a service level agreement in place.

Where EPs are working with YOT the work undertaken appears to vary greatly and included therapeutic work, training for YOT staff, parenting courses, assessment, intervention and advice as well as consultation, assessment and intervention work with YISP (Farrell et al., 2006). Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) and LA officers reported that EPS can make a positive contribution to work within this area because of their
'distinctive understanding of the complexity of the issues involved and their role in training, development and supervision of other professionals working with these young people, together with their ability to facilitate work across agencies' (pg 100 Farrell et al., 2006). Talbot (2010) suggests that information from the Seen and Heard study indicates that whilst it was evident that YOT staff invested time and effort into adapting materials and interventions, some participants questioned whether YOT staff had the necessary skills and experience to both identify individual need and then to appropriately differentiate their approach to ensure participation.

Whilst there is evidence of EPs providing training for YOT staff (Farrell et al., 2006; Talbot, 2010) and that access to training is recognised as important, YOT managers acknowledged that it was not practical for YOT staff to become experts in SEN but that greater access to specialist professionals would bring great benefits. Two quotes from that paper would seem to be pertinent to this idea in relation to the role of the EP:-

Rather than train all YOT staff, you’re better off ensuring good access to educational psychologists (pg 34, Talbot, 2010).

As a model, rather than training all YOT staff in being experts in assessing young people; half a day per week of access to an educational psychologist in the Local Education Authority (LEA) is so valuable. Any member of the YOT staff that has a concern can go along and discuss it and get access to advice (pg 35, Talbot, 2010).

2.8 Summary and Conclusions

YOTs are the primary service charged with both reducing first time offending and reoffending. They are multiagency teams made up of a range of different professionals. The primary tools used by these teams to assess risk and plan interventions based on these risks are the Asset and Onset tools.

Changes in sentencing with the introduction of the YRO and the roll out of the Scaled Approach has been seen to have implications for some young people, particularly those scoring highly on Asset leading to potential inequality. Weaknesses in the Asset itself has been identified as well as a lack of knowledge in those completing it leading to a potential under identification of young people with SEN.

Generally there appears to be a lack of knowledge and understanding of education and particularly SEN with less than one quarter of YOTs reporting that they have a member of staff qualified in SEN. There is therefore a potential skills and knowledge gap in YOTs around teaching and learning generally and SEN specifically.
YOTs’ access to educational psychologists is varied and may not be seen as a priority with competing demands on EPs’ time from schools and local authorities for them to complete more traditional work. The ability to work in this area may also become further squeezed as councils continue to have to find further ‘efficiencies’ and services are pushed into becoming traded services. However, as the earlier quotes suggest, where there is access, this is seen as valuable and useful. It would also seem to be the case that what different YOTs access varies. This study focuses on one aspect of service delivery to YOTs, consultation and chapter 4 explores this approach to EP work in more detail.
Chapter 3 Prevalence of Special Educational Needs

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the prevalence of young people with SEN in the youth justice system, but includes some relevant literature from adult offender literature. Agreed prevalence rates have yet to be established and a lack of a universal definition of learning difficulties or SEN has contributed to this difficulty. The chapter therefore begins by looking at the wide range of definitions which are used in the literature in section 3.2. The following section 3.3 examines some of the literature on prevalence rates.

3.2 Definitions

Although this is well covered ground, this chapter begins with a brief examination of the number of different labels and definitions that are used in the literature when looking at the area of SEN and learning difficulties. Within education the term SEN is most commonly used and is defined in the Code of Practice as follows:-

‘Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LEA.
- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area.
• for children under two, educational provision of any kind' (Section 312, Education Act 1996 (DfES, 2001)).

In this definition the label of SEN depends both on the child's learning difficulty and that this difficulty requires educational provision which is additional to or different from what is usually available. This means that a child may be given a label of SEN in one area or school but not another because although the level of learning difficulty might be exactly the same, the provision available may be different. Consequently, depending on the resources available in schools and, for example, the level of delegated funding in the authority, a child might be recorded at School Action in one authority, at School Action Plus in another and in a third may have a statement of SEN. The Green paper on SEN (Department for Education, 2011) suggests that the current categories of School Action and School Action Plus will not be used in the future. However, the actual definition of SEN remains essentially unchanged as can be seen in the recently published Draft legislation on Reform of provision for children and young people with SEN (Department for Education, 2012).

Outside of the field of education the term learning disability tends to be used rather than the terms SEN and learning difficulties. The Valuing People White Paper (Department of Health, 2001) defines learning disability in the following way:-

Learning disability includes the presence of:

• A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with;
• A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning); which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

The document goes on to clarify that a learning disability should not be based solely on cognitive ability:-

_The presence of a low intelligence quotient, for example an IQ below 70, is not, of itself, a sufficient reason for deciding whether an individual should be provided with additional health and social care support. An assessment of social functioning and communication skills should also be taken into account when determining need._ (para 1.6, Department of Health, 2001).

This definition encompasses people with a broad range of disabilities in contrast to many other definitions of learning disability used in research which are defined wholly by IQ (Loucks, 2007). However, although the White Paper (Department of Health, 2001) definition includes a broad range of difficulties, adults with a higher level autistic spectrum disorder
i.e. Aspergers syndrome who have average or above average intelligence are not included in the definition.

In addition the term learning disability is not seen to include all those who have a ‘learning difficulty’ as the term learning difficulty also includes people who have specific learning difficulties for example dyslexia but who do not have a significant general impairment in intelligence (CIPOLD, Undated).

This paper which purports to provide a working definition of learning disabilities, states that the UK is the only country that uses learning disability in this way and that in some other countries, for example the United States, the term learning disability is used to refer to people with specific learning difficulties and as such there is no overlap between the two terms. They suggest that the term ‘intellectual disability’ used in some other countries for example United States and Canada is, however, synonymous with the above UK definition of learning disability.

The British Psychological Society (2000) definition is essentially the same as the Department of Health’s criteria. Whilst acknowledging people with learning disabilities do not constitute an homogeneous group, in terms of diagnosis and classification they suggest there are three core criteria for learning disability which are:-

- Significant impairment of intellectual functioning;
- Significant impairment of adaptive/social functioning;
- Age of onset before adulthood.

There is a need for all three criteria to be met before a person can be considered to have a learning disability and it is suggested the difficulties in assessing adaptive/social functioning have contributed, in the past, to a tendency amongst clinicians to concentrate on assessment of intellectual functioning only.

Loucks (2007) suggests that the formal definition of learning disability for diagnostic purposes is generally accepted as an IQ below 70. However, there will be number of people who will be experiencing difficulties who do not necessarily fall within this category. A person with an IQ above 70 may well still experience difficulties with cognition, communication and adaptive/social functioning. The term SEN encompasses a far broader range of difficulties that people may experience including ADHD, social communication difficulties, language difficulties and other social and emotional behavioural difficulties. Research within this area then, reflects these widely differing definitions and goes some
way to accounting for the difficulties in establishing prevalence rates of learning difficulties and disabilities and SEN within the youth offending population.

3.3 Prevalence of Special Educational Needs Within the Criminal Justice System

This next section will consider some of the literature that has explored prevalence rates of learning disabilities and SEN of people who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

3.3.1 Learning Disabilities

McBrien et al. (2003) refers to the Department of Health (1998) which they contend suggested that the rate of intellectual disability in the general population is 2%. However, establishing prevalence rates in the offending population has proved elusive. As Loucks puts it ‘the most consistent information about the number of offenders with learning difficulties or learning disabilities is that no one agrees how many exist’ (pg 11, Loucks, 2007). For example, Murphy, Harrold et al. (2000) found 28.8% of the prison subjects had IQs below 70 compared with only 2% in a study by Murphy, Harnett et al. (1995). In reviewing the literature, then, a confusing picture emerges where there is a lack of common variables, making comparisons difficult.

Some studies have investigated the rates of learning disabilities in people suspected of carrying out a crime. For example, Gudjonsson and Clare et al. (1993) found 8.6% of suspects in a police station had an IQ of less than 70 and 42% had IQs between 70 and 79. In the general population it is estimated that approximately 2.2% have an IQ of less than 70, and approximately 6.7% have IQs between 70 and 79. In another study, Lyall et al. (1995) estimated a rate of 15% for learning disabilities amongst suspects, although it was noted that there had not been any reliability and validity studies of the screening procedure used.

Other studies have looked at prisoners on remand or in prison. Both Loucks (2007) and Mason and Murphy (2002a) refer to the study by Coid (1988) which investigated whether ‘mentally abnormal’ prisoners were accepted or rejected by the NHS. They suggest that this study found a prevalence rate of 0.34% (\(34 \approx 10000\)). However, this was a retrospective survey of ‘mentally abnormal’ men remanded to Winchester prison for reports on their state of mind and health or their fitness to plead. The study covered a five year period from 1979 to 1983. Coid suggested that approximately 2000 men were remanded per year given an
approximate total of 10,000 over the five year period. His actual sample group was 362 and it was this group’s medical records that he examined retrospectively. Of this 362 he found 34 who he felt had a primary diagnosis of ‘mental retardation’. So, the conclusion drawn by others of only 34 in approximately 10,000 (i.e. 0.34%) having learning disabilities would seem to be erroneous as there is no information on the other nine and half thousand prisoners on remand.

A study by Gunn et al. (1991) also found low levels of mental retardation within the population sampled but again was also primarily looking at psychiatric disorders, of which mental retardation was one of many. The study randomly selected approximately 1500 sentenced men and around 400 young offenders for interview. Only 0.5% were given a diagnosis of mental retardation. However, it does not appear that any formal assessment of cognitive ability was given and the diagnosis was based on a clinical interview schedule.

There have also been a number of reviews of literature e.g. McBrien (2003): Foley (2001). In the Foley review, 20 studies were examined which looked at the academic characteristics of imprisoned young offenders spanning the period from 1976 to 2000. This review found a lack of uniformity in the measures used, which included various IQ tests, self-report, tests of language skills and the WRAT (Wide Ranging Achievement Test). The review did not explore definitions of inclusion and exclusion between papers making comparisons difficult. The papers reviewed also varied in sample size, age range and gender.

However, in the analysis of the literature the author suggests that, whilst a number of studies found full-scale IQ scores of between 80 and 100 (e.g. Beebe and Mueller (1993) who reported an average full-scale IQ of 89), another study is cited, (Mesinger, 1976), in which a broader range of scores was obtained. In this study 14.1% had an IQ below 74 as measured by the Otis Beta test. The author also noted that a higher performance IQ than verbal IQ was a frequent pattern, citing studies by Ollendick (1979) and Rincker et al. (1990).

A slightly more recent review by McBrien (2003) identified and explored a number of methodological issues in studies conducted before January 2003. In examining these studies, two main approaches were found to have been used. One approach was to explore which offenders had intellectual disabilities and the other was to explore which people with intellectual disabilities offended. McBrien found that a wide range of approaches were used in the studies to ascertain the presence of intellectual disability (e.g. administrative
definitions, psychiatric diagnosis, educational background, self-report, IQ measures and adaptive behaviour) and suggested that these methods were less than adequate.

Some of the reasons why these approaches to ascertain the presence of an intellectual disability were felt to be less than adequate are listed below:

The use of administrative classification of those in receipt of intellectual disability services can be problematic since there is likely to be a number of people who may be entitled to intellectual disability services who, for whatever reason, do not access them. For example, Loucks (2007) refers to studies that indicate that many adults with mild learning difficulties lose touch with services when they leave school (e.g. Northwest Training and Development Team, 2005).

In looking at self-report, McBrien (2003) identifies a number of potential difficulties and quotes a conclusion by Lyall, Holland et al. (1995) that self-reports of reading and writing difficulties and type of school attended were not reliable methods. When comparing self-reported difficulties with results of the short form WAIS – R another study found that none of those self reporting difficulties actually had an IQ below 70 and whilst 5/21 of the self-report group had an IQ below 75 and almost equal number (4/21) of the control group also had an IQ below 75 (Murphy et al., 1995) indicating that the self-report method was over inclusive. This study also found that verification of the type of school attended was difficult as very few of the prisoners were able to remember the name or location of their school.

McBrien (2003) suggests that results are also affected by the particular IQ measures as well as how and when IQ tests are administered. For example, Noble and Connolly (1992) are reported to have found that average IQ scores tend to be lower if they are administered shortly after admission to prison, if they are administered in a group, rather than individually and if tests other than the WAIS – R are used. In addition a number of studies have used the quick test. McBrien (2003) suggests that others have found that results using the quick test do not agree with those obtained from the WAIS – R (French et al., 1995).

McBrien (2003) also found that in her review of the literature there was only one study that used both an IQ measure and a measure of adaptive behaviour when looking at the prevalence of learning disability. This study was conducted by Mason and Murphy (2002b) and investigated people with intellectual disabilities on probation. Findings suggested that if the impairment was defined as two standard deviations below the mean on measures of both intellect (as measured by the WAIS – R) and social functioning (as measured by the VABS), then 5.7% of their sample would fall into the category of intellectual disability.
In more recent literature Ford, Andrews et al. (2008) explored the usefulness of a screening tool in identifying learning disabilities within the adult forensic population. Although the actual focus of the study was on the usefulness of the screening tool, they do address a number of methodological issues highlighted by McBrien in identifying learning disabilities. They used both an age appropriate WISC measure as well as a measure of adaptive functioning i.e. the Vinelend Adaptive Behaviour Scales completed by a knowledgeable parent or carer to identify learning difficulties. This information was used as a baseline from which to judge the usefulness of a screening tool. The average full-scale IQ for the sample (N = 71, 51 male, 20 female) was 75 with the ‘bulk’ falling in the borderline and extremely low ranges (actual percentages not specified). Although they suggest caution in interpretation because of their sample size, they purport that the range in their study is not significantly different from a larger scale study of intellectual ability of the same population (Kennedy et al., 2003).

Mottram (2007) investigated the number of prisoners with a learning disability in three different prisons, Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Liverpool, Style and Hindley. HMP Liverpool is a male prison, Style a women's prison and Hindley a young offenders institution. In identifying learning disabilities the WAIS was used to measure IQ and the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale was used to measure social functioning, although results from this are not included in this report. In HMP Liverpool of those tested 7.1% had an IQ below 70 in comparison to approximately 2.2% of the general population, 9.3% had IQs between 70 and 74 and 14.3% had IQs between 75 and 79 i.e. 23.6% had IQs between 70 and 79 in comparison to 6.7% of the general population.

At Style of those tested 8.3% had an IQ below 70, 10% had an IQ between 70 and 74 and 21.7% had an IQ between 75 and 79. At the young offenders institution, 3.3% of those tested were found to have an IQ below 70, 1.7% had an IQ between 70 and 74 and 21.7% had IQs between 75 and 79.

The results from HMP Liverpool are discussed in more detail in a further paper by Hayes, Shackell et al. (2007). In this paper results from both the WAIS and Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales are discussed. As noted earlier, 7.1% of those tested had an IQ less than 70. On the Vineland adaptive behaviour scales, using self-report rather than information from a parent or carer, 10.1% of the participants gained standard scores below 70. A further 33.3% fell in the borderline range and taken with the 10.1% meant that 43.4% had ‘serious deficits in adaptive behaviour’ (page 164). When combining scores on the WAIS and the VABS only 2.9% (n = 4) had standard scores below 70 on both tests and 9.4% gain scores
below 75. Borderline groups were seen to be those with standard scores < 80 with 21.7% of the sample falling within this range.

The authors suggest that the proportion of 2.9% falling below 70 on both instruments is not markedly different from the population distribution. However, they go on to suggest that the range of abilities within the subtests indicate specific areas of difficulty which may be of concern particularly within the criminal justice system. Approaching half (45.3%) had communications scores on the VABS of <70 which the authors argue would seriously compromise their understanding of the highly verbalised context of the court room.

A further paper by Chitsabesan, Bailey et al. (2007), commissioned by the YJB of England and Wales, explored the learning profiles and educational needs of young offenders. The authors point out that previous studies have not always clearly defined the term learning disability or had used less well-recognised measures, which they suggest are addressed in their study.

The Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) was used to measure IQ and the WORD to assess reading and reading comprehension (which will be discussed later). In their definition of learning disabilities they refer to the ICD-10 definition of mental retardation (IQ <70) but do not include a measure of adaptive skills suggesting that whilst this should be included that the general convergence between assessment of adaptive behaviour and cognitive skills has been reported elsewhere (Hayes & Farnill, 2003).

In relation to results from the WISC, 20% had an IQ of less than 70 and as such the authors argue would fall into the ICD-10 criteria of learning disabilities. In addition they found verbal IQs to be significantly lower than performance IQ and this was particularly the case for male offenders. Only 2.2 % of the general population would be thought to have IQs below 70. The additional finding that within the prison population verbal IQs were significantly lower than performance IQs suggests that low Verbal IQs are more evident in the prison population.

Actual prevalence rates of learning disabilities amongst the offending population and those known to the criminal justice system remain difficult to establish. Despite this, however, there is growing agreement in the literature that there are significant numbers of people in the criminal justice system whose learning disabilities mean that they will experience additional difficulties whether this is in relation to understanding the criminal justice system itself or in accessing interventions put in place to address their offending behaviour. In addition there is an acknowledgement within the research that there are also a number of
people who, whilst they do not strictly meet the criteria for the label of learning disability will nevertheless experience difficulties in coping with the criminal justice system and McBrien (2003) argues that

one of the most prevalent vulnerable groups amongst offenders comprises those who do not have an intellectual disability as formally defined but who do have much lower cognitive and adaptive abilities than do either the general public or the offending population (P 103, Ibid).

3.3.2 Special Educational Needs

As has been discussed earlier learning disabilities can be seen to fall within a wider umbrella term of SEN. Within this broad term there are other branches of research that have explored the prevalence of other learning difficulties within the criminal justice system.

An evaluation of asset forms in 2002 suggested that 25% of young people within the youth justice system had been identified as having SEN and of those 60% had a statement of SEN (i.e. 15% in total) (Baker et al., 2003; cited in Welsh Assembly Government, 2009; YJB, n.d.). This document quotes 3.4% of the overall population in Wales as having a statement at that time but noted however large variations between authorities ranging from 1.6% to 5.1% (Estyn, 2003; cited in Welsh Assembly Government, 2009).

The reliability of the data was questioned, however, by the authors as it was based on Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) information from schools which can be inaccurate and vague. No breakdown of specific categories of SEN was provided but suggested that almost a fifth of the entries were recorded as having 'other' needs.

The analysis of Asset showed that half were underachieving in schools and one in three needed help with reading and writing (YJB, n.d.). In the study undertaken by Chitsabesan, Bailey et al. (2007) referred to earlier, levels of reading and reading comprehension where explored using the Word Reading and Reading Comprehension subscales from the WORD (Wechsler Objective Reading Dimensions). In terms of reading age, 27% had reading ages one standard deviation below the mean (standard score = 70-84) compared to approximately 14% in the general population, 20% had a reading score two standard deviations below the mean (standard score equals 55 to 69) compared to an expected 2.1% in the general population and 5% had a reading score three standard deviations below the mean (standard score equals 44 to 54) compared to an expected 0.15% in the general population. Only 32% had a reading score in the average range is (standard score equals 85 - 115) compared to the general population where approximately 68% would be expected to score in this range. There were no results for the remaining 16%.
In terms of reading comprehension these fell below those of reading. Here only 15% gained a comprehension score in the average range. Of the remainder, 32% scored one standard deviation below the mean, 25% were two standard deviations below and 4% three standard deviations below the mean. There were no results for the remaining 23%. Overall the mean chronological age for the sample was 15.1 years. The mean age equivalent of the sample was 4.1 years below chronological age for word reading and 5.4 years below chronological age for reading comprehension.

A study by Bryan (2004) investigated the hypothesis that a significantly higher percentage of the prison population has speech, language and communication difficulties compared with the general population. The participants in this study were 30 male young offenders with an age range of 18-21 years, serving 3 years or more in a young offenders institute. Results found that: on a naming test 43% (13/30) were described as gaining a score significantly lower than the limits acceptable for their age: on a test of grammatical competency, 73% (22/30) were reported to have scored significantly below acceptable limits for their age and in relation to the comprehension test administered 23% (7/30) scored significantly below an acceptable level and less than would be expected at age 11 years. On a test of picture description: 47% (14/30) gained two or more ratings of moderate impairment.

Part of this study also looked at self-reported difficulties. Hearing difficulties were reported by 17% (5/30). Half of the participants reported difficulties with memory and 37% (11/30) reported literacy difficulties. Seven participants had significantly low scores on all assessments, four of which had attended special school, though the type was not specified so it is not clear whether their attendance at a special school was related to their learning or their behaviour. The other three had attended mainstream schools. For a fifth of the participants there was a definitive report of learning difficulties and all of these participants had ‘some significant difficulties with speech and language’. No assessments of non-verbal ability were included so it is unclear whether any language difficulties identified were specific or part of a more general learning difficulty.

In further study, this time by Bryan, Freer et al. (2007), the language skills of 50% of the population in an institute for young offenders aged between 15 and 17 years were screened. Literacy and numeracy information was also collected. The participants completed three language assessments: the TROG (Test of Receptive Grammar), the BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Scale) and the TOAL-3 (Test of Adolescent and Adult Language). On the TROG the majority of participants (49) achieved the expected score for people 12 years and above. On the BPVS, scores were generally poorer. None of the
participants gained an age equivalent equal to their chronological age with differences ranging from 1.5 years to 11.25 years. The mean age for the group as a whole was 11.5 years.

The TOAL 3 comprises of 4 subscales: Listening Vocabulary, Listening Grammar, Speaking Vocabulary and Speaking Grammar each giving a standard score between 1 and 20. Scores between 1 and 3 are described as very poor and a score of 4 or 5 is described as poor. These two categories taken together account for 9% of the normal population. In this study a much higher percentage of the young people fell in to these two categories (46% to 67% across the four subtests).

Information about literacy and numeracy was obtained from prison records. This indicated that 62% did not reach Level 1 of the National Standards for Adult Literacy (equivalent to GCSE grades D-G) and 60% did not reach Level 1 in numeracy. No measures of non-verbal ability were included in this study, so as with the previous study it is not clear the extent to which poor language skills reflect specific language difficulties or are part of more general learning difficulties.

BIBIC (British Institute for Brain Injured Children, 2005) surveyed YOTs and found that 35% of children under 17 with Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) had either diagnosed mental health disorder or learning difficulty. This may well be an underestimate since they only requested information on diagnosed cases (Loucks, 2007). Of the 35%, 3% had an autistic spectrum disorder, 42% had a diagnosis of ADHD and 46% had a diagnosis of some other learning difficulty or mental health disorder including Tourette's syndrome, conduct disorder, emotional and behavioural difficulties or depression.

Examples from the study also suggest that young people with language and communication difficulties can experience great difficulties in understanding the terms of any orders they are placed under. The study found that often they do not remember what they have signed and can be easily confused over the finer details. The study cites one example of a young person who thought that he would not breach his order if he ran down the street that he had been banned from because he had not actually stopped. Loucks (2007) also refers to a study by Seden (2006) who suggested that the behaviour of people with learning difficulties may be misinterpreted as antisocial expressing concern that ASBOs may be imposed inappropriately on this group.
Although there remains a lack of consensus around definitions and prevalence of learning
difficulties and disabilities and SEN there does seem to be a growing acknowledgement
that a significant number of young people entering the youth justice system have SEN.

In the study ‘Seen and Heard: supporting vulnerable children and youth justice
system’ (Talbot, 2010), the prevalence of the difficulties found in research was compared
with the views of YOT workers. In examining this relationship they quoted the following
prevalence rates:-

- learning difficulties: 23% of young offenders have IQs below 70 (Harrington et al.,
  2005)
- communication difficulties: 60% (Bryan, 2004; Bryan et al., 2007)
- mental health problems: 40% (Healthcare Commission, 2006)
- literacy difficulties: 29% (YJB, 2006b)
- special educational needs: 25% (YJB, 2006b)
- ADHD: 15% of 10 to 19-year-olds in custody had a diagnosis of ADHD (Fazel et al.,
  2008)

Although routine screening was found not to have been undertaken by the YOT, the
participants in the study were asked how closely these research findings matched with their
own experiences. The findings suggest that although most of the staff said the proportions
of children who offend were similar to those found in the research there were some
differences which the author suggests reflect the lack of routine screening and assessment
procedures.

There would seem to be therefore agreement in both the research and with workers in the
field that there are significant numbers of young people presenting with SEN in the youth
justice system. This can present these young people with a number of hurdles in
negotiating their way through the youth justice system.

In the Talbot study participants were also asked what proportions of children found it hard
to engage fully in interventions. Of those who responded to this question approximately 2/5
felt that almost half of the children with impairments or difficulties found it hard to participate
(Talbot, 2010).

The most often cited difficulty for children with SEN was in relation to understanding
(Talbot, 2010). Responses from youth offending workers indicated difficulties in the
following areas
• understanding the various legal and youth justice processes
• understanding their rights and entitlements
• understanding the consequences of non-compliance both with court orders and more generally understanding the impact of their behaviour and managing difficult social situations
• understanding written information ranging from official letters to timetables and more generally information displayed on notice boards
• being able to convey their own level of understanding
• making sense of the world
• engaging effectively in interventions.

The main aim of this study was to consider the views of a number of YOT staff in relation to how the identified and supported children and young people with particular impairments, what specialist services they were able to access, what training was available to them and to identify what would help them most in working with these young people. YOT staff were asked to complete an on-line questionnaire using ‘survey monkey’, although hard copies were also available. In order to ensure a range of views would be reflected in the study, four different post holders were encouraged to participate, these being Heads of service, YOT managers, YOT caseworkers and Specialist staff. In all, responses were received from 89 out of 157 YOTs in England and Wales. In addition, 3 focus groups took place to supplement the information gathered about one particular area in the questionnaire – custodial sentences although the data from these is not particularly highlighted in the study as a whole. In total there were 208 responses to the questionnaire. The biggest percentage of returns was from specialist workers who made up 47%. Of this group over half were from health and a much smaller number (ten) were from education. Only 29% of responses were from caseworkers, with 20% of responses coming from YOT managers and 4% coming from heads of service. This perhaps indicates that although a range of views were elicited, the views of caseworkers may have been under-represented and potentially the views of specialist workers over-represented. The data was analysed by total response and by different staff group – heads of service and YOT managers together, YOT caseworkers and specialist YOT staff. Although the data was analysed by group as well, the results were generally presented as a total response even when markedly different responses were given by the different groups. As these staff groups undertake differing roles it would have perhaps have been more useful to present the data by the three groups. In addition where quotes are given these are just attributed to ‘a participant’. Providing information about their role would have helped to gain a sense of these different groups views. Despite this, the study highlights a number of particular areas of concern and is suggestive of YOT workers
views of some potential solutions which include examples of good practice. More than 4/5 of the participants highlighted a need for greater involvement from specialist workers with some participants suggesting the need for speech and language therapists or learning disability nurses, whilst others suggested mental health workers, education staff and educational psychologists. The study goes on to suggest that specialist staff ‘in situ’ could help to identify need, provide support to YOT staff on how best to work with young people as well as assisting in adapting programmes and interventions. This study looks at what having access to one specialist service, educational psychology, might look like and sets out to explore whether one approach, consultation, could be useful and effective in supporting YOT workers in their work with children and young people.

3.4 Conclusion

Although actual prevalence rates remains elusive it seems clear that there are significant numbers of young people who have identified or unidentified SEN in the youth justice system. There is also a growing recognition that the implications for these young people is serious and is reflected in the views of YOT workers who feel that young people with SEN are more likely to get a custodial sentence (Talbot, 2010). Having SEN can impact at every phase in the criminal justice system from understanding the charge brought against them, understanding and participating the court process, understanding what is expected of them and the potential consequences from non-compliance to finding it difficult to engage and understand programmes and interventions put in place to help them address their offending behaviour.
Chapter 4 Consultation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief description of the work of Psychiatrist Gerald Caplan and the development and definitions of consultation. The next section looks at a common model that is used in the area of school psychology – eco-behavioural consultation. Section 4.4 considers issues more directly related to consultation in the area of educational psychology. The chapter concludes by considering some of the literature relating to the evaluation of consultation as used by EPs.

4.2 Consultation: Development and Definitions

Possibly the earliest systematic approach to human services consultation began in Israel in 1949. Psychiatrist Gerald Caplan, together with his small team, was given the task of delivering mental health services to 16,000 adolescent immigrants. He realised that the service would have to be delivered more effectively than would be allowed by the traditional model of referral/diagnosis/psychotherapy of individual clients. What emerged was a different model of service delivery. Instead of seeing clients in a central clinic, Caplan and his staff travelled to the clients' locality. There they met with the referred adolescent and their caregivers. He found that this approach often improved the caregiver's (who became termed consultees) effectiveness in managing the client's problem. He believed that this consultation approach could impact on the mental health of many more clients than the more traditional one-to-one approach.

Erchul and Martins (2010) suggest that, conceptually, Caplan's 1963 definition encapsulates the essential features of mental health consultation i.e.

\[\textit{Consultation,.. denote[s] the process of interaction between two professional persons- the consultant, who is a specialist, and the consultee, who invokes his help in regard to a current work problem with which the latter is having some difficulty, and which he has decided is within the former's area of specialised competence. The work problem involves the management or treatment of one or more clients of the consultee, or the planning or implementation of a program to cater to such clients.} \text{(pg 470, Caplan, 1963)}\]

There are several features of consultation that are seen to distinguish it from other forms of professional relationships, like supervision or teaching. These are:-
A triadic relationship between consultant, consulted and their clients.

The relationship between consultant and consultee is non-hierarchical.

The consultation focuses on work-related issues rather than personal issues.

The consultant has no ‘administrative responsibility’ or formal authority over the consultee and as such responsibility for the client remains with the consultee.

It is considered to be a voluntary relationship and as such the consultee can accept or reject any advice or guidance offered. Attempting to force a consultee to accept a consultant’s suggestion is likely to be met with resistance and therefore unlikely to be successfully implemented (Hines, 2000). They also state that the voluntary initiation of consultation by the consultee is seen as important for 2 reasons. Firstly there is an acknowledgement that a problem exists and secondly the consultee is more likely to be motivated to do something about the problem.

Discussions remain confidential, unless there is a belief that harm may result from remaining silent.

There is a dual purpose to consultation. Firstly it is to help the consultee with the current issue. Secondly it should aim to enable the consultee to develop skills to deal effectively with similar problems should they arise in the future without, preferably, the need to involve the consultant i.e. Consultation has both remedial and preventative goals.

Although the field of consultation has developed and progressed since these beginnings and different models of consultation are used widely across a number of fields and disciplines many of these features remain relevant even though definitions may vary.

In providing a definition of consultation Gutkin and Curtis (2000) utilise that of Medway (1979) who defines the process of consultation as ‘collaborative problem-solving between mental health specialist (the consultant) and one or more persons (the consultees) who are responsible for providing some form of psychological assistance to another (the client)’ (pg 276, Medway, 1979). However, they go on to acknowledge there is no single definition of consultation which is universally accepted. Other definitions abound. For example, Wagner (2000) defines consultation as a ‘....voluntary, collaborative, non-supervisory approach, established to aid the functioning of a system and its inter-related systems...’ (P.11). The definition of Sheridan, Kratochwill et al. (1996) is presented by Kennedy, Cameron et al. (2009) as a more ‘transparent, working definition of consultation’(P.11). In this definition consultation is seen as ‘.... an indirect problem-solving process between a consultant and one or more consultees to address concerns presented by a client....’ (pg 341-342, Sheridan et al., 1996). Whilst acknowledging the definition has weaknesses, Kennedy,
Cameron et al. (2009) suggest it makes explicit the indirect nature of consultation as well as making reference to problem-solving within a triadic relationship between consultant, consultation and the issue or the focus of change.

Bozic (2004) describes how Caplan did not see the consultant role as necessarily fixed but rather that the consultant may move along a continuum between client centred and consultant centred consultation. Although proposed for mental health consultation, Bozic suggests that it can be applied to distinguish different styles of EP consultation. He suggests that at one end of the continuum – client centred consultation, the EP would make an assessment of the pupil’s (client’s) problems and then recommend how the teacher should deal with the ‘case’. This would appear to be very similar to a referral type model where the EP acts as advice giver. Here there may be a risk that the recommendations or advice do not fit with the consultee’s perception of the difficulty and as has already been suggested, programmes are less likely to be implemented if teachers have little ownership of the solutions. At the other end of the continuum is Consultee-centred consultation where the consultant attempts to improve the skill level of the consultee through helping them to develop their problem-solving skills and support them in finding their own solution. Here, it may be the case that because the focus is supporting the consultee to develop their skills, the child and families needs and views may be overlooked.

In reality it is unlikely that EPs using consultation as a model will fall at one extreme or another and it is more likely that they will fall somewhere between the two. There will be individual differences between EPs as to where on the continuum they may place themselves and within EP differences depending on the piece of work being undertaken. It is a common misconception that, as consultation is seen as an indirect way of working, that no direct work with the child is undertaken. However, this is not the case but rather activities such as assessments, observations, consultation with parents, pupils and others come out of the consultative process.

### 4.2.1 Eco-Behavioural Consultation

Although there are many different models of consultation, in reviewing the literature, in the area of school psychology, the most commonly referred to model is eco-behavioural or one of its variants. Gutkin and Curtis (1990) suggest that school based consultation services differ significantly from the medical model in their conceptualisation of human behaviour. Significant models within this field are suggested to be behavioural where behaviour is primarily seen to be a function of environmental stimuli (e.g. Bergan, 1977) and the
ecological model which postulates that behaviour results from the complex interaction between environmental factors and people’s individual characteristics (e.g. Bandura, 1978). Gutkin and Curtis (1982) had originally postulated problem consultation and behavioural consultation as two distinct models but subsequently by 1990, they suggested that there was clear congruence between the two models. For example, Gutkin and Curtis (1990) compare different models including Bergan’s (1977) 4 stage model: Problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation and problem evaluation. They also refer to Goodwin and Coates (1976) model which has 12 steps: define inappropriate behaviour, define appropriate behaviour, analyse antecedents for inappropriate behaviour, analyse consequences for inappropriate behaviour, analyse antecedents for appropriate behaviour, analyse consequences for appropriate behaviour, design antecedents for appropriate behaviour, design a signal and design consequences for inappropriate behaviour, implement, follow-up.

Gutkin and Curtis (1990) also refer to their own seven-step problem-solving model developed in 1982 (Gutkin & Curtis, 1982): define and clarify the problem, analyse the forces impinging on the problem, brainstorm alternative strategies, evaluate and choose among alternative strategies, specify consultee and consultant responsibilities, implement the chosen strategy and evaluate the effectiveness of the action and recycle if necessary.

An example of a problem-solving model is that of D’Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) cited in Erchul and Martens (2010). They proposed a 5 stage model of successful problem-solving. These are general orientation, problem definition and formulation, generation of alternatives, decision making and verification.

These problem-solving and behavioural consultation models have clear similarities and Gutkin and Curtis (1990) argue that although specific words may differ, the underlying concepts are virtually identical leading them to feel that they could be integrated into a single system – ‘ecological consultation’. This term was felt to be broad enough to encompass both behavioural and problem-solving consultation whilst at the same time acknowledging the importance of the nature of the interaction between persons, environments and behaviours during the consultation process.

The term eco-behavioural consultation is now more commonly used and one variant of this approach is conjoint behavioural consultation. EBC is defined as" a systemic, indirect form of service delivery in which parents and teachers are joined to work together to address the
academic, social or behavioural needs of an individual for whom both parties bear some responsibility (in Sheridan et al., 2007; pg 22 Sheridan & Kratochwill, 1992).

Within the model several goals and objectives are outlined that are achieved through the implementation of four collaborative stages: - conjoint needs identification, needs analysis, plan implementation and evaluation.

### 4.3 Consultation in Educational Psychology

Consultation within Educational Psychology Services, either as an element of what EPs do or as part of whole service delivery has grown steadily (Watkins, 2000) and the significance of consultation to EP practice is demonstrated by its inclusion in initial training for educational psychologists (Kennedy et al., 2009).

Wagner (2000) suggests that although consultation as practiced by EPs may contain some of the elements described in other models, none are adequate for the EP context. She describes consultation as ‘a process in which concerns are raised and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated which combines joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review.’ (Wagner, 1995). Within consultation there is no notion of referral. Consultation involves working with the person most concerned, and therefore possibly more motivated to bring about change. However, consultation can occur at the individual, group or organisation level and consultations may move between these levels.

Wagner (2008) outlines the psychologies that inform consultation. She suggests these come primarily from social psychology and starts from the premise that behaviour is a function of the person and the situation (Lewin 1946) i.e. taking a social interactionalist perspective. The psychologies that inform practice are seen to be personal construct psychology, systems thinking and family therapy, solution focused approaches, ideas from appreciative enquiry and narrative thinking.

Using personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955) enables an exploration of individuals’ constructs of how they view themselves and others. Within personal construct theory individuals are viewed as scientists trying to make sense of the world. Constructs are a framework that individuals use to make predictions about the world and therefore to inform their behaviour. Assessment of these constructs can give insight into how their constructs influence their beliefs, thinking and subsequent behaviour.
Systems thinking explores the importance of sequences of behaviour and how patterns can build over time. Work therefore may need to be at the individual, group or whole organisational level.

The use of ideas from systems thinking and family therapy enable consideration to be given to the different contexts the child experiences, how these interrelate and how these may give rise to conflicting expectations for example.

In acknowledging the constructionalist nature of language Wagner (2008) states that the language of deficit and labelling are avoided and as such frameworks provided by solution focused conversations are helpful and have become integrated into the consultation model (in Wagner, 2008; Wagner & Gillies, 2001). Solution focused approaches aim to identify goals rather that ‘dig for deficits’ and seek to identify exceptions and to locate the clients own resources. Hymen, Michel et al. (2002) suggest that solution focused questions provide structure to the consultation.

In explaining the process of consultation, before the consultation takes place, consultees are asked to consider some key questions which are

- What concerns you?
- What have you tried?
- How would you like things to change? (and what would that look like?)
- What you hope to get from this consultation?

Wagner (2008) argues that in many cases this enables the consultee to have already noticed what may make a difference before the consultation and can lead to what solution focused approaches would call pre-session change.

In describing what is effective about consultation, Wagner (2008) lays emphasis on the process of consultation

*Consultation provides time and space for busy professionals, such as teachers etc., who have concerns about children to have reflective conversations that make a difference. It is the process (original emphasis) of consultation that is the key to the difference that consultation makes - not the actions that are arrived at when the consultation is ending. If the actions themselves made the difference, then they could be prescribed without the need for consultation (pg 148, Wagner, 2008).*

In these terms then conversations are seen to be at the heart of consultation. ‘We believe EPs are employed to have conversations’ and that ‘in a purposeful conversation, we have a

- **Externalising the problem.** Moving from internal to external changes how we view the problem. If we see it differently, we will tend to act differently towards it.
- **Getting Meta, taking a helicopter view.** Through asking questions about the concern, e.g. what has been tried, what strategies, outcomes, exceptions - when is the problem not there, less intense, last less long etc., Wagner suggests that a more detached and therefore comprehensive view emerges.
- **The Paradigm shift.** From an examination of the connections, the view of the concern shifts from within-person to a more interactionalist stance.
- **Engaging in self-reflexivity.** The process of consultation enables the person to recognise their own role in the patterns of behaviour and that possibilities for change, through taking different actions emerge.

McNab (2002) sees consultation as a ‘special conversation’ to address an issue, which is based on Solution Focused Brief Therapy. The conversation is about seeking a solution to the consultee's problem or concern. He sees the EP as a 'conversational artist’ who takes up a stance of 'respectful not knowing'. There needs to be an acknowledgement of the participants’ experience of difficulty and that solutions are sought but not imposed. Asking questions and making tentative suggestions lead teachers to feel empowered. Demonstrating, giving advice and telling lead teachers to feel belittled, inadequate, useless and inferior (Landsberg, 1996). The importance of consultees having ownership of actions is further illustrated in a study by Reinking, Livesay et al. (1978) They found that the likelihood of programmes generated as a result of consultation being implemented is related directly to the degree of consultee involvement in the problem-solving process.

McNab (2002) suggests that consultation is inherently inclusive and inherently addresses school improvement. It values, affirms and empowers teachers, parents and children. He goes on to state that it affirms EPs professionalism because there is a transparent application of psychology, tasks are agreed which have a clear purpose and it is reflective of the plan-do-review cycle which allows learning and accountability. There is a view sometimes expressed that consultation means that no direct work is undertaken by the psychologist. This is not the case, but rather the assessment comes out of consultation and has a clear and agreed purpose.
4.4 Evaluation of Consultation

A number of Educational Psychology Services who use consultation have undertaken evaluations of their service delivery. For example, in evaluating their then new consultation model in 2000, Buckinghamshire found that the response they had from schools was generally positive. The schools were reported to like the immediate feedback from consultation as well as EP involvement in the classroom. Positives were also noted by the EPs themselves. There was a shift away from individual work to more systemic work, together with a reduction in report writing (Munro, 2000).

Dennis (2004) in reviewing the implementation of consultation after one year, gathered data from 22 schools where it was felt consultation had been implemented with varying degrees of success. From the analysis a number of factors were identified that were felt to have an impact on the success of implementing consultation. Results indicated that schools fell on a continuum from schools that seemed to be unaware of the model and how it might be used to schools that saw ‘consultation as integral to the development of inclusive practice’ (P 27).

In her conclusion, Dennis suggests that the degree to which consultation can be implemented successfully seemed to relate directly to staff attitudes to special needs and inclusion. Other important factors were identified as the relationships the EP had, not only with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), but with other staff, the degree to which SENCOs had protected release time, and the degree to which SENCOs had good links with management. There were also some external issues identified that could mitigate against the successful implementation of consultation. For example, where there was an expectation that the EP had assessed a pupil before a request for statutory assessment could be made.

Evans (2005) evaluated the impact of a group consultation approach. Teachers were invited to attend a problem-solving consultation both as presenters of cases and as contributors to solutions, with sessions facilitated by EPs.

The problem-solving model had the following stages:-

- What do you want from the consultation
- Problem exploration
- Target setting
- Agree interventions
- Confirm action
Findings indicated that staff felt very positive about being able to plan for concerns discussed following the group consultation and that they benefited from access to the skills and knowledge of others. However, it is not clear from the study how teacher’s viewed the role of the EP in consultation but suggest that the skills of the EP as group facilitator would be one of a number of variables that might impact on the outcome of the consultations.

When examining research from the USA, a survey by Gutkin and Curtis, (1990) showed, amongst other things that there was a drop in referral rates and increased teacher effectiveness led to gains for other children in the same class. Teachers also found problems to be less serious and there were changes in teachers’ perceptions of causation with a move away from within-child explanations to a more internationalist view. Similar findings have been found in the UK (Wagner, 2000). In Kensington and Chelsea, requests for statementing reduced but requests for EP involvement did not.

In another US study, Sheridan, Kratochwill et al. (1996) reviewed outcome research and found at least some positive results in approximately 3/4 of the studies examined. Approximately a third reported some neutral results and 4% percent reported at least some negative results. When examining the outcomes across all studies just under 70% were positive, around 30% were neutral and 5% were negative. When looking at the consultation model used just under half used a variant of behavioural consultation. Only 11% had used mental health consultation and 4% organisational consultation. Just over a quarter of studies examined identified ‘other’ consultation models and just over 10% no model was named. When looking at the type of model used they found that those studies using behavioural consultation had the most consistently positive results with 89% in the positive, 11% neutral and no reported negative results. This compared with 57% positive and 43% neutral where mental health consultation had been used. Results were less positive for those studies on the ‘other’ model category. Here just under 37% were positive, 65% were neutral and 6% were negative. Sheridan suggests some caution in interpretation as she suggests a bias may exist in only publishing results with positive outcomes. However, the pattern of results suggest that models with clear conceptual and empirical validation would seem to be better than what Sheridan describes as more eclectic models.

Farouk (1999) reports that much EP consultation practice in the UK is not based on a coherent model and systematic approach. However, findings indicated that EPs were engaging in many of the strategies that are seen to be central to consultation i.e. ‘adopting a joint problem-solving approach, having a genuine two-way meeting, building on teachers’ own existing strategies, fitting in with the teachers’ ways of working and the importance of following up and reviewing progress’ (pg 261, Farouk, 1999). Whilst studies indicated the
theoretical underpinnings of consultation used, Leadbetter (2006) suggests that few studies provide explicit details about what EPs do 'under the guise of consultation'. If a coherent and systematic approach is to be adopted, Wagner (2000) emphasises the need for assumptions to be discussed and made visible and suggests that often this is not the case.

However, Wagner goes on to say 'When consultation works as it is intended, a greater capacity develops in the system for developing solutions, and there is less amplifying of deviance and pathology. Thus, the psychology used is of great importance', (Wagner, 1995).

Kennedy, Fredrickson et al. (2008) expand on this idea suggesting that the ‘psychological theories which underpin the different models of consultation in turn influence the process in which the consultant engages, the content of what is said and the way in which it is said’ (page 170). In their study, Kennedy, Fredrickson et al. investigated the extent to which EPs espoused theory was reflected in what they actually did in consultation. Espoused theories included solution focused approaches, problem-solving, personal construct psychology, neurolinguistic programming and humanistic approaches as well as approaches based on the work of Wagner. The most frequently named psychological theory was solution focused followed by problem-solving and personal construct psychology. The authors suggest it is interesting that psychodynamic, behavioural and cognitive behavioural approaches were not explicitly mentioned as an influence on the model of consultation although one EP did make reference to social learning theory. In relation to mapping practice to espoused theory there was evidence that behaviour in consultation reflected espoused theory. For example, three of the four stages of problem-solving were addressed by those EP’s who said they used a problem-solving analysis model.

As the authors themselves note, the sample size for this study was small which has implications in terms of generalisability. However, in terms of overall conclusions they suggest that the study ‘indicates a high degree of congruence between theory, research and practice at least in the early stages of the consultation process, and substantial consistency between psychologists’ but that ‘further research on the later stages of action planning, supporting implementation and evaluation of outcomes is needed’.

It is now generally acknowledged that consultation is used as a model of service delivery in a growing number of EP services. Much of the literature in relation to EP consultation unsurprisingly relates to consultation in school settings and there is less written about consultation by EPs in other settings. The second part of this study will examine how a
consultation model of service delivery can be transferred to a different setting – working within a YOT.
Chapter 5  Methodology

5.1  Introduction.

The overall aim of this study which was divided into two phases was to look at how the Educational Psychology Service offered to the YOT could be developed in collaboration with them. As such, the nature of this study lent itself to an action research approach. The chapter begins, therefore, by discussing the nature of action research before moving on to describe the individual phases of the study that made up one cycle of the action research process. In describing the phases of the study, methodological issues around the use of focus groups are explored as well as issues related to insider research. Finally, the method of data analysis is described.

5.2  What is Action Research?

Cohen, Manion et al. (2000) suggest ‘action research may be used in any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for solution’ (P 226, Ibid). In describing action research (A R) their perspective is in relation to teachers or groups of teachers but the underlying principles apply equally to different contexts and disciplines.

There are a number of different approaches to action research (McNiff, 2002) which Hammersley (2004) suggests vary across four different dimensions so that :-

Action Research-

- can be undertaken by sole practitioners or by external agencies.
- can vary in the extent to which the research is undertaken individually or collectively.
- can be concerned with local and specific problems or with bringing about wider social and educational change.
- can vary in relation to theoretical approach. (Hammersley 2004).

Cohen and Manion et al. (2000) refer to several definitions. e.g.

- A R 'is a form of disciplined enquiry in which a personal attempt is made to improve and reform practice’ (pg 32, Hopkins, 1985).
- A R 'is a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice’ (pg 156, Ebbutt, 1985).
AR is 'a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an examination' (pg 186, Cohen & Manion, 1994).

'To do action research is to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, than one usually does in everyday life.(pg 10, Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992).

AR is 'critical (and self critical) collaborative enquiry by reflective practitioners being accountable and making the results of their enquiry public, self evaluating their practice and engaged in participatory problem-solving and continuing professional development (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996).

Within these different definitions Cohen et al. (2000) draw on the work of Hult and Lennung (1980) and McKernan (1991) to suggest the following principle characteristics of AR

1. makes for practical problem-solving as well as expanding scientific knowledge
2. enhances the competencies of participants
3. is collaborative
4. is undertaken in situ
5. uses feedback to from data in an ongoing cyclical process
6. seeks to understand the process of change within social systems
7. seeks to understand complex social situations
8. is undertaken within an agreed ethics framework
9. seeks to improve the quality of human actions
10. focuses on those concerns / problems that are of immediate concern to practitioners
11. it is participatory
12. frequently uses case study
13. tends to avoid the paradigm that isolates and controls variables
14. is formative, such that the definition of the problem, the aims and the methodology may alter during the process of action research
includes evaluation and reflection

is methodologically eclectic

contributes to a science of education

strives to render the research usable and shareable by participants

is dialogical and celebrates discourse

has a critical purpose in some forms

strives to be emancipatory

The nature of this current study fits broadly within these definitions of AR although does not fulfil all the principles and characteristics outlined above. The most notable exception is in relation is the emancipatory nature of action research (point 21). Cohen and Manion et al. (2000) argue that emancipatory AR is seen as participatory and as such is seen as a democratic activity. Thus it becomes not simply a form of ‘change theory’, but rather addresses fundamental issues around power and power relationships and that in giving power to participants, AR is seen as an empowering activity and therefore emancipatory.

One of the dimensions along which action research can vary according to Hammersley (2004) is the extent to which action research addresses local or wider issues. Kemmis (1997) suggests that approaches to action research can been seen to fall into one of two camps reflecting different theoretical perspectives. Reflective practitioners fall into the first camp, seeing AR as addressing improvement at a local level. Critical Theorists fall into the second camp. They see action research as part of a broader agenda, moving beyond the ‘local’ to changing education, schooling and society.

Within this framework of defining action research, this current study sits within the former, reflective practitioner, camp. This study does not attempt to address broader change issues but seeks to explore improvement of professional practice at a local level within one YOT.

There are a number of different models of action research, containing different steps and stages. For example, Cohen, Manion et al. (2007) make reference to McNiff (2002) who suggested an 8 stage model. Lewin (1948; 1946), who is often seen as one of the founding fathers of AR, saw AR has having four main stages: planning, acting, observing, reflecting. Kemmis and McTaggart (1981) in Cohen, Manion et al. (2007) suggest AR-is a spiral of action, monitoring, evaluation and re planning.
Although there are a number of differing models there are commonalities. Robson (2002) suggests that there is a widely adopted view that AR is a cyclical or spiralling process (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Although different models may have differing numbers of steps they all fundamentally can be seen to have the same core elements: planning a change; acting and then observing what happens as a result of that change and then reflecting on the processors and outcomes before entering into a new cycle.

Within the action research model Robson (2002) describes different roles that can be adopted. In this study my role is perhaps best described as that of practitioner researcher as opposed to ‘researcher’ or ‘consultant’. Robson (2002) describes a practitioner researcher as someone who works in a particular area and at the same time undertakes some form of systematic study of some aspect of that work. Working in this way falls into what might be considered to be ‘insider research’. Mercer (2007) however argues that whether a researcher or practitioner is considered an insider or not, is not clear cut and depends on ‘the interaction of many different characteristics, some inherent and some not’. She goes on to say that ‘the relationship with the researched is not static, but fluctuates constantly, shifting back and forth along a continuum of possibilities’ (pg 13, Mercer, 2007). In the context of this study my position as researcher sits neither wholly as an ‘insider’ researcher nor wholly as an ‘outsider’. On the one hand my position could be seen as that of ‘insider’ as I am working on developing the role of the EP in within the YOT team. However, on the other hand aspects of my role would seem to fit more with ‘outsider’ as I am not part of the YOT, but merely a visitor working with them but not actually part of their team. Mercer (2007) argues that both positions have advantages and disadvantages.

She suggests there are pros and cons in relation to four variables or dimensions which are: access, intrusiveness, familiarity and rapport. Access is often seen to be easier for the insider researcher as they already know the setting and there are fewer issues with travelling times and arranging interviews etc. A disadvantage is seen to be that it can be difficult to draw a clear division between the research and the ‘day job’. Within this dimension, my role is more that of outsider. I was not based with the YOT and needed to travel to their base and arranging times for contact did, therefore, require perhaps more effort. However, as an outsider on this dimension the division between the research and other work was more clearly defined.

On the second dimension of intrusiveness, Mercer (2007) suggests opinion is divided as to how being an insider or not impacts on the research process, quoting two writers who take up opposing positions. Hawkins (1990) takes up the position that the researcher who carries on with their normal role in the institution will have more impact on the research than
a visiting researcher or consultant. Mercer then quotes Hockey (1993) as taking the opposite view in that ‘insiders’ blend in and are therefore less likely to affect the research’. Mercer (2007) suggests that the extent to which insiders may influence the research can depend on the position that the researcher has in the organisation so that someone who is in a position of power or authority is likely to have greater influence on the research than an insider who does not. Again here, my role appears more as an outsider than insider. However, it could be argued that in relation to this study I will have influenced the research because I am an insider in as much as the research relates directly to my work with the YOT team. How and in what ways is difficult to determine but it has to be acknowledged that my own views on ways of working are likely to have influenced the interpretation of views expressed by YOT workers.

In terms of familiarly, Mercer (2007) argues that whilst initially at least, insiders are likely to have a better understanding of the social setting and culture of the institution she suggests that the extent to which this leads to a deeper understanding is debatable. In addition she suggests greater familiarity can lead to the development of ‘myopia’, so that things can be taken for granted and questions left unasked. On the other hand she refers to Hockey who suggests that ‘disorientating and anxiety provoking effects of culture shock can be avoided (pg 204, Hockey, 1993) and privileged information can be exploited (Mercer, 2007). Again my position as a researcher does not appear to sit totally in either the insider or outsider position, for similar reasons as outlined above.

The final dimension on which Mercer suggests the degree to which a researcher can be seen to be an insider/outsider relates to rapport. Again there can be both advantages and disadvantages to being an insider or outsider researcher. She suggests insider researchers may get a greater level of candour because they already have a degree of credibility and rapport. The converse may also be argued - that information may not be shared with an insider because of concerns about what may be done with that information.

Mercer (2007) therefore sees insider/outsider not as an either or but rather as points on a continuum. Within this study, there are aspects of my role as researcher which fit with both insider and outsider researcher. Not being part of the YOT would fit with the outsider perspective. However, there is also insider perspective in relation to my position as research practitioner looking aspects of my own work.
5.3 Structure of the Study

Following an action research paradigm, this study encompasses one action research cycle of plan, action and reflection/evaluation, and it would be envisaged that subsequent cycles would follow. This first cycle study can be separated into two distinct phases. The first phase involved the use of focus groups to gain participants’ views. The second phase was the implementation of a pilot study of consultation as a method of service delivery, and its evaluation, which was developed as a direct result of the focus groups in the phase 1. Each of these phases will be described in turn.

5.3.1 Phase 1 Seeking the Views of YOT Workers.

The overall aim of this part of the study was to gain the views of YOT staff on issues related to their work, their knowledge of SEN and how they thought the Educational Psychology Service could be of use to them. This phase of the study had the following research questions.

1. What types of work are undertaken by the YOT in relation to young people?
2. What is the YOT’s knowledge of SEN?
3. What role do the YOT workers see for the Educational Psychology Service?

To answer these questions a small number of focus groups were used. Although a number of different approaches to gaining this information could have been employed, for example questionnaires and/or interviews, in this case a focus group approach seemed to be the most appropriate and useful.

Focus groups have been used frequently in market research (Smith, 1995) but it was not until around the 1990s that focus groups become ‘part of the accepted and respected methodology of social science’ (pg 44, Lunt, 1998).

Lunt (1998) suggests focus groups can be a way of eliciting the views and perspectives of groups of individuals which is less threatening and formal than other types of interviewing. Kruger and Casey (2009), in Franz (2011) define focus groups as a carefully planned series of discussions to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment (P 2, op cit).

Powell, Single et al. (1996) suggest focus groups are a form of group interviewing but would draw an important distinction between the two. In group interviewing the emphasis is on the questions and answers between the research and individual participants. In focus groups
however there is more emphasis on the interactions within the group to the topics and questions given by the researcher.

One of the main advantages of using a focus group approach is that it is a highly efficient method of gathering qualitative data as it is collected from several people at the same time. In addition the quality of the data may be enhanced as group members influence one another by responding to the comments and ideas of others and discussion (Krueger, 1994; in Lunt, 1998). Gibbs (1997) suggests there are also benefits for the participants in having the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process and to work collaboratively as well as being valued as experts in their field.

Although there can be seen to be a number of advantages to the use of focus groups, they are not without disadvantages. One of the downsides to a focus group approach can be that it is difficult to identify an individual view from the group view and whilst the process can be empowering for some this is not universal and might be particularly the case for inarticulate or shy group members (Gibbs, 1997).

Robson (2002) highlights a number of other potential disadvantages. The number of questions that can be asked is limited and he suggests typically fewer than ten substantial questions can be asked in an hour. Expertise is needed in order to facilitate the group process and there can be difficulties in managing the dynamics within the group. In terms of the data gathered from focus group Robson highlights the fact that the results cannot be generalised because they are not necessarily representative of a wider population and that the ‘live and immediate nature of the interaction may lead a researcher or decision maker to place greater faith in the data than is actually warranted ’ (pg 285, Robson, 2002).

Although there are disadvantages to the use of focus groups, for this particular study, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages in that it enabled a large quantity of data to be collected in a relatively short time as well as hopefully gaining insight into the degree of shared understanding of the topics under discussion.

In selecting the focus groups, a number of considerations needed to be taken into account. The first of these is size. There is no definitive agreement on the ideal number for a focus group. Gibbs (1997) makes reference to MacIntosh (1981) who recommended between six and ten. Robson (2002) quotes Stewart and Shamdasami (1990) who gave a range between eight and 12. However, Gibbs (1997) provides examples of focus group size outside of these parameters, where some have used as many as 15 participants (Goss & Leinbach, 1996) or as few as four (Kitzinger, 1995). In this particular study, although the
aim was to have a group size of around 6 to 8 participants, the actual number was, to some extent, dictated by availability and as such one of the focus groups size fell below the lower limit.

A second consideration in putting together the focus groups was to decide whether the groups should be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Unsurprisingly, both approaches have disadvantages as well as advantages. Robson (2002) refers to the work of Brown (1999) in summarising these. Homogeneous groups have commonalities in background position and/or experience. Advantages are that these commonalities facilitate communication and can provide a sense of safety when expressing concern or conflicts. The main disadvantage with homogeneous groups however is that there may be what is referred to as ‘groupthink’. Heterogeneous groups on the other hand have different backgrounds positions and/or experience. These differences, it is suggested, may stimulate discussion and may enable people to look at topics from a different perspective. However, the disadvantages can be significant with a risk of power imbalances, with dominant participants overpowering the group process.

This study aimed to have homogeneous groups as it was felt that this would better capture differences between the teams and their roles than using heterogeneous groups.

### 5.3.1.1 Role of the Facilitator

In running focus groups Gibbs (1997) highlights the challenge presented to the facilitator. She suggests facilitators or moderators need to have good interpersonal skills, be good listeners, as well as being non-judgemental and adaptable.

Robson (2002) also highlights the usefulness of having a second person to take responsibility for the technical aspects of the group, for example recording equipment, but also to be available to help manage the group as well as providing support to help the group run smoothly.

Gibbs (1997) suggests the need for consistency across focus groups in relation to facilitators. In this study however this was not possible and there was a different second facilitator used in the second focus group due to the retirement of the first second facilitator. The third focus group was small and as search it was felt second facilitator would be somewhat overwhelming. However, the primary facilitator was the same in each of the three focus groups.
5.3.1.2 Ethical Considerations in Focus Groups

Gibbs (1997) refers to Homan (1991) in suggesting that ethical considerations of focus groups are no different from those in many other fields of social sciences. Firstly in recruiting participants it should be ensured that full information is provided about the purpose of the group and how the information will be used. Additionally, Gibbs (1997) suggests that in running groups it is good practice not pressurise any members to speak.

Further ethical issues can be in managing and dealing with sensitive material. However, the topics open to discussion in this study were unlikely to stray into such territory. The focus groups were not being held with vulnerable individuals. These were groups of professionals who all knew one another. It was therefore felt that the participants would be in a good position to make judgements about what they did or did not want to share.

5.3.1.3 Focus Group Selection.

In this study, the aim was to have three different homogeneous focus groups made up of specific workers within the YOT: - Case Managers, Support Workers and the Prevention Team. The Case Managers and Support Workers work together, with the Support Workers undertaking work with young people under the direction of the Case Managers. They work with young people who are already offending and will be on an order. The Prevention Team workers work with groups of young people aged 13 – 16 who are engaged with crime and have been identified by one of a number of organisations as being most at risk of offending. In reality, the Case Managers focus group was a little more heterogeneous as the YOT management were keen for a member of the Substance Misuse Team to be part of the focus group. The primary role of the Substance Misuse Team is to address issues of substance misuse in young people and young people who are known to the YOT may be referred to the Substance Misuse Team if there are issues around drug and alcohol use.

Having 3 homogeneous focus groups was seen to have two advantages. Firstly as the different teams have different roles I was interested to explore these perspectives within individual teams and to explore in what ways these different roles might impact on the nature of issues raised. Whilst it could be argued that it would have still been possible to do this in heterogeneous groups, the use of homogenous groups was more likely to elicit these. Secondly, there was the potential for power imbalances with heterogeneous groups as the Case Managers supervised and directed the work of the Support Workers. Having heterogeneous groups, then, was more likely to ensure that differences in role and perception could be explored.
The actual selection of the focus groups was done via the managers of the individual teams. Managers therefore had the ultimate say in who could volunteer for the groups. Once potential members had been identified by their managers, they were provided with a participant information sheet as well as a consent form (Appendix 3). Information provided to the participants highlighted the fact that although the sessions would be recorded, any data used from the groups would be in anonymous.

The sizes of the focus groups varied. The Prevention Team focus group was made up of six workers. The case manager focus group had five members and the Support Workers focus group was the smallest with three members.

5.3.1.4 Running the Focus Groups

Two of the three focus groups took place in the summer term of 2010 at the YOT’s base. The third also took place at their base but was undertaken in the autumn term of 2010.

For all three focus groups I was the main facilitator and for two of the three focus groups there was also a second facilitator. As has been outlined above the third focus group was small, consisting only of three participants and therefore only one facilitator was used as it was felt that two would be somewhat overwhelming. Where a second facilitator was used, their role was primarily to manage the recording equipment, and take some notes but also to provide additional input and support as needed to the focus group process.

A prompt sheet was used to ensure that the same points were given to each group and included a reminder to participants of the aims of the focus group as well as the fact that the sessions were to be recorded (Appendix 4). As this was not a particularly sensitive topic there did not seem to be a need for confidentiality, in fact it may well have been of benefit for the workers to discuss further outside of the focus group some of the issues raised with managers and where this was the case it was suggested. If however, a situation had arisen that did raise questions of the need to keep certain things that were said in the focus group confidential then, that would have been raised at the time with the focus group.

5.3.1.5 Data Collection for the Focus Groups

Each of the focus groups was audio recorded and before participants arrived the audio recording system was set up and checked to ensure it was working. For the first focus group, the audio equipment used was a 2 CD recorder. This meant that the recording deck needed to be changed after an hour. For the second focus group the same CD recorder was used but an additional digital recorder was used as a backup. For the third focus group, which was also the smallest, I decided against using the CD recorded as it was
somewhat unwieldy and relied solely on a digital recorder. The advantage of the digital recordings were that they could easily be transferred to the computer as MP3 files, but more anxiety provoking as there was a danger that the data could be accidently deleted before this could happen. Although data from CDs is a little more difficult to delete, they were less easy to work with. The data from digital recordings was transferred and stored on a password protected computer and also stored on a pen-drive that no one else had access to. Data recorded on to CD was also stored on the computer and the CDs stored in a secure office.

5.3.1.6 Data Analysis of Focus Groups

There are many approaches to the analysis of data generated from focus groups and includes approaches such as grounded theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis. The approach chosen for this study however was that of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clark (2006). They define thematic analysis as a method for ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ but in their paper they suggest the approach was poorly demarcated with the lack of clarity about the theory and method. They therefore set out set out to provide an outline of what they see as the essential elements of thematic analysis.

In carrying out thematic analysis Braun and Clark (2006) outline the six stages or phases of analysis they feel make up the approach. They do not however see the approach to analysis as linear but as a more recursive process with movement between stages moving in both directions.

The phases are:

1 familiarisation with the data
2 generating initial codes
3 searching for themes
4 reviewing themes
5 defining and naming themes
6 producing the report

In my analysis the recorded data was transcribed. This initial transcription was useful in helping to familiarise myself with the data. In listening and transcribing particular codes and
initial themes were formulated. Braun and Clark (2006) argue that themes do not emerge as this suggests the analysis is a passive process and does not acknowledge the active role the research has to play in identifying, selecting and reporting themes.

In order to ensure anonymity each participant was assigned a code shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Showing the Make-up of the three Focus Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Name code</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ‘Prevention’</td>
<td>YEW 1</td>
<td>YIP Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEW 2</td>
<td>YIP Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEW 3</td>
<td>YIP Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEW 4</td>
<td>Challenge and Support Team Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEW 5</td>
<td>YIP Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEW 6</td>
<td>YIP Engagement Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Case Managers</td>
<td>CM 1</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM 2</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM 3</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM 4</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM 5</td>
<td>Case Manager (substance misuse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Support Workers</td>
<td>SW 1</td>
<td>Support Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2 Phase 2 Consultation Pilot and Evaluation

5.3.2.1 Research Questions

Phase 2 of the study had the following research questions which were addressed through the implementation of the consultation pilot and its subsequent evaluation using a focus group of consultees.

1. What are the range of difficulties that are brought by YOT workers to discuss with an EP in consultation?

2. Can a consultation model support YOT workers in their work with young people?

3. What are YOT workers views of consultation?

4. Is a model of consultation in evidence?

5. What are the facilitators/barriers to this method of service delivery?

5.3.2.2 The Consultations

Direct access to the Educational Psychology Service was a key finding from the first three focus groups and implementing this was the focus of the second phase of the study. The use of a consultation model of service delivery was employed because it allows direct access to the Educational Psychology Service and is very flexible in its approach. It adopts a plan-do-review approach and begins with an initial consultation with the concern holder. The idea of using a consultation model as a way of enabling direct contact with the Educational Psychology Service by individual workers was initially discussed with some of the YOT managers who were happy for this approach to be instigated.

Initial arrangements were that I would be available one morning every week with individual staff being able to book a session via their electronic toolkit. Initially a room was booked that was not located near to the YOT work offices but on the floor below. In order to try to
increase ‘visibility’ a request for a room on the same floor as many of the workers was made.

In order to promote the service a leaflet outlining the consultation service was provided and circulated by service managers to all staff (Appendix 5). Staff were also provided with a second document called pre-consultation thinking which provided some questions for staff to think about before the consultation (Appendix 6). However, consideration of these was not essential to consultation.

Within the consultation itself there are likely to be a number of processes taking place. Kennedy, Cameron et al. (2009) suggest the following components:-

1. listening to problem presentations from a psychological perspective
2. Ascertaining perspectives on possible links between the antecedents of the problem and the frequently reported outcome
3. Creating dissonance in the clients perspective of the antecedent outcome by introducing mediating variables based on psychological knowledge
4. Clarifying new objectives designed to ameliorate the reframed problem
5. Making this goal real and attainable
6. Contributing psychological strategies/interventions for change
7. Supporting the consultee to commit to advice
8. Agreeing a plan of action and follow up
9. Including reflection and evaluation for both the consultee and consultant
10. Extracting important themes/problems/possibilities and pitfalls to inform personal development as a consultant

Each consultation lasted for approximately one hour and written feedback in the form of the consultation summary was provided following each consultation. An example of written feedback is provided in Appendix 1.

5.3.2.3 Sample Size

In total seven consultations were included in the study. Of these one consultation was with two YOT staff, a case manager and a support worker, the others were all with one member of staff. Team members from both the Prevention Team and those working with offenders accessed the service. Only one member of staff had a second consultation about the same young person and one member of staff consulted about two young people.
5.3.2.4  Ethical Issues

In conducting the consultations the young people were not identifiable to me (they were referred to as the ‘young person’ or by their first name only and this was not recorded on the feedback sheet) unless there was explicit permission from the young people’s family. This was the case for two of the young people. In one of these the Educational Psychology Service was already involved and in the other the worker got parental permission. It transpired that this young person was also about to be referred to the Educational Psychology Service by the school and subsequently the EP became involved.

5.3.2.5  Evaluation of Consultation

The final phase of this study was to carry out a further focus group with individuals who had used the consultation service. In this case this group may be considered homogeneous in one respect that they had all accessed the service but heterogeneous in another as their roles and responsibilities differed. This focus group consisted of 6 YOT workers.

A further script was developed for this focus group with questions relating specifically to the consultation process. The following questions were asked:

1) What were your expectations of consultation
2) What did you think about the information you were provided with?
3) In what ways was the consultation helpful/useful
4) To what extent were the issues we worked on together resolved to your satisfaction
5) Written feedback was provided – do you have any comments about the written feedback
6) Do you have anything to say about the accessibility of the service?
7) What do you think about the future of this service?
8) Do you have any suggestions as to how the service could be improved?

In running this focus group I decided against having a 2nd facilitator, mainly due to the increasing work demands of the service following an approximate 30% reduction in staff. This meant that there was little availability of staff to be able to provide additional support in the focus group. A similar procedure was used in this focus group as that used previously. Following introductions, the aim of the focus group was outlined, and participants were reminded that the discussion would be recorded.
The group discussion was recorded using a digital recorder and was stored in a similar way to the initial digital data from the first focus groups. The data was also analysed using similar method to those used for the initial focus groups i.e. using thematic analysis.

The focus group itself was conducted in a room within the YOT. This was chosen rather than asking the consultees to come to the educational psychology offices because it was more convenient for them and took up less of their time and in total the focus group lasted for 45 minutes.

5.4 Summary

This study used an action research methodology and was conducted in two phases. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data generated from both phases. Phase one consisted of running three focus groups to elicit YOT workers views to address the following research questions:

1. What types of work are undertaken by the YOT in relation to young people?
2. What knowledge do YOT feel they have in relation to SEN.?
3. What role do the YOT workers see for the Educational Psychology Service?

Phase 2 was developed from a key finding of phase one in relation to how the Educational Psychology Service could support the YOT in aspects of their work. This phase consisted of offering a consultation service which was then subsequently evaluated using a focus group. The research questions for this second phase were:

1. What are the range of difficulties that are brought by YOT workers to discuss with an EP in consultation?
2. Can a consultation model support YOT workers in their work with young people?
3. What are YOT workers views of consultation?
4. Is a model of consultation in evidence?
5. What are the facilitators/barriers to this method of service delivery?
Chapter 6  Results and Discussion of the Initial Focus Groups

6.1  Introduction

According to Braun and Clark (2006), undertaking thematic analysis involves several stages, (see methodology) which are not necessarily linear, but familiarisation with the data has to be an initial step. In approaching the analysis of the focus groups, familiarisation with the data was achieved initially through the transcription process. The initial recordings were transcribed using different methods. Parts of the recordings were transcribed using voice recognition software. This was achieved by listening to small sections of the audio file and then repeating what had been said into a word document using the voice recognition software Dragon Naturally Speaking 11. A different method was also used which involved using a digital pen and then converting this into a word document using My Script for Livescribe software. Both methods required frequent revision of the data as both methods tended to be less than 100% accurate (for example ‘is it a’ was interpreted as ‘visitor’ and ‘some of the’ was interpreted as ‘similar’). Once the transcriptions had been translated into word documents each audio file was listened to again and any errors spotted were corrected. As a result the audio files were listened to several times. A sample of the transcription from one of the focus groups is provided in Appendix 7.

At the same time as listening and transcribing, I was also looking out for what might be initial codes and possible themes. I started with the Prevention Team focus group transcript initially numbering each relevant ‘chunk’ of data and writing a corresponding summary of what I thought each referred to. Once this process was complete I then reviewed the summaries and used ‘post-its’ to record any themes that seemed to be crystallising. The data so far had been looked at in a linear fashion – i.e. analysed the transcripts in order. I initially listed the emerging themes but as the list increased it became increasingly difficult to manipulate the data. Initially I had tried to use mind maps using pencil and paper as a way or organising the data and themes but in wanting to revisit and amend, pencil and paper maps were difficult to revise. The usefulness of a computer programme to aid the analysis was therefore explored. NVivo was chosen as it was available most easily from the University. The transcript was imported into NVivo and again codes were recorded. The use of NVivo more easily enabled a re-iteritive process to be employed where themes and their inter-relationships could be amended and modified as the transcripts were revisited until the chains of evidence and themes that were produced through this process were felt to be stable and reflective of the original data.
The next section describes the results of each of the three focus groups. For each focus group the same four trigger questions were used, these being:

1. What work do you do in relation to young people?
2. What knowledge do you feel you have in relation to young people who may have SEN?
3. What issues do you face in delivering a service to young people with SEN?
4. What skills/knowledge/resources do you feel it would be useful for you to gain in order to address the issues you have identified?

In considering their responses to these trigger questions overarching themes for each focus group were identified and these are discussed below. This section concludes by comparing and contrasting the findings from the three focus groups.

6.2 Prevention Team Focus Group

This focus group was made up of six youth engagement workers (identified in the quotations below as YEW 1-6) from the Prevention Team. Within this team there were different sub-teams – YIP and Challenge and Support Team though they were all employed as youth engagement workers.

In considering the responses from this focus group some factual information that was provided by the group about the type of work undertaken is discussed. This is shown in figure 1. Following on from this is a discussion of some of the dominant themes that emerged from the trigger questions asked. These are summarised under the overarching heading of issues in relation to SEN. This approach has been taken rather than taking each question in turn as a number of the themes were not question specific.

6.2.1 The Role of the Prevention Team

Figure 1 is a mind map of the dominant themes that emerged in the group’s discussion about their role and provide a context for the next section about issues relating to SEN. The themes represented in figure 1 are expanded on below
6.2.1.1 Assessment:

Assessment using Onset provides the starting point for their work, helping them to identify areas that need to be addressed. As such the view was expressed that the work they do is evidence based:

*It's evidence based so whichever there's like 15 areas or something that we assess like living arrangements family and personal relationships, lifestyle, thinking and behaviour, education. Then depending on the score of each area that kind of gives us the target so it's evidence based but it's an individual support plan.* (YEW 4)

6.2.1.2 Aims:

The stated overall aims were related to having an impact on antisocial behaviour and to prevent an escalation of these behaviours within set time limits.

*We work with young people to try to cut down on antisocial behaviour.* (YEW 5)

*The overall aim is to reduce the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system.* (YEW 1)

*We work with them for about six months and our aim basically is to reduce their initial Onset assessment score and that's our overall aim basically.* (YEW 3)

6.2.1.3 Referrals to the Service

As the quote below shows the young people they work with have been referred by a variety of different professionals.
The young people are referred to us from like agencies from like school or police and we have had signs that they have committed (like) social behaviour when they have been referred it gets passed on to the relevant area where they live and (like) we can then do one-to-one working and invite them into a group sessions whatever’s best to suit their needs. (YEW 4)

In looking at referrals to the service both the level of antisocial behaviour and the level of risk are assessed to determine particular areas of difficulty. One worker illustrated this by drawing distinctions between the types of difficulties the young people may have. Some young people may be assessed as exhibiting high-level antisocial behaviour, and being on the on the cusp of criminality whilst others are assessed as exhibiting 'lower level behaviours' where there may be more social issues:-

I deal with the lower level stuff em but tend to have more of the social, can't say that but tend to have a lot more of the social issues that come along with that like personal & stuff like that but yours is the higher level, like yours is more like leading into yours is more on the cusp of criminality. (YEW 2)

Regardless of the actual level of antisocial behaviour, a key factor in making a referral was the assessed level of risk of the young person entering the criminal justice system:-

Some come with and some come without (a final police warning) so it's just obviously dependent on the factors around that young person as to how, more at risk they are of getting into the system really. (YEW 4)

6.2.1.4 School

Experiences with schools varied with examples, both positive and negative being provided. For example, YW 1 described how he had found schools to be helpful when he had approached them for help. However, the converse is true in the following quote where school’s response to the management of a young person was seen to be a real barrier.

With my particular person he was reduced to an hour a day in school he was allowed in between 10 to 9 and 10 to 10 and that was because of his behaviour. ........ I had real barriers with the school to up the timetable to even two hours a day because he was saying I'm not going in. There's no point be going in for that hour. It was because it was so early it was like 10 to 9 and he was back out at 10 to 10. So no there's no point. He wouldn't wake up on time on purpose because you if you woke up half an hour late there's no point in going in for half an hour, the school just said we're not upping it because he is not making the effort to come in for that time so that was a barrier with me because he was out so much like just not doing anything, no positives. (YEW 3)

6.2.1.5 Targets

Although the workers were clear that their work was based on the Onset assessment, work delivered also had to fit in with any targets set from funding partners which could present a challenge:-
We also get some funding from the (area) health team so what we deliver has to coincide with their targets which is basically healthy eating, healthy living lifestyles so so the carrots like what we were talking about before, you know if we provide food it needs to be healthy we need to provide a lot of physical exercise activity. (YEW 5)

You need to be so broad with everything you need kind of tick everybody’s box with what you are. (YEW 1)

6.2.1.6 Interventions

Work was varied involving working at an individual and group level as well as working in a variety of settings including schools. Specific pieces of work that were mentioned were around awareness raising of what is classed as antisocial behaviour as well as addressing issues such as drugs and alcohol, anger management and the impact these can have both on the individual and community.

The age range of the pupils worked with was also discussed and varied according to the area in which the Prevention Team was located. The broadest age range was 8 to 17, though one area catered for 8 to 13 because it didn’t have the facilities to deal with the broader age range. However, this was not strictly adhered to:

we do work with the younger end like 12 yr olds because there isn’t a junior yip in our area and we can’t just close the door in their face basically and say we can’t work with you, (but it ) just tends to be 13 to 17 in our area. (YEW 6)

Getting the young people to engage in the areas of work identified from their assessment using Onset was perceived, as, at times, a challenge and to some extent this difficulty might be compounded by a perceived lack of resources:

I find that really difficult… or anger management and things like that there’s not many tools that really we’ve got when we work with young people like that so that’s quite difficult. (YEW 1)

We use tools like that we use worksheets or it might be dead basic cut and stick or whatever it is any way we can engage them. (YEW 3)

They also saw distinctions between how they worked with young people and the work of schools.

But we are not you know we are not like school we don’t sit down and do a load of writing.(YEW 2)

Although there was some evidence that workers tried adapt approaches based on their observations as can be seen from the following quote
I’ve used skills like if they do drawings or if they do like some writing that usually gives you clues. (YEW 4)

Other comments suggested that the workers did not always feel they had the necessary skills and resources to support them in managing young people who were difficult to engage.

(Having access to) actual resources aimed at young people with those sorts of needs rather than us trying to think how to adapt this ourselves. (YEW 3)

You’re trying to do a workshop and trying to get them to engage and they can only concentrate for small periods of time... (YEW 2)

The young person I was referring to before doesn’t do any of that and he doesn’t speak either he hardly says anything so it’s always very hard to engage him, to know if he is enjoying the session or whether you make any progress with him. (YEW 4)

Through the focus group the range of needs the young people they work with present with were clearly described as well as the challenges this presents. Work set not only needs to address identified need but also any additional targets set as a result of any conditions applied to additional funding. Working on engaging young people was a central theme and an awareness of the need to differentiate was clear.

Whilst some of the issues raised in relation to engagement and resources could be applied to young people in general the next section looks more specifically at issues relating to those young people with SEN

6.2.2 Issues Around Special Educational Needs

Figure 2 is a mind map of the dominant themes to emerge from the focus group that were related to SEN. Each of these themes are expanded on below.

6.2.2.1 Knowledge

Workers were aware of aspects of SEN processes for example School Action and School Action Plus as well as statements. In carrying out their assessments it was reported that they asked about what stage a young person may be on in relation to SEN and that this information was usually provided. YEW 1 stated that if the young person was statemented then he would also get the statement to read. However, no additional information tended to be provided if the young people were at SA+.
When asked specifically about their knowledge of SEN, workers were aware of the range of difficulties, mentioning behaviour difficulties, difficulties with concentration and attention as well as difficulties with cognition and thinking. However, in terms of their level of knowledge they judged this to be low.

Yeah it's just that it's such a complex I think for me obviously I can't speak for anybody else this is one of those subjects where you could train me for years and I've never be you know I'd never feel confident. (YEW 1)

However, workers were able to give explanations of how they had adapted their work based on perceived difficulties with learning and recognised that underlying factors could impact on behaviour even if they did not necessarily feel that they had the knowledge and skills to identify and address those difficulties per se.

When you’re trying to a workshop and trying to get them to engage and they can only concentrate for small periods of time even if you try to make it quite diverse and not reading and writing and doing activities but trying to find the best way to work with that young person. (YW 2)

In exploring perceptions around their knowledge of SEN (or perceived lack of it), there were two important inter-relating themes, confidence and getting support.
6.2.2.2 Confidence

In relation to SEN, the notion of confidence (or lack of it) was mentioned in relation to several different areas. One worker referred to confidence in relation to gaining a sufficient knowledge base around SEN:

"train me for years and I'd never be, you know, I'd never feel confident, you know, and there are so many symptoms or things to look out for which cover a massive range of possible SEN so you are, it's like, it's just one of those areas where I'm a bit woah." (YEW 3)

For others confidence was expressed in terms of being able to manage individual work with young people together with the ability to adapt their plans as needed:

"I've gone through about 20 things before I've actually got to the main thing but I've kind of adapted it there and then on the spot. So if you are not very confident of.... I'm not saying that I'm not....." (YEW 1)

Confidence was also seen to be important in terms of developing good working relationships with the young people themselves.

"If you're not confident you're goosed basically 'cos the kids can see it in you and it just it undermines yourself then and you start questioning your ability but then the young people will either think you know it's no good I'm not going to go or that didn't address my needs it's no good for me..." (YEW 4)

When asked what might enable people to feel more confident one worker expressed the view that this would be through more training:

"Cos if you're not experienced that, Not really had any relevant training or you are completely unconfident in this area then you're not going to know where to go are you? You've got the barriers do you ask a colleague, do you feel like you want to be made to look daft or you don't know your job or you know you can't work with that., you know there's loads of little things that go on in people's heads." (YEW 2)

This highlights some interesting issues not only about confidence but also about the perceived working/learning culture of the organisation where individuals might feel anxious about exposing a lack of knowledge and the impact this might have on an individual's feelings of competence.

More training appears to be a common theme with enhanced training and support being recommended by more than three fifths of YOT staff interviewed in a study carried out by Talbot (2010). However, in a different study (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009), it was suggested by YOT managers that it was not practical for YOT staff to become experts in various fields of SEN and that it would be more beneficial to have access to other appropriate professionals. Some examples of good practice were cited where by an EP was
available for ½ a day a week but this provision was not universal. In this current study it was not necessarily the availability of support that was the issue but knowing who to approach.

6.2.2.3 Getting Support

Knowing who to go to when they were stuck in relation to SEN was seen to be problematic at times for a number of different reasons. Knowing who to approach was one barrier. Approaching a colleague was perceived to have some risk as can be seen from the following two quotes:-

…do you feel like you want to be made to look daft or you don’t know your job? (YEW 4)

…but you know they’ll think I don’t really want to ask somebody cos they’ll think I’m not doing my job properly. (YEW 2)

Potential anxiety was also seen in approaching other professionals with their current level of knowledge which the perceived to be low. However, with more knowledge one worker expressed how this might make her feel:-

…more comfortable in being able to approach someone to say we think it might be this, that and the other, can an assessment be done (YEW 3)

A different worker saw potential difficulties arising from a lack of knowledge around SEN in being able firstly to know who to take that concern to and secondly how to articulate that concern to another professional:-

Who do you go to and what do you actually say to them, there’s something going on here but I just don’t know what it is? (YEW 6)

Looking at this comment from the perspective of the four stages of competence model, what the worker is describing here would seem to fall into the second stage of conscious incompetence. In other works she is recognising that this is an area in which she has yet to develop particular skills.

Knowing who to contact was also a concern for another worker for a slightly different reason. Here it was about the reception that such an enquiry might get.

Unfortunately in some services you can phone somebody and it just knocks you back to zero because they can come across not very nice, like whether it’s snotty, or whether they’ve made you feel you should know the information or they’re too busy…. But unless you know there is an approachable person you know, well don’t worry about it… (YEW 2)
Although there was some perceived risk in taking concerns to colleagues there was also acknowledgement that there were support mechanisms within the service that are continuing to develop. However, it was also felt that access to some outside support could be helpful at times as can be seen from the following quotes:

- *Just having a friendly approachable person at the end of a phone who if you are stuck around this, how do we contact you* (YEW 3)
- *If you come up against something that none of you have worked with, then who would it be, would it be yourself do we phone, are we ok without kind of having that I suppose that authorisation from yourself……actually how to work with that young person with SEN.* (YEW 4)

In looking at addressing workers confidence in working with pupils who may have SEN it was felt that more training would be helpful even though there was an acknowledgement that SEN is a very broad area and that there was probably insufficient time available to enable them to develop a level of expertise in SEN. When asked about how EPs might be able to support them, this focus on training was reflected in their responses. Workers also reflected that the initial training they had been given by the Educational Psychology Service had been useful and that they felt they would benefit from accessing this again.

The second focus of responses related more to individual casework and picked up on earlier discussion about having someone to be able to take things to when they were stuck. One worker explained it in the following way

- ‘It’s kind of actually how to work with the young person with SEN…..how do they understand things, what sort of things do you do with them to actually get the message through…. What’s the best way of doing that?’ (YEW 1)

This view fits in very much with the Welsh study (2009) where for YOT managers the preferred approach was to have access to specialists and as one manager described:

- *As a model, rather than training all YOT staff in being experts in assessing young people; that half day a week of access to an educational psychologist in the LEA is so valuable. Any member of YOT staff that has a concern can go along and discuss it and get access to advice* (P 35 Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)

6.2.3 Summary

These workers faced a number of challenges in trying to engage a number of the young people they worked with. Although they often recognised the need to differentiate work for some young people, they perceived their knowledge and skills in relation to SEN as low. A barrier to addressing these difficulties at times was related to confidence in approaching others both within in their organisation and in relation to other professionals. Ways of
addressing this were seen to be through accessing more training and through having access to someone to talk through individual cases.

6.3 Case Managers Focus Group

The second focus group was made up of four Case Managers and one substance intervention worker. Although homogeneous groups had been requested the YOT was keen to include a member from the Substance Misuse Team which added a useful dimension to the group. Although this particular member’s contribution was limited their presence served to highlight some tensions for the Case Managers in carrying out their work.

This section will begin with some contextual information about the nature of the work that the Case Managers undertake before moving on to consider some of the main themes that emerged from this group.

6.3.1 The Role of the Case Manager

The role of the case manager is summarised in figure 3. The work involves delivering interventions to address offending behaviour and substance misuse as well as referrals to other agencies such as CAMHS. The basis on which this work is identified is through the assessment tool of Asset

![Figure 3 Mind map of the main themes describing the work of Focus Group 2](image)

A shared perception was that their work begins with assessment:-

*Asset tool, first bit we do within that asset, multiple areas, things like was saying living arrangements, relationships, thinking and behaviour…*(CM 3)
...perceptions of others, that’s the bit that we use to identify future work. That’s the main core of the assessment. (CM 1)

The young people that the Case Managers work with come to them through the criminal justice system which may be pre-court if they are on a final warning or if they are placed on an order following a court appearance: The level of assessment depends on where the young people are in the criminal justice system. As one worker explained:-

...either through a final warning which is pre-court, they are picked up by the police, we’d do an assessment then, not as full as the full, yes but you would still be able to do the dynamic and the educational, that would be very important. (CM2)

Although the Case Managers do undertake some direct work with young people their role goes wider and is summarised in the following quote:-

It’s signposting and coordinating, all the aspects that you’ve brought up, in, that need to be addressed. (CM 2)

6.3.2 Themes from the Case Manager Focus Group

In analysing the data from this focus group the themes that were dominant were somewhat different from the first focus group. A particularly dominant theme for this group was school, which also contained a number of important subthemes, timescales and joint working.

There were also a number of subthemes within the overarching theme of SEN. The mind map (figure 4) provides a visual representation of how these themes interrelate and the themes that appeared to be most relevant to this study are discussed in the following sections.

![Mind map of the main themes from Focus Group 2](image_url)
6.3.2.1 School

In this focus group school and more particularly frustration with school was a dominant theme and in their discussions a number of potential barriers in working with schools were raised. Firstly there were issues that related to getting information. Initially this might be in relation to knowing who to go to in school and there was a feeling of frustration that it was not always clear who was responsible. In addition, identifying someone in school was no guarantee that the required information would be forthcoming:

‘I go through the pastoral office or the head of year, the deputy head nobody’s accountable.’ (CM 2)

‘Once you’ve found somebody to get that information (others – yes) (cough) you are chasing tails. You are just constantly on the phone oh you said you’d fax over you’d email it but you still haven’t received it has a knock-on effect with the work that we deliver, the assessment, in the delivery of service.’ (CM 1)

In addition there was also the feeling that the information that was received from school was not necessarily accurate. One worker gave an example of one pupil who school reported had 100% attendance but when this was investigated it transpired that the young person was on alternative provision and had been provided with a laptop to do work at home but actually had not opened it for 3 months.

Another issue that was raised by the Case Managers related to the educational provision that schools might provide for some young people which was not necessarily felt to be in the best interests of the young person. The following quote seems to sum this feeling up:

‘I think that our frustration with it because I’ve often found since I started here seeing young people are just excluded they are given alternative provision yes but it’s a, not to their benefit from my point of view it’s the schools benefit.’ (CM 3)

A further area of frustration for the Case Managers was that there was not always a sense of partnership with schools around supporting young people. They felt they were not included in schools planning around the young people they were involved with as a matter of course and were therefore not always in a position to advocate for the young people. As such they described how the outcomes of schools planning were often unhelpful to the young people. For example, one worker described how she was not included in a meeting in school and that she felt therefore that there was a lack of advocacy. Her frustration is clear:

…but at the same time these young people are just getting lost and are not getting any education that’s specific to them, it’s just about ticking the box, getting a bit of education two hours for somebody in Y8 a day is nothing, how is that going to improve that young person’s life. it’s just not good enough when you’re involved with that person and you’re not getting invited you know there’s issues there because he’s not been properly spoken for do you know what I mean?’ (CM 4)
6.3.2.2 Special Educational Needs

This section will explore some of the important themes that related directly to SEN. The first two relate to the previous theme of school and reflect further the workers frustrations with schools. These themes are identifying and meeting needs and conflicting timescales. The other themes that will be covered in this section are joint working, knowledge of SEN and access to support.

6.3.2.2.1 Identifying and Meeting Needs

There was also a perception that some young people’s needs had not been addressed by school. Literacy levels in particular were commented on with a feeling that many of the young people they worked with had very low literacy levels:

*What is surprising is how low their basic skills are.* (CM 1)

*I’d say their reading and writing I’d say (unclear) beyond the level of a six-year-old it's that bad.* (CM 2)

Not only was it felt that at times literacy difficulties were not being addressed but that there were also concerns about schools ability to identify difficulties. Two Case Managers made reference to cases where parents who had concerns about their children’s learning did not appear to have been listened to by schools:

*I can see parents also who are telling me we have tried and tried and tried to get.. and that nobody has listened.* (CM 1)

*that's exactly what I was saying because like I've had I've had parents who says look I've told school years ago that this was happening and nothing’s happened but if we was to turn the clock back that young person would be safe.* (CM2)

6.3.2.2.2 Conflicting Timescales

There was a perception that SEN processes in school took too long, were additional barriers to meeting need and did not necessarily affect any change. Indeed there was the perception that not only were timescales overly long but that over time the situation could also deteriorate significantly:

*…and you feel as if there are hoops to go through, they have a school plan and School Action, a School Action plan and have reviews and then they have reviews of that review and then that may consider to go on to SEN but by that stage they are already self excluding from school because they are so fed up with all the process.* (CM2)

The young people known to the Case Managers are on orders which have a certain amount of time to run. Any work identified through their Asset assessment therefore has to be
completed within the timescale of the order. However, there may be other issues which need to be addressed which are not necessarily on the order. This can be problematic if the intervention required takes longer than the order has to run. One worker explained it in the following way:-

It’s frustrating cos you can attend a meeting and then god knows what happens after that cos the order’s finished and you feel like you can’t help that young person enough. (CM 4)

Another case manager’s example related to a young person with complex mental health needs. The psychiatrist involved felt his needs required long-term intervention but for the case manager, involvement was not dictated by clinical need but by the length of the order.

it’s a lifetime of unpicking this young person’s experience so much and that probably the reason he behaves in a way that he behaves but we have to work collectively to support him it’s not about the same do this this this and his going you know transformed some sort of star student but at the same time that’s what we’re trying to do but if someone is on a three or six months order you do the assessment hope you (they) don’t reoffend again it’s like how far are you going to get really. (CM 3)

6.3.2.2.3 Joint Working

Throughout the focus group several references were made to working with others. In looking at the comments several points can be made. Firstly there was clearly a sense of Case Managers working with others as can be seen from the following quote.

..so ideally you would have a YOT worker and an oasis worker if there are substance misuse problems and a connexions worker whether that be a personal community adviser or someone from 16 to 19 or a school personal adviser for the younger age range. (CM 4)

Although the Case Managers gave examples of where joint working went well and they clearly had good working relationships, this was not universal. For example, the Case Managers had identified a gap in working with Connexions PAs because although they would have younger pupils on their caseloads, their work is primarily with Y9 upwards as the focus of their work is on transition from school. There was therefore felt to be a gap in yrs 7 and 8.

Well because we work through Connexions PAs (Personal Advisers) and they only work from Y9 onwards don’t they? (CM 1)

Accessing provision was also presented as a barrier to joint working. This seemed to be particularly the case when difficulties identified were not seen to reach the threshold required for particular specialist teams to become involved:-
They might not have reached the threshold for CAMHS but you know there are behavioural issues you know they are not attending school you just haven't got any provision to access. (CM 3)

A further barrier in developing joint working related to the voluntary relationship some services have in relation to young people. The substance abuse worker highlighted this difference in the following way:-

The obvious difference is it’s voluntary so the young person has to want to engage with (the service) and it's up to them if they want to make a change in their lives and change the substance use. (CM 5)

For the other Case Managers, this could present somewhat of a dilemma as substance misuse might have been identified on the asset assessment but if it is made mandatory on the order and the young person does not engage with the substance misuse service then they would be in breach of the order. The resolution to this dilemma is that this element is categorised as voluntary on the order.

there's also a bit of contention between voluntary and mandatory if for example we are only talking is just for example if we get somebody who is on what we call a low tariff something simple like shoplifter or something similar but has drug and alcohol issues he may be given a referral order and on this referral order has a contract and we might put on this contract that he goes to (name of substance misuse team) for example and if he doesn't comply with his contract then his breached now that is how he thinks it in his head when he leaves but by the time it gets to ‘substance misuse service’ he may have bumped into people or maybe even be told by the (name of substance misuse team) people that this is voluntary you know, thinking where the young person could be a little bit confused and they are going to play it off and just say I'm not going. (CM 2)

Much of the discourse throughout the focus group related to the interface between the Case Managers and other agencies and relates directly to the core function of the Case Managers role which was described as signposting and coordinating all the aspects that have been identified through the Asset assessment. Facilitating this often involves referring to other agencies rather than doing the intervention work directly. In trying to deliver their work and provide best outcomes for the young people on their caseloads, the Case Managers are often faced with referring to and working with different agencies whose own agendas, targets and focus do not always coincide with those of Case Managers. As EPs there may be something we can offer in bridging some of these differences and difficulties particularly in relation to schools and education.

One area where this is perhaps most evident is in relation to SEN. Whilst a number of difficulties and barriers that have been described above could relate to any young person in the criminal justice system, there can be additional difficulties when the young person
concerned also has SEN. The following sections explore the issues that emerged from this focus group in relation to SEN and the possible role for an EP in addressing those issues.

6.3.2.2.4 Knowledge of SEN

Information from the focus group suggested that the level of knowledge within the YOT generally was felt to be limited but that some individuals within the team felt their knowledge was good. Some of the Case Managers were not clear about the SEN processes:

*I don't know much about the services and provision. I don't know how you get referrals or what happens* (CM 4)

*... For my purpose how was a young person identified as being SEN. At what stage or what triggers that.* (CM 1)

Although individuals felt unclear about SEN processes, in describing their work it was clear that they adapted their approach to individual young people based on their observations and assessments, for example providing one-to-one interventions for individuals who they felt would have struggled in group learning situations. In formulating their approach to working with a young person, identifying their ‘learning style’ forms part of their assessment. However, one case manager suggested that simply identifying the learning style was not necessarily helpful if there were not the resources and interventions available. Having limited resources was also echoed by other Case Managers.

*As practitioners we go through the learning style looking at the learning styles of individuals and stuff and we sort of tailor and adopt resources limited resources that we’ve got to facilitate however I think those resources I me personally I don't think we have sufficient resources.* (CM 4)

6.3.2.2.5 Access to Support

Although a difficulty identified by the members of the focus group was a lack of resources, the details seemed to relate more to a lack of knowledge and skills in differentiating materials. As such an EP would seem to be one professional who could provide some support in this area.

*yes for like a learning style is all very well doing assessments and what on the learning styles but then without resources and interventions how do we then to address that, because we’re not experts in it.* (CM 2)

A model of support was described that was already in place in relation to mental health. In looking at how this support might be provided one Case Manager made reference to how a CAMHS worker had joined their service and was available to work with the Case Managers around young people with mental health issues.
What I find really useful we’ve just had a CAMHS worker start in YOT who works with young offenders who have mental health issues or does an assessment, if we had somebody from education a similar sort of setup, working as an integrated rather than multiagency integrated into our service. (CM 4)

A gap in knowledge was recognised in relation to what resources and support were available and that having direct access to someone with an educational and SEN perspective would be useful:-

Me personally as I was saying earlier it’s about not having sufficient knowledge of what sorts of resources I could tap into I mean I’m not hundred percent sure what your role would be within that remit and whatever the provision and similar that would help me to deliver support me in delivering the work that I have identified not knowing what’s out there that’s available. (CM 1)

It’s that really cutting out the middleman. Going direct to you as opposed to you know. (CM3)

…and for me it’s mainly it’s just feeling that we’ve that we need some access into more information about support that we can access rather than the process rather than learning more about conditions (CM 4)

Yes you know what I mean practical guidance. (CM 3)

And also us accessing support and not having to go via the school because obviously that's not working. (CM 4)

6.3.3 Summary

Although the Case Managers do work directly with young people their role is far broader than that of the Prevention Team (and Support Workers discussed next). The Case Managers are often trying to work in conjunction with other professionals which at times was perceived to be problematic. This was particularly evident in trying to work with schools. Case Managers described difficulties with not only getting information from schools, but also that they were often not included in school meetings which may be planning educational provision. There was also a feeling that schools were not always meeting a young person’s needs either because they had not identified the need, were taking too long to do so and or where then not providing an appropriate curriculum. Literacy difficulties were highlighted as a particular area of concern and reflects research findings of lower than expected levels of literacy within this population (Chitsabesan et al., 2007). Outcomes were sometimes felt to be for the benefit of the school rather than the young person. Barriers in working with other professionals were also identified which related to differing thresholds for involvement or different frames of reference for engagement.

In relation to SEN, there was a perceived variation in the knowledge and expertise within the service. There was agreement, however, that there was a lack of knowledge and
expertise in relation to differentiating materials and that access to someone with an educational background would be useful. This would seem to be even more important when considering some of the findings outlined in the literature review, relating to the lower IQs of this population and the greater than expected percentages of young people with additional learning difficulties (e.g. Chitsabesan et al., 2007; Mottram, 2007). This problem is further exacerbated when they have to complete the ASSET form.

### 6.4 Support Workers Focus Group

This final focus group was the smallest being made up of 2 YOT Support Workers and 1 substance misuse support worker.

In looking at the dominant themes these were again different to those of the other two focus groups. By far the most significant node was ‘assessment and intervention’. Issues around knowing who to go to was also fairly dominant in this focus group as well as issues around SEN and differentiation. As one of the group worked with the Substance Misuse Team, the theme of voluntary participation was also evident. These main themes are represented in the mind map below (figure 5).

![Figure 5 Mind map of the main themes from Focus Group 3](image)
The differing emphasis of the themes in this focus group would seem to reflect the different roles that these professionals have in working for the YOT compared with the other teams. Whilst the Case Managers have overall responsibility for each of the young people in their caseload and have a focus on coordinating the work to be done with young people, the Support Workers main role is to work directly with the young people on areas identified by the Case Managers from the Asset assessment. As such one of the dominant themes here was in relation to assessment and intervention.

### 6.4.1 Assessment and Intervention

For both the YOT Support Workers and the substance misuse worker, the work with young people begins with an assessment. This assessment is perceived to be holistic in that they explore a number of different aspects of the young person's life. The assessment used by the substance misuse worker was described as being similar to the asset assessment used by the YOT. Although assessment is the starting point for each of the three Support Workers their roles differed slightly. The substance misuse worker emphasised how engagement with the service was voluntary and that the focus of their work was guided by the goals set by the young person.

*It goes through the whole, the full life of the young person. It'll be like physical, emotional, health, family set up, what drugs or alcohol they are using, why they are using it you know to see what's going on, basically, as a whole and then take it from there, Make plans what the YP wants to get out of it what they feel realistically they are going to do and what they need to do to get to that goal and then working from there.* (SW 1)

One of the Support Workers who worked for the YOT worked with young people in custody. She emphasised again the need for a holistic approach and that services were coordinated depending on identified need:

*I'll be informed when a young person has gone into custody so I'll then do a visit with the case manager or do a visit myself if I know the young person and I basically take a holistic view with them working with the case manager. It's not like I do anything on my own, it'll be like what with (substance misuse service) you'll look at a lot of different aspects in their life, what might be having a major effect on how you know on their offending So I've done a lot of work with housing 'cos that's... if they're not in stable accommodation or they're having problems at home that seems to be a major factor at times because they'll have an argument with the family and then go out and offend, so I'll look at holistically what the issues are and where I can help support them with the Case Managers for example the training or the housing are two main ones I've dealt with.* (SW 2)

She went on to explain the need to plan for when the young person is released from custody and how this would vary from person to person. So support might be around...
developing self-esteem or simply building a relationship so that the young person knows her when they are released. Other work that follows then maybe around working directly with the young person offering some practical support, for example knowing what to do with a bank card, completing forms for college or liaising with other professionals or training providers.

*I’m basically quite intensive support from in like they tend to have the first 4 weeks when a YP is released I am quite intensive with them. It can be quite varied my job because sometimes you might be doing some self-esteem work with someone or taking them to a bank and then like today I’ve been doing cooking with someone, you know, basic life skills em ’cos they’re in their own accommodation so it can be quite varied what I do with them.* (SW 2)

In addition this worker outlined a new role of working with some younger pupils and although the role was still being clarified the focus seemed to be on identifying potential underlying problems by proving some additional support

*…use me as a support role to be getting them there or checking up on them, if there’s any problems, we can find out straight away and it’s like seeing the underlying issues ’cos like SW 1 said they do things sometimes, they do a behaviour because they are masking something so it they are not attending school it might be they have a simple problem like dyslexia or something that they are kicking off in class because there are underlying issues so by having quite a supportive role we’re trying to identify them and I think knowing that there is someone there who they can talk to about stuff cos you know we have built up a good relationship is a big thing with us as well.* (SW 2)

The third support worker again worked directly with young people and again under the supervision of a case manager.

*I can like support their with em and I'll just do like one-to-one work with them you know like the reparation, Em whatever work that YP needs doing ……from the (Asset) assessment the case manager will identify what work needs doing with that YP Em and whatever work needs doing I'll help the case manager just do that work with the YP.* (SW 3)

6.4.2 Issues Around SEN

6.4.2.1 Types of SEN

In delivering interventions and support all three identified some particular difficulties that would relate to SEN. These included concentration and literacy difficulties. Poor concentration was identified as being particularly problematic as a young person’s limited concentration could impact on the Support Workers ability to complete the set interventions

*One thing I struggled with if they’ve got a short concentration span and you’ve got a piece of work to do with them but their concentration span is so small that you… it’s just impossible to get that work done.* (SW 2)
...and they'll be focused for about 15, 20 min and then they're just like just can't concentrate anymore but is not enough time, you need more time than that to get the work done with them, I struggle with that sometimes. SW 1)

6.4.2.2 Differentiation

Although they suggested that at times they could struggle, this group also gave examples of how they had differentiated the work when faced with certain difficulties for example with attention and concentration or literacy difficulties

I think one thing I’ve done with one young person, his concentration span was low, I went in we got a room downstairs that's quite hidden away and doesn't have as big a window as some of the others are some of the other rooms people will be looking in or they will be looking out so if you take them round that corner they can't get distracted by things going on outside. (SW 1)

...statement said he had real poor attendance but I picked that he was having some difficulties so used other strategies to do the work with him, like I just have conversations with him and then get him to draw pictures or when he couldn’t spell words he used to try and ask me he kept constantly asking me to check if what he was writing was correct but I didn’t, I just said say it how you want. (SW 3)

6.4.2.3 Access to Support

However, there were also cases where, although a differentiated approach was being used there was uncertainty as to whether this was the right approach. For example, one of the workers described some of the work she was doing with a young person who was described as having some complex medical condition that resulted in him becoming deaf:

...he can’t understand lips unless it’s something really basic and we write, talking to him on paper and if a lot of body language and yes that’s fine but sometimes I feel like I’m not doing the right thing with him you know. (SW 1)

There was a clear identification of the need to access support and the Support Workers described different aspects of the support available to them.

6.4.2.4 Information

One of the workers commented on how having information or not about a young person’s SEN can impact on their work.

I’ve tended to work with the older ones, with not always seen a statement I think it's, though, just not being passed on or something so you’ve understood there might be a problem and that's why they might be struggling in the classroom but haven’t understood why. I have recently seen a statement for one of the young lads that I’ve worked with and it has been quite helpful in identifying different ways that his problem affects him and then ways of dealing with it so to me it is quite a new thing and I’m still trying to get my head round it. (SW 1)
6.4.2.5 Case Managers

All three Support Workers made reference to going to their Case Managers in the first instance if they had any concerns about the young person.

Getting that because for all of us, quite similar, we’ve got the people who are like above us, like case managers, so if I’ve got something like I’m concerned with or I think there might be a problem I’d pass it on to a case manager for them to look at, perhaps look at it in more detail, might move it on from there to someone else like yourself. But at our level it’s not really for us to look too deep into it but to pass on. (SW 1)

yes if it was a case worker then I wouldn’t be the first port of call for working with that young person so in theory they should have, should know how the young person works and they can then advise us and can say oh Joe Bloggs he’s got this, that and the other on his statement so when he's reading and writing you need to watch out for this that or the other make sure you are aware that he can’t do this, that or the other (SW 3)

……you’re working with them and you are finding that that's not working you’re like shall we try this way and then will have a conversation with a case manager (SW 2)

6.4.2.6 Other Professionals

Although there was the availability of Case Managers as the first port of call references were also made to calling on other professionals, for example, from health services.

I had one young person when I was like going through his offence with him. Trying to do like an apology, I think. Trying to get him to describe how his victim might have felt. Trying to get him to empathise. He was just getting confused with all the different types of emotions. He couldn’t distinguish between different emotions so I found that a bit difficult. I spoke to the health team and they did a bit of work with him around that because I wasn’t too sure what to do with him. (SW 1)

The usefulness of having access to outside knowledge and expertise was also articulated and another worker described how a diagnosis of Aspergers helped them make sense of a young person’s behaviour.

I’ve just started working with a lad who is in custody and we worked with him a couple of years ago and I was remember he really really struggled in the group work and he’d kicked off, he just got really frustrated and there was a lot of group work around at that time and he was getting really frustrated. I think you know it made it harder for him and then recently in custody he had a diagnosis of Aspergers and we said a lot of things have come into place like he doesn’t like being in a big group but he likes structure and all the things that we saw him kick-off about before is possibly related to his Aspergers. So it would have been good if we could have known things like that at the time, if he had got a diagnosis and that and this time we are looking at tailor making it when he comes out with very little group work and if it is going to be a very small group, more one-to-one work with him so we know that he will struggle in a group, so we’re tailor making it now that we’ve identified…… (SW 2)
In addition there was also recognition that there could be a role for an EP to support them when they were struggling with particular situations.

*yes I think so because like (SW 1) said there's times in an appointment that you really struggle it's not you've identified that there is something there, it's strategies then, you know we might have our own strategies, you know, to take it like we said tailor-make it, like use pictures instead but it would be good to see from a professional point of view and what sort of strategies, say it is Autistic or Aspergers, you know, what works really well with a person who might be this statement. I think that would be quite useful even if it was like an educational psychologist come into one appointment to see them, they might grasp how the young person is and then said I think it would be good for you to work with them like this and he'd get more out of it. (SW 2)*

*There might be someone that you really struggle with and you think if I had just one appointment with an educational psychologist. (SW 3)*

One of the workers gave a specific example of how the intervention from an outside professional had enabled them to understand the young person’s behaviour from a different perspective and to change their approach based on the advice given.

*I don't know whether it was a clinical psychologist or an educational psychologist but it was thinking about your language with him, like he doesn't like to be controlled so saying in a way where he has some form of control over it. (SW 2)*

6.4.3 Summary

This focus group was the smallest of the three and although the three participants had the same job title there were differences in their individual roles. Despite this similar difficulties were noted in relation to SEN particularly around literacy and concentration difficulties.

Their work was under the direction of Case Managers and these professionals were identified as the first port of call if they had any particular concerns about case work. However, they also indentified that it would be helpful to have access to other professionals with specialist SEN knowledge.

6.5 Main Conclusions from the 3 Focus Groups.

Overall the views of the three focus groups were very different. However, there were some similarities. These differences and similarities will be summarised in the following section.

Generally, there was a perception that knowledge of SEN was limited although there were examples of individuals who felt their knowledge was good.

The work undertaken by the different teams was diverse. The Case Managers had a more strategic role in signposting and coordinating interventions. This focus group spoke the
most about school, highlighting some tensions they experienced in both getting information from schools and in getting schools to respond to individual needs.

The Support Workers seemed more removed from schools generally working more directly with young people. Their work is at the sharp end of the criminal justice system working with young people in custody, recently released from custody or on orders. They work under the direction of the Case Managers. The work of both these teams is mandatory.

The Prevention Team work with young people at risk of offending. The work this team does is voluntary. They work more with groups and also work in schools where the nature of the work is more collaborative – schools invite them in.

Two of the focus groups had members from the Substance Misuse Team. The engagement of young people with this service is voluntary. Whilst the team’s expertise was readily recognised, the voluntary nature of their work with young people was raised as a source of tension for one case manager.

All of the focus groups felt that there was a role for the Educational Psychology Service but there was not clear consensus between the groups as to what this should look like. The Prevention Team focus group identified most strongly with ‘more training’. However, there was also acknowledgement that it would also be useful to be able to contact an EP directly. For the Case Managers direct access to an EP was felt to be the most helpful. In the case of the Support Workers they identified both direct access to an EP as well as more training.

6.6 Next Steps

In looking to develop the next step in the action research paradigm, the initial findings were discussed with one of the service managers. More training was identified as a potential area for development but the details of this were not specified. The idea of a further focus group to gain some clarification was suggested but logistically this was not possible. In addition it was likely that there would be very diverse needs for which on reflection a training approach may not have been the best route to pursue. Rather than simply go ahead with something that may or may not be useful, training was therefore set aside.

A key finding and one that had been suggested by all of the groups was direct access to an EP and it was this avenue that was therefore pursued with the YOT. Consultation seemed to be an ideal way of enabling YOT professionals to gain direct access to the service for several reasons.
• Consultation has no concept threshold. Potentially any YOT professional can therefore access the service without the need to identify whether a young person has reached a particular threshold for involvement.
• Consultation can happen at the point at which someone has a concern. They do not have to wait for a particular training session to run before getting support.
• Consultation as a method of service delivery was already being successfully implemented in schools and as such it was a method of service delivery that I was very familiar with.

Phase two of the study involved the setting up and running of the consultation service. The implementation and outcome of the consultation service form the content of the next chapter.
Chapter 7  Consultation: Results and Discussion.

7.1  Introduction

This chapter analyses the principle data related to the following research questions

1  What are the range of difficulties that are brought by YOT workers to discuss with an EP in consultation?

2  Can a consultation model support YOT workers in their work with young people?

3  What are YOT workers views of consultation?

4  Is a model of consultation in evidence?

5  What are the facilitators/barriers to this method of service delivery?

It is divided into three main sections. The first section provides a brief overview of each the consultations that took place. The second section then moves on to discuss the findings from the focus group which was run with some of the youth offending workers who had accessed the consultation service. The final section in this chapter explores in more detail two of the consultations and reflects on how the conversations could be seen to fit within a consultation framework.

7.2  The Consultations

In total seven consultations took place, discussing six different young people in the time scale between setting up the consultation service and holding the focus group with participants of consultation. There were 6 YOT workers involved in the consultations. One worker (YOT worker 5) discussed two young people; one YOT worker had two consultations about the same young person and for one consultation, two YOT workers attended. In looking at special educational needs two of the young people had statements of SEN, 1 was known to be on SA+ (as school had already raised this young person with the author), 2 of the remaining three were felt to have some form of SEN but their SEN status was unknown and the final YP was not felt to have any learning needs. Of the YOT workers involved, 3 had also participated in the initial focus groups. These were CM 1, CM 3 and YEW 4. This information is summarised in table 2.
Table 2 Summary information of the consultations including presenting concern or issue and main conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Person</th>
<th>YOT worker</th>
<th>SEN?</th>
<th>Main Issue/s</th>
<th>Main conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>CM 1 and YOT 1</td>
<td>ADHD and Aspergers (statemented)</td>
<td>Communication between YOT and Youth Offending Institution</td>
<td>Differentiation of tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>YEW 4</td>
<td>Behaviour difficulties SA+</td>
<td>Individual work with K and interface with school</td>
<td>Need for coordinated approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EF</td>
<td>YOT 2</td>
<td>Social communication difficulties</td>
<td>Difficulties with time leading to possibility of breach</td>
<td>Interventions to address time keeping/being in the right place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>YOT 3</td>
<td>None identified</td>
<td>Non-attendance</td>
<td>Nature of reward system. Exploration of non-attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ</td>
<td>YOT 3</td>
<td>Learning difficulties unspecified</td>
<td>Non-attendance</td>
<td>Breaking ‘goals’ down into smaller steps/exploring commitment to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KL1</td>
<td>CM 3</td>
<td>Behaviour difficulties (statemented)</td>
<td>‘engagement’</td>
<td>Reasons for ‘resistance’ explored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the table, the nature of the main presenting issues differed from consultation to consultation and even where the main issues were the same i.e. around non-attendance there were differences in the backgrounds or aetiologies of the presenting difficulties. In order to get a flavour of the differences between the consultations a brief description of each will be given. Details about the individual young people given below does not include information about their criminal record or why necessarily they were known to the YOT as this was not an essential element of the consultations. The consultations were driven by the concerns that the consultees brought. The original offences were why they were involved with YOT workers but it was the work the YOT team then had to try to do with the young person that was the focus of the consultations rather than a detailed history of their criminal past. Of course elements were included by the YOT members of staff where this was relevant to their narrative. The consultations involved both those who were known to the Prevention Team and had been identified through Onset as being a risk of becoming an offender (and therefore their involvement was voluntary) and those who were offenders and therefore had to complete interventions in order to comply with their orders. As such, the reason these youngsters were involved with the YOT varied from truancy and risk factors associated with possibly becoming an offender to offences of burglary and assault.

7.2.1 AB

AB had a statement of SEN which indicated he had both Aspergers and ADHD and at the time of the consultation he was in custody. The YOT workers appeared to have a clear understanding of AB. They felt that he needed things to be stated unambiguously, he needed to know what was happening and had difficulties with empathy and seeing things from another’s perspective. They felt that uncertainty led to increased anxiety which in turn was felt to increase the likelihood of behaviour difficulties. The discussions also explored other possible implications of his Aspergers and ADHD in relation to possible difficulties with processing information as well as the possibility that other factors such as noise and ‘crowds’ might also cause an increase in anxiety.
The main difficulty that the workers had was in relation to his management within the Youth Offending Institution. The YOT workers had noticed that AB’s behaviour difficulties were less in evidence when he had been moved to a small unit. However, following an incident he was moved back into the larger main unit and unable to go back to the small unit until his behaviour had improved. The YOT workers recognised that this was problematic in that it was likely that being in the main unit meant that AB was exposed to far more stressors than when he was in the small unit. As they had recognised that anxiety increased the likelihood of behaviour difficulties a return to the small unit seemed difficult to achieve.

A second difficulty that they had identified was his lack of empathy and that this had implications for him addressing aspects of the offending work they needed to do with him. Their initial aim was to get him to recognise thoughts and feelings and to ask for help. They had also noticed that in trying to do this work, asking him about past events did not seem to be working.

In looking to help them formulate some solutions or ways forward the outcomes of the consultation fell into three different areas. The first area was about reflecting back what they had already noticed about what was working and what was not with suggestions for how they might further develop their emerging hypothesis around his level of social understanding. The second area related to the idea of ‘doing something different’. They had noticed that asking him about past events was not working. A suggestion from Solution Focused Approach is that ‘if something isn’t working do something different’. In this case a tentative suggestion was to move from looking back to looking forward and exploring with AB possible goals he wanted to work on.

The final area related to reflecting back to them aspects of their work that they had talked about that were working but that they perhaps had not given any weight or importance to. Although, they were finding it difficult to engage AB in the work they were trying to do, what was clear from their discussion was that a relationship was being maintained, they were committed to continuing to work with AB and that this could provide a model to AB that adults were not giving up on him.

7.2.2 CD

CD was discussed by YEW 4 who was a member of the Challenge and Support Team. The concerns were that behaviour in school was becoming increasingly challenging to the extent that CD had been put on a reduced timetable. In terms of this consultation there were three main areas of discussion. The first was around the individual work that YEW 4 was doing with CD, looking at how this work could be conceptualised again using a solution
focused framework. The second area of discussion looked at this work within a wider context. From discussion it emerged that the worker was not the only one working one-to-one with CD, there was also a learning mentor from school and another member of the YOT who specialised in using neurolinguistic programming (NLP) techniques. What became clear here was the need for there to be communication between the different adults in order to facilitate a more coordinated approach to the interventions.

This young man had also been referred to the EP by the school. The third area of discussion related to ‘what next’. School were due to call a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meeting and as the EP I was due to consult with the school. Although this work was started and some assessment took place in school, school placed him in the authority PRU on a PARE (pupil at risk of permanent exclusion) placement before any real work could be done with the school. Although there was a willingness to work with outside agencies from some individual members of staff within the school, for example the SENCO, there was no real commitment for trying to make the placement work for CD from a senior management perspective. The PARE placement removed responsibility from the school and the EPS work continued with the PRU.

7.2.3 EF

EF was discussed by YOT 4. EF was a yr 10 pupil attending a PRU who had been remanded in custody for stealing. At the time of the consultation he was on ‘a tag’ needing to be in from 7pm until 7am and he was managing to do this. He was felt to have severe communication problems, had been known to CAMHS since the age of six and had been assessed by a clinical psychologist. Part of this assessment had suggested EF had cognitive difficulties and was described as functioning developmentally around a 10 year level.

The worker felt that EF was easily led and that his behaviour was quite impulsive in that he would see something and then just take it (this was explored in a subsequent consultation which fell outside of the timeframe of the study). However, the most pressing issue at the time related to his difficulty with time keeping which had led to him breaching his order.

The focus of this consultation centred on two main areas. The first area related to exploring the impact his learning difficulties may have in terms of his understanding and that therefore work would need to be differentiated appropriately. Ensuring others working with him were also aware of his difficulties was also discussed.
The second area of discussion related to exploring what mechanisms could be put in place to help him to be at the right place at the right time. These included looking at supporting EF to develop some self management strategies but also to look at the way the adults could also support him, for example trying to ensure that appointments were on the same day at the same time.

7.2.4 GH

GH was discussed by YOT 3 who was a case manager for the FIP (Family Inclusion Project) and part of the prevention arm of the YOT. Concerns around GH related to attendance at school. His secondary career was described as somewhat chaotic. There were a number of behaviour difficulties at his first secondary school he attended where ‘he was getting sent home for the tiniest thing’. On transferring to another secondary school the worker described that relationships were better but that GH was refusing to stay for whole days. The information presented suggested that this might often happen if he felt he might be unable to do something. For example, he refused to go into a maths lesson because there was going to be a test. The situation was felt to be frustrating because GH was perceived to be ‘clever’ and his teachers were frustrated because he was not achieving his potential. The worker had set up a reward system with a reward of visiting a farm or sanctuary for completing 2 weeks attendance.

The focus of this discussion looked at two main areas. Firstly there was some discussion about the nature of the reward system that had been put in place and how this might be adjusted or amended. How a purely behavioural approach was unlikely to be successful was the second area to be explored as the reasons why he was refusing to go into lessons had not been clearly identified or addressed. Discussion centred on how some work around mapping out different aspects of school and how he felt about them might be helpful as a first step.

7.2.5 IJ

IJ was also discussed by YOT 3 and discussion related to long-standing non-attendance and learning difficulties. His mum had reported that attendance issues began in year seven following a change of school from one that had a good understanding of his needs to one that did not. He was subsequently sent to the PRU for assessment, moved to a third secondary school before returning to the PRU. At the time of the consultation IJ was on a reduced timetable and his attendance was intermittent.

IJ wanted to go to a mainstream school and had been told by an attendance officer that this would be explored if he attended for six weeks. IJ had said he wanted to attend but at that
stage he had not been able to translate this into actual attendance. The focus of the consultation centred on how the worker might work with IJ to explore in more detail how issues around his attendance could be addressed. The usefulness of exploring how IJ might break the goal down into smaller steps, to identify exceptions and also to explore ‘commitment to change’ using ideas from Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) and motivational interviewing were discussed.

7.2.6 KL

KL was discussed in two consultations by CM3. KL was on an order for criminal damage which had subsequently been extended following an incident at his educational placement, the PRU. The criminal damage came about as a result of him running away from school when he had been told he could not go back to his aunt following an allegation in relation to a family member. At the time of the consultation an Aims assessment was ongoing.

The presenting concern in the first consultation related to trying to overcome his ‘resistance’ and to ‘facilitate his level of engagement’. KL had quite a few aspects to his order – anger management, developing victim empathy as well as ‘consequential thinking’, possible work around minimising risk dependent on the outcome of the Aims assessment and relationships. Several approaches had been tried including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing and NLP with limited success. Although it was felt there was some resistance, through discussion it was possible to identify some exceptions. KL was demonstrating a level of compliance because he was turning up and was able to engage with some of the work for example identifying long-term and short-term goals.

Tentative suggestions were made about possible reasons for KL's apparent ‘resistance’ and ‘non-engagement’. These centred on the possibility that KL had a number of adults working with him and that this in itself could be confusing. Secondly although a number of different approaches had been tried it was not clear as to how these had been evaluated and so it was suggested that it may be helpful to re-examine what had already been done in order to identify what skills he had, what skills he had yet to acquire and what skills it would be useful to work on.

A second consultation was arranged in order to do that. During this consultation some further exceptions were noted, including him applying some of the anger management techniques he had been taught. However, difficulties remained for the case worker in trying to find a way to address particular areas of working. It was noted that he seemed to find it difficult to empathise and that when he was asked about how he felt about things he would either say ‘I don’t know’ or say ‘fine’ which had been taken as a sign of non-engagement.
An alternative but equally possible hypothesis was posed that resistance was an indication that the task was too difficult in some way. The possibility of providing more scaffolding was discussed through changing the nature of the language, by using scaling questions as well as providing him with more concrete learning materials to explore how he might feel in different situations. How to further differentiate should he still find the tasks too difficult was also discussed. Overall the focus here seemed to centre on identifying the learning objective, establishing what skills he had in relation to that learning objective and then looking at the next small steps.

### 7.2.7 Summary of Consultations

In examining the cases that the YOT workers came to discuss some similarities and differences can be noted. All but one of the young people were identified by the YOT worker as having a special educational need. Two (AB and KL) had statements, one was identified as being at SA+, and two were identified as having some sort of SEN, although the Code of Practice level was not referred to or known. In relation to the nature of the SEN social communication difficulties were clearly identified with two young people (AB and EF), ‘behaviour difficulties’ were identified for CD and KL and one young person (IJ) was identified as having ‘learning difficulties’ the exact nature of which were unknown.

Although there were differences in terms of the main identified issue the YOT workers wished to discuss at the consultation, there was one common thread to all the meetings. Whilst this may have been expressed differently by different individuals all the consultations contained some elements that related to exploring ways of working with the young people more successfully. There was a sense for all of the consultees that at some level they were not able to engage successfully with the young people in order to undertake the work they needed to do and all of the consultations contained an element of the adults doing something different. They had noticed that what they were doing was not bringing about the change they felt was needed to tell them that the interventions had been successful and were open to considering both different ways of viewing the problem and of finding alternative ways of presenting their interventions. In other words they came to the consultation because they felt stuck in the work they were doing, they knew that they needed to do something different but did not have a way of bridging that gap. In addition for two cases there was an additional issue (and in one of these it was the main issue) which related to working with another institution. In one case (AB) this was a Youth Offending Institution and in the other (CD) this was the school.
At the end of each of the consultations a general question was asked to establish if what had been talked about had been helpful. All of the consultees at this point stated that the consultation had been helpful and that they felt the consultation had given them some concrete ideas to go away with. However, in order to explore the usefulness of the consultations in more detail a further focus group was organised with some of the consultees. The findings of that focus group are discussed in the next section.

7.3 Consultation Focus Group

As was outlined in the methodology section the focus group was run in the YOT offices and ran for 40 minutes. All the members of the focus group knew one another and as all of the group had all attended a consultation they all also knew me. As such this focus group was made up of five of the six workers who had attended a consultation. YEW 4 was unable to attend due to other commitments. The purpose of the focus group was outlined and permission was gained for recording the session. Due to a number of factors including a significant reduction in the size of the service, a second facilitator was not used in the session. As the group all knew one another and was undertaken in their offices, there was a relaxed atmosphere to the session. There were not the facilities available to provide refreshments but as the focus group took place in their own offices, participants who wanted to brought their own drink. The session was recorded using a digital recorder and the group was asked the following 4 main questions:-

Before you came to consultation what expectations did you have?

What did you think about the consultation itself?

Do you have any comments about the written feedback?

What do you think about the future of the consultation service?

The focus group questions set out to explore four broad areas in relation to the consultation service. These related to expectations about consultation, the consultation itself, views relating to written feedback and the future of the service. Each of these will be explored in turn and the main themes relating to each area highlighted.

7.3.1 Pre-consultation (Prior Expectations)

The first question of the focus group attempted to explore what, if any, expectations the consultees had of consultation. Consultees had access to some pre-consultation material. The first of these (Appendix 5) gave a brief summary of consultation as a process. The second document was called pre-consultation thinking (Appendix 6). This document
contained a number of key questions aimed at supporting the consultation process. However, it had been made clear that there was no need for this to be completed in order for the consultation to proceed. There was an expectation, therefore, that although consultees did not have to have completed any written work beforehand, they would have had access to information outlining what consultation was about. That said one worker stated that he had no particular expectations.

*I think I came in with quite an open mind I didn’t have any specific sort of expectations from all other than look I’m going to go through the consultation and see what information is given and see how I can adapt to working with my young person and gain a better understanding.* (CM 1)

I wondered whether the consultees had had sight of the paper work before hand and so a supplemental question was asked to this effect. An initial lack of response from the focus group indicated that they were not immediately able to recall information about the paperwork and one consultee asked if the group could be reminded as to what documentation was being referred to. Once reminded it did appear that the consultees had had sight of the paper work and two different responses were noted:

*It kind of triggered things to maybe discuss.* (YOT 1)

*…make you think about why you were referring, think about maybe why you’re having the consultation in the first place and things to bring to the table.* (CM 3)

Although there was an initial lack of recall subsequent comments following a reminder does provide some indication that access to the pre-consultation thinking document was useful in helping at least some of the consultees to consider some of the aspects they wanted to discuss during the consultation. No reference was made to the other document which outlined consultation as a process. Whether this was because it was not seen to be important or useful is difficult to say.

In considering the consultees views about their prior perceptions of consultation they therefore seemed to have a fairly open minded approach. There were no real issues in this area that raised particular concerns. For example, there was no sense of anxiety or concern that it might be a waste of time or that they felt the child should be seen rather than having a conversation about them. Overall they seemed to be fairly open, without having any preconceptions, seeing it as a fairly straighforwad process of being able to have a conversation about a young person for whom there were concerns.
7.3.2 The Consultation

The next question for the focus group focused on the actual consultation itself. In exploring this question responses fell into two main areas. The first of these related to consultees’ perceptions about the consultation process. The second related to aspects of problem-solving explored within the consultation itself. Figure 6 (below) summarises the main themes in a mind map.

Figure 6 Mind map of the main themes relating to consultation

7.3.2.1 Perceptions of Consultation

Overall consultation was seen to be positive and in their discussions a number of perceptions emerged about consultation as a process. One worker commented that she felt the process was very thorough and another felt it was similar to supervision commenting

\[ In \text{ a way it was like micromanagement of a case almost. (CM 3) } \]

Another worker seemed to pick up on the interactive nature of the process with the comment:-

\[ I \text{ think it is a bit more that just being a Google Psychologist. (CM 1) } \]

Generally the consultees’ perception of consultation was positive for a number of reasons which will be expanded on in the next section.
7.3.2.2 Problem-Solving

In analysing comments made by members of the focus group two major themes emerged which were - ‘developing understanding’ and ‘new ideas’. Each of these two themes contained one or more sub-themes. In relation to ‘developing understanding’ these were ‘reassurance’ and ‘problem clarification’ and in relation to ‘new ideas’ there was one sub-theme ‘differentiation’. Each of these main themes together with their subthemes will be explored in the next section.

7.3.2.3 Developing Understanding.

Through the consultation process consultees were able to explore alternative explanations and hypotheses for presenting behaviours. This enabled them to feel they had gained a better understanding which in turn changed the way they felt about the problem as well as leading to different ways of working. For example, one consultee expressed this in the following way:-

*Because at times it was frustrating but then when I spoke to you and it was oh right I understand now it’s not that he won’t do it , it’s that he really struggles with it.* (CM 3)

Another consultee said:-

*What advice you gave me hasn’t made him go to school more, but that I feel I understand him more and we’ve talked thought things that I couldn’t get him to tell me through normal, through other interventions I was doing.* (YOT 3)

For another consultee, who attended the consultation with a colleague, the process enabled them to consolidate and confirm their understanding of the difficulty which in turn increased confidence in trying different approaches to the work they would try to undertake.

*…but confirmed sort of unofficial thoughts like yes are we doing this right yes this is what the need is and stuff or whatever so in a way consultation reinforced our awareness levels that we already had.* (CM 1)

A common theme in the consultations was related to ‘non-engagement’ of the young people the YOT workers were trying to deliver interventions to. Consultation appeared to offer consultees the opportunity to explore non-engagement and through the process enabled them to develop different and perhaps more helpful explanations of the behaviours they were seeing in the young people they came to discuss. This then opened the opportunity to explore the development of alternative ways of working with the young people. This second theme of developing new ways of working is discussed in more detail in the next section.
7.3.2.4 New Ways of Working/Differentiation

All the consultations contained an element of exploring different ways of trying to work with the young people, based on revised or alternative hypotheses for presenting behaviours. For example, in the case of AB, differentiation related to the fact that he found it difficult to be in groups. The YOT workers found that changing the venue and moving to a more informal approach led to positive outcomes.

I think the change of venue, sometimes at home, around his accommodation, and speak to him and again, he was just very informal, he got this CD out and it was 'what do you think about this, what do you think about that', it wasn't directed… it was the same sort of work but done in a very different way, in an informal way, and I thought that we got a lot more from him, not just the actual contributions, I think, but relationship wise as well. (CM 1)

In other cases developing new ways of working revolved more directly around the intervention and how it was being delivered. Within this, learning objectives were explored as well as possible barriers to the young person ‘engaging’ with the work and how these might be overcome. For example, one consultee was finding it difficult to facilitate discussion with the young person. She found that presenting the task in a different way had a positive outcome.

The consultation for me, I found it really useful, I got a really useful tool out of it because the young person I was working with, I couldn't facilitate a lot of discussion with him so it was really unclear as to establishing his understanding of what we were trying to do, especially victim empathy stuff. Then you gave us the idea of boxing off feelings, you know attaching certain activities to certain feelings so I created that into an exercise and it worked really well. (CM 3)

Suggesting a change in task from an open ended discussion to a more scaffolded approach enabled the young person to more actively engage with the task. In addition the young person also felt more positive about the work.

…and the feedback from the young person, he found that a lot more easy to work with and actually said that himself 'cos I asked him what was different. Because I praised him, the reason that it came out like cos I praised him for the amount of engagement he had in that session and I said what's different from the sessions and he said well it's easy to put things in a certain area and then talk about it rather than just talking about it. (CM 3)

For another consultee the problem had been clearly identified, however what consultation offered her was the opportunity to explore how the problem could be addressed focusing on an exploration of alternative ways of communicating.

He struggles with the concept of time and time management and is on the autistic spectrum, you gave me the ideas of using very strict routines, using pictures in his
timetable to associate with what he is meant to be doing, so changed all his timetable around and used pictures and he's engaged really well since then and, just a different ways of communicating. (YOT 2)

The process of consultation provided additional ways of working for another consultee:-

An idea really of what to do with each young person that I hadn't thought of before so it was really useful to have that extra idea. (YOT 2)

7.3.2.5 Outcomes of Consultation

Overall the feedback from the consultations was positive. This is perhaps unsurprising as consultation works best where consultees come to the consultation on a voluntary basis (Gutkin & Curtis, 1990). In this study consultees were likely to be more motivated and to view consultation favourably as they had to actively signed up for the consultation rather than being directed or sent.

Whilst consultations did not necessarily completely resolve all of the issues, it was seen to have a positive impact on their work. For example, one consultee noticed a change in the length of session the young person would tolerate which was put down to a combination of changing the way they were working with him and having a greater understanding of the impact of his SEN.

And the little bits of stuff we started doing then,.. really good and then understanding what he had as well, and different ways of working and go from like 10 min sessions with him to cooking sessions that could last two or three hours because we did it in a different way with him. (YOT 1)

One consultee summarised consultation in the following way

No I think the main learning point for me was the different ways of working with a young person and that's what's the biggest thing that's not gonna go away cos I've had one consultation with you, I'll come across a different person who will have a different need that will require a different way of working. (CM 3)

As the consultant, these reflections resonate with my own feeling about the usefulness of consultation. The YOT workers all have expertise around youth offending but do not necessarily have (nor would they be expected to have) expertise around education and learning. Where workers are struggling to be able to deliver interventions, an educational perspective delivered through consultation can be useful in enabling YOT workers to access a different skill, knowledge and understanding base enabling them to conceptualise the problem differently, and consider alternative hypothesis for particular behaviours.
However, it is acknowledged that consultation is not a panacea and this can be illustrated by one consultee’s experience of the limitations to consultation. Although she felt the consultation had enabled her to develop a better understanding of the young person and as a consequence enabled her to communicate more effectively with him her ultimate goal of getting him back into school had not been achieved and she felt that:

… he needs an educational psychologist all of his own for about a year. (YOT 3)

7.3.2.6 Generalisability

One further impact may be worth noting and that related to generalisability. One worker noted that she also worked with one of the young people discussed in consultation with another consultee. This worker noted similar difficulties in that she also struggled to talk to him but noted that:

…then I found it more helpful cos I really struggled to speak to him but when I talked to (other worker) and saw the information you’d got, it made everything clear and it was easier to talk to him. (YOT 2)

Another worker also made a comment about how something that had been discussed in consultation had been passed on to a colleague who also saw positive results:

…..communicated that to another colleague who’s delivered sex education with him and she found it really useful as well, using those methods. (CM 3)

Whilst this sample is small and certainly any degree of generalisability around possible positive impact of consultation is questionable, in this sample, at least, it did seem that the outcomes of consultation were positive. Larney (2003) points out that in a number of evaluations of consultation it is often only the impact for the consultees and to a lesser extent the consultants that is examined and that the impact for the ‘client’ of the consultation is not. She suggests this has been described as a significant flaw in this area of research (e.g. Bramlett & Murphy, 1998). Although this is also the case in this study (i.e. the young people themselves were not interviewed), there is some indirect information to suggest that there were also positive outcomes for the young people as well. One example is the quote given above. A second example is given below:

I thought that we got a lot more from him not just the actual contributions I think but relationship wise as well. I think his ideas sort of changed a little bit of how he saw my role or how he may have seen YOT 1’s role. (CM 1)
7.4 Written Feedback

Written feedback in the form of a consultation summary was provided which outlined the main discussion points and summarised conclusions and possible action points an example of which is given in Appendix 1. Although this question did not generate a great deal of discussion, overall written feedback was seen as a useful. For two it was an aid memoire:

_For me having read it and digested it I put it on file in case any to look back and refresh._ (YOT 1)

_Cos I'd forgotten one, about my feedback sheet, thing I'd forgotten some of the things that you'd said and I thought oh yes I needed it definitely._ (YOT 2)

Another consultee used the feedback sheet as a basis for developing an intervention:

_I found it useful because from that feedback I was able to compile an actual exercise, so and there is still an outstanding exercise on there that I can go back to cos obviously on a day-to-day basis it's useful to have that to refer back to just to remind ourselves what we need to cover and try with the young person._ (CM 3)

For another consultee written feedback was important because:

_While you are sitting in the consultation there is so much going on._ (CM 1)

Again it is difficult to generalise from this small sample. However, comments made do suggest that the written feedback, if nothing else was useful as an aid memoire.

7.5 The Future of the Consultation Service.

The final focus group question related to the possible future of the service. There had not been as much take up of the service as I had hoped and I was interested to explore issues around this.

7.5.1 Accessibility

Although the service was made known to the YOT workers via their managers as well as through flyers advertising the service, the actual take up of the service was somewhat limited. I was interested to know what the group thought about the accessibility of the service and whether there were ways to improve this.

In terms of physical access the consultees did not see any particular difficulties. The booking- in system was part of their intervention toolkit accessed via their office computers and was a system they were familiar with.
Whilst one consultee commented on the ease of access:-

*And ideally still being accessible because some of the services we do have unfortunately it's accessing them like there's so many protocols.* (CM 1)

Another did again refer to the idea that some colleagues might find signing up for a discussion with an EP a little intimidating. The view that some might find talking to a psychologist intimidating had been raised in one of the original focus groups.

*I think it might be like if you are new or something, if you're not used to make you loads of referrals and things like that, some people may find it intimidating to think am I referring to the right thing, I'm not sure if this is you know, but that's the same for any referral I suppose, that's not just you, ......what am I trying to say that, that might be a barrier for people that they don't know who you are do you know what I mean.* (YOT 2)

In looking at possible ways round this it was recognised that short sessions had been done with teams and that:-

*I think people are starting to know who you are, just initially I think it actually takes a bit of time to realise what it is and what it's for and it takes other people to use it, to them saying to, if you've got an issue why don't you speak to.* (YOT 2)

Another consultee seemed to acknowledge the importance of being known. She had been part of the first focus group and so knew who I was.

*I think, I found it... I think you've got a point there because I saw you at the initial when you started in that group, I think without that advantage it would be a bit like a faceless facility.* (CM 3)

These comments indicate that it takes time to establish a service and whilst in some ways the service was accessible it was felt there could be difficulties in access in relation to workers own perceptions. Building relationships and becoming a familiar face seemed to be seen as important in enabling staff to feel comfortable in using the service. Attempts to increase visibility and increase familiarity had been done in a number of ways. Initially I had been allocated a room on a different floor to the YOT workers but this was changed so that I was located on the same floor. I had also been to visit all the teams in their offices. However, it is clear that this needs to be an ongoing process. One consultee suggested that a further visit to teams would be useful and this was subsequently put in place. Further familiarisation will hopefully also be achieved by carrying out further training with all YOT staff which at the time of writing was being planned as part of my ongoing work with the service.
7.6 Consultation as a Model

The feedback from both the consultations themselves and from the focus group seemed to indicate that the consultees had found them useful. However, in ‘doing consultation’ I was interested to see to what extent what was going on in the consultation could be seen to fit within the Wagner’s model of consultation discussed in the literature review. Wagner (2000) suggests that there can be a simplistic view of consultation and that the ‘casual observer may not see or grasp the complexity of what is going on or what needs to go on’ (page 15). The next section explores the extent to which the consultations could be seen to move beyond the simplistic view of ‘just having chats with teachers’. In other words, as described by Kennedy et al. (2008), was ‘I walking the talk’?

In looking at consultation as a problem-solving process, problem identification is considered by many researchers to be the most significant phase (Kennedy et al. (2008)) and can be supported by exploring previous actions and interventions (Wagner, (1995) in Kennedy et al. (2008)). Without a clear problem or concern, discussions are likely to remain unfocused and solutions elusive. It can be argued therefore that problem identification is an essential aspect of consultation.

Wagner (2000) argues consultation is a process where concerns are raised and that a ‘collaborative and recursive process is initiated that combines joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review (page 11) and suggests that the processes through which conversation assists change are:-

- **Externalising the problem.** Moving from internal to external changes how we view the problem. If we see it differently, we will tend to act differently towards it.
- **Getting Meta,** taking a helicopter view. Through asking questions about the concern, e.g. what has been tried, what strategies, outcomes, exceptions- when is the problem not there, less intense, last less long etc., Wagner suggests that a more detached and therefore comprehensive view emerges.
- **The Paradigm shift.** From an examination of the connections, the view of the concern shifts from within-person to a more interactionalist stance.
- **Engaging in self-reflexivity.** The process of consultation enables the person to recognise their own role in the patterns of behaviour and that possibilities for change, through taking different actions emerge.

In exploring the extent to which the consultation carried out with the YOT workers might be seen to fit within this framework, problem identification as well as externalising the problem,
getting meta, paradigm shift and engaging in self-reflexivity will be addressed. The next section begins by looking at problem identification but for the remaining processes looking at these elements as separate entities is artificial as, in reality; they are not separate processes or items but are processes that are interdependent on one another and the key that enables these processes to happen are the questions that are asked in the consultation. As such two examples from the consultations undertaken will be explored in turn to show how these processes were reflected in the consultations.

7.6.1 Problem Identification.

Through discussion around the case that the YOT worker brought it was possible to identify the workers main concerns and what solution focused approaches would call a goal for the work – ‘what do we need to talk about in order that this conversation will be useful to you?’ The problems or concerns identified then became the focus of the conversation. Different problems or concerns were identified by individuals: ‘not engaging’, breaching his order because of being late to appointments, escalating behaviour difficulties in school, to get the young person to recognise thoughts and feelings. For one consultee, on reflection, the problem identification may not have been sufficiently explored and clarified. In the focus group she made reference to the fact that although an outcome of the consultation had enabled her to have more ‘engaged’ conversations, neither of the young people she came to talk about were back in school. This suggests that her goal for the consultation was that the boys would return to school. Whereas this was un-arguably a long-term goal, it may have been helpful to articulate more clearly that this was unlikely to be achieved through one consultation and that what was being explored was the next small steps towards that goal.

7.6.2 The Consultation Conversation

In this next section 2 of the consultations will be explored in some detail in order to illustrate how the processes outlined by Wagner (2000) above can be seen to be reflected in the consultation conversations that were undertaken in this study.

The consultations generally began by exploring concerns and this enabled the YOT workers to both externalise the problem and take more meta view. For example, in the case of KL the case worker was able to see that what had been interpreted as ‘non-engagement’ (an internal factor) could attributed to external factors i.e. the task presented was too hard/inaccessible. What supported this change of view was exploring what had been tried, what the outcomes had been as well as exploring exceptions. Through this discussion a paradigm shift from non-engagement to a more interactionalist stance emerged. In terms of
self-reflectivity, the YOT worker was able to see that working differently i.e. using differentiated tasks might enable KL to engage more effectively.

In the case of YOT worker 5 who discussed IJ and GH an exploration of possibilities around why intervention might not have been successful opened the possibility of working differently. In both these cases a purely behavioural approach in the form of offering rewards had been taken in trying to get the two boys to attend school. For one it was a trip for two weeks attendance and for the other consideration of mainstream school following six weeks attendance at the PRU. In both cases more detailed questions were asked in relation to the young people’s current attendance patterns which opened up the possibility to consider alternative formulations in relation to non-attendance at school. This in turn enabled the YOT worker to explore alternative ways of working (as it had been suggested that exploring in more detail school factors that were impacting on attendance might be a first step in gaining a better understanding of the boys’s non-attending behaviour).

Although discussions appeared to have enabled a paradigm shift in the consultation and did enable the YOT worker to have more successful interactions, the paradigm shift to a more interactionalist stance was not necessarily maintained. Comments made in the focus group suggested that whilst she had been able to work differently with the young people ‘within-person’ explanations to non-attendance remained the dominant narrative.

This may reflect a weakness in the model used since a follow-up consultation is not required but in this case may have been helpful. Kennedy (2008) points out that whilst some consultation models require more than one meeting in order to complete the problem-solving process e.g. Bergan and Kratochwill (1990), in the Wagner model more than one phase of the problem-solving process happens within one consultation. In schools where Wagner’s model is most often used this issue is likely to be less problematic since the EP would be going back into school on a regular basis and is much more likely to be able to pick up and revisit issues or concerns. In working in the YOT the connections are much looser. There is no one to coordinate EP involvement and therefore a way of building in evaluation more explicitly will need to be considered.
Chapter 8 Summary and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter begins with a summary of the key findings from each of the research questions for the two phases of the research. It then moves on to outline some of the possible implications for future work of the Educational Psychology Service with the YOT. Section 8.4 reflects on the use of consultation as a method of service delivery for EPs. The following section, 8.5, explores some personal reflections on the methodology used in the study. The chapter concludes with some implications for further research.

8.2 Summary of the Key Findings from Each of the Research Questions

8.2.1 Phase 1 Research Questions

1. What work do youth offending workers undertake with young people?

The views of three groups of professionals working in the YOT, the Case Managers, the Support Workers and the Prevention Workers, were explored. Despite the formal remit of the YOT as a whole to reduce either (a) the likelihood of a young person entering the criminal justice system or (b) the risk of reoffending for those already in the criminal justice system, the findings from the focus groups illustrated how the work they actually undertake is more varied and dependent on specific roles of individuals working in the service. The Case Managers and the Support Workers both work with young people within the criminal justice system and the prevention workers work with those perceived to be at risk of becoming young offenders. Professionals from all three groups felt that the start of any work with young people began with the assessment of individuals, however the subsequent work undertaken varied according to the teams. The Prevention Team were more likely to work with groups of young people. They were also more likely to work in schools ‘delivering’ messages aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour. The Case Managers worked with individuals, although their role was also seen as one of coordination and ensuring that referrals to others in the service were made in accordance with the outcomes of their assessments. For the Support Workers, their main role was to work directly with young people on areas identified through the Asset assessment, working alongside and under the direction of the Case Managers.

The Prevention Team also delivered training programmes in schools aimed at awareness raising of what is classed as antisocial behaviour. The aim of these sessions was to reduce the likelihood of young people becoming young offenders.
In their direct work with young people, the interface with schools was identified as a key theme in both the prevention focus group and the case manager focus group. Whilst the Prevention Team provided examples of both positive and negative experiences of working with schools, the Case Managers views were more generally negative. They were clearly frustrated and felt thwarted by schools as they strived to secure appropriate interventions for the young people on their caseload. Frustrations in relation to schools included not knowing who to go to to get information they needed, that schools were not always willing partners in supporting young people, that schools were not always willing or able to identify and meet the special needs appropriately of the young people on the Case Managers caseload and that, even when these needs had been identified, the SEN processes took too long and were too bureaucratic.

2 What knowledge do youth offending workers have about SEN?

Knowledge of SEN was varied. Whilst it was clear that workers were aware of some aspects of SEN and some individuals felt that their own knowledge was good, overall knowledge base was judged to be low. Issues emerging from this perceived lack of knowledge related to confidence and potential feelings of competence within the Prevention Team focus group. In the Case Managers and the Support Workers focus groups issues related more particularly to issues around differentiation. Whilst both focus groups were aware of the need to differentiate they did not always feel they have the skills and resources necessary to do this.

3 What views do youth offending workers they have about how the EPS might support them in their work?

All three focus groups identified that having access to an EP would be useful. Both the Prevention Team and the Support Workers focus groups identified that more training would be helpful. All three groups also identified that having direct access to an EP in relation to case work would be helpful.

8.2.2 Phase 2 Research Questions

The key findings and themes from the second part of the research will be summarised by returning to the research questions.

1 What are the range of difficulties that are brought by YOT workers to discuss with an educational psychologist in consultation?
The young people brought for discussion had a range of difficulties which fell broadly into the areas of social communication difficulties, behaviour difficulties and/or learning difficulties. Their position on the Code of Practice also varied from no SEN/not recorded to young people who had statements of SEN.

Although in two cases there were issues in relation to working with other institutions, all the consultations contained an element of exploring different ways of working with young people to increase ‘engagement’. What is perhaps of some interest is that the nature of the presenting difficulties were no different from those that would be raised by schools. What was different was the context in which these difficulties occurred and that these young people were on the fringes of or already involved in the criminal justice system.

2 Can a consultation model support YOT workers in their work with young people?

Although the sample was small, all of the consultations had positive outcomes. These positive outcomes varied but included ‘gaining a better understanding’ which in turn led to developing different ways of interacting as well as changing environmental factors and differentiating tasks to take account of emerging hypothesis about perceived difficulties. There was also some evidence that what had been discussed in consultation had a wider impact and was generalisable beyond the individual case discussed.

3 What are YOT workers views of consultation?

Generally the YOT workers views of consultation were positive. Views expressed indicated that they found the process supportive. Views included seeing consultation as a form of supervision that could be affirming, could support the development of understanding and provide a framework for developing alternative intervention strategies.

4 Was a model of consultation used?

This was not a central focus of the study. However, it was important to explore to some extent whether what was being called consultation could be seen to fit within a Wagner’s model of consultation. In analysing two of the consultations, it could be seen that the essential elements of consultation were in evidence - externalising the problem, getting ‘meta’, the paradigm shift and engaging in self-reflectivity. However, as was noted earlier, there may be a weakness in the model as follow-up was not built in and in one case in particular would perhaps have been helpful.
What are the facilitators/barriers to this method of service delivery?

The data gathered suggests that consultation was seen to be a useful and helpful tool in supporting YOT workers in their work with young people. In looking to maintain the service some potential facilitators and barriers were identified.

For those in the focus group who had accessed the service, the method of gaining access was seen to be straightforward. Other facilitators identified included the lack of thresholds and protocols in accessing the service. A lack of age restrictions was also felt to be helpful. Being known to the service users was seen as a facilitator.

Conversely not being known to all the YOT workers was perceived as a barrier. This was for two main reasons. Firstly, despite work being done on promoting the service, it was not clear the extent to which all YOT workers were aware of the service and if they were aware, of how to access it via the ‘toolkit’. Secondly, if staff were aware of the service but were unfamiliar with it there was a perception that staff my not feel comfortable in accessing the service. Ways of addressing these potential barriers were put in place including attending team meetings and work in this area is ongoing.

8.3 Implications for Work with the YOT

This study set out to develop the work of the Educational Psychology Service within the YOT through the use of an action research paradigm. Initial focus groups suggested that direct access to an EP would be helpful and as such a consultation service was piloted and accessed by a number, albeit quite small, of YOT workers. A focus group of consultees was used to evaluate the service and it was seen to be useful both in terms of enabling consultees to develop alternative constructs about the problem and/or in supporting them to establish different ways of engaging young people in the interventions they were trying to deliver. This was done by exploring ways of differentiating tasks to address identified (or possibly unidentified) difficulties that would enable the learning objective to be achieved.

Although this study was small scale, it has provided sufficient positive feedback to look to continue the service on offer and at the time of writing further dates had been provided for staff to sign on to. The extent to which this service can continue is, however, unknown. In the current political climate of increased ‘efficiency’ targets within local authorities many services, including our own are moving towards becoming traded services. Within this context of financial ‘belt tightening’ it is unclear how long this service, which is currently ‘free’ at the point of delivery, can continue to be delivered in this way. If the service has to be paid for, questions arise as to who should or could pay? As these are some of the most
vulnerable young people, who if their offending behaviours are not addressed, can end up costing the state, should LAs have a responsibility to provide access to support for YOT workers in supporting young people or should it be the YOT itself that should value and therefore fund additional resources. Interestingly, if the YOT were paying for the service, they may actually use it more as they would want to make sure get their ‘money’s worth’.

Secondly, although the participants of the focus group appeared to have a positive view of the benefits of access to consultation with an EP, uptake of the service has not as high as had been hoped. There may be a number of reasons for this.

- The service is not sufficiently well embedded in the system.
- Potential consultees lack confidence to approach the service.
- The service is not sufficiently understood by potential users for them to see the potential relevance.
- Whilst it is seen as useful there is less actual demand than anticipated.

Work continues on trying to establish links between the educational psychology service and the YOT, firstly through the continuation of the consultation service and secondly through delivering joint training with members of the YOT. It is therefore hoped that the visibility of the service will be increased and given that the service can continued to be offered, will be better utilised in the future.

As has been noted already, positive outcomes to consultation were reported by the focus group participants. In addition other larger studies (e.g. Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) have also noted the positive role EPs can play in supporting YOT workers in their work with young people.

Although this study focused on one aspect of EP delivery (i.e. consultation) other avenues for support were identified in the study, for example doing more training. The Welsh Assembly report (2009) noted EPs being involved in a wide variety of training including motivational interviewing as well as ADHD and autism.

Currently access to consultation continues to be offered to the YOT. In addition the service has also delivered some training with members of the YOT.

8.4 Reflections on the Use of Consultation

The findings the focus group indicated that consultation provided at least some positive outcomes and that as such was helpful to the consultees in resolving the issues that they
brought to the consultation. As an EP I have used this model of consultation within educational settings and within those settings have knowledge not only of psychology but also of teaching and learning and first-hand experience of working within a school. In using this consultation model in a non-educational setting I had no first-hand experience of that working context. However, despite this apparent limitation, all of the consultations had some positive outcomes for the consultees. This suggests that consultation as a model is not reliant on the consultants’ knowledge and experience of the consultees work but that it is through the joint exploration of the issue, that positive outcomes can be achieved. Each participant brings different knowledge to the conversation. The consultees bring their knowledge and expertise in relation to their work and the consultant brings knowledge and expertise in relation to psychology, SEN and consultation.

Although this was a small study it does provide some evidence that within this context consultation as a model of service delivery is useful. It was also interesting to note that there were no expectations of the young person being seen or assessed. This was unlike situations in school when consultation was first introduced. Often, even though consultation had been explained, some staff found it difficult to understand the joint problem-solving approach. In these cases staff either wanted to give information (what do you need to know?) or wanted the child or young person to be seen and assessed. The reason for this difference is unclear. One reason might be to do with expectations. Schools had been used to EP’s coming in, seeing children and getting information and therefore these expectations may have interfered with the ability to work with a new model of service delivery. For the YOT, no such expectations were in place as they had not previously had access to any Educational Psychology Service.

Overall, the use of consultation as a model seems to have some validity however I feel it needs further development. When used in school there is a more overt mechanism for follow-up. If a further consultation has not been arranged then planning meetings with SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) offer the opportunity to check with school whether any follow-up might be useful. The consultation service with the YOT was set up in order that the workers would have easy access to the service -there were no thresholds, no referral forms and workers were able to book a consultation directly. The advantage of this was that it afforded free access to workers who wanted to discuss an issue. However, there may also be a disadvantage to this approach in that follow-up was left to individuals and no mechanism was in place to more formally build in any follow-up. In looking at further developments of the service it may therefore be useful to consider ways of offering some follow-up but still leaving the decision with the consultees. One way of doing
this would be to send a follow-up email simply offering a further consultation if the consultee had any remaining concerns they would like to discuss.

8.5 Reflections on the Methodology

This study used an action research methodology. As outlined in the methodology Cohen and Manion et al. (2000, 2007) suggest action research can be used in any setting ‘where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for a solution’ (P 226 Cohen and Manion 2000). In looking to develop ways of working with the YOT an action research model therefore seemed appropriate but was not straightforward in its implementation. In carrying out the research I endeavoured to adhere to the central tenets of action research i.e. planning and then implementing a change, observing the outcome of that change and then reflecting on the processes and outcomes. There were however a number of challenges in completing this research.

When I initially started out on this project there were two EPs working with the YOT. Although I had undertaken to develop the project, having a colleague who knew the context working alongside, with whom to discuss ideas, was very helpful. She had also been available to co-facilitate the first focus group. When she left the service, resources were such that she was not replaced and meant that I had to ask another EP to co-facilitate the second focus group. There was therefore a lack of consistency between the focus groups. However, although not ideal I did not think this was too much of a difficulty and in any event was unavoidable.

In looking to pursue the action research paradigm one area that came out of the focus groups was the idea of ‘more training’ but the detail was non-specific. In an ideal world I would have liked to have run a further focus group to have explored that area further. However, it was unfortunate the resources needed to undertake a further focus group were not available. This had the effect of somewhat limiting the direction that the project could take as I did not feel that providing ‘more training’ would be useful within the project framework without more information about what the workers may have been looking for.

The ‘doing’ part of the action research cycle consisted of offering consultations to workers within YOT (and the wider organisation, which included Connexions and the FIP). Take up was slow and the number of consultations with YOT staff within the time frame of the project was limited. This resulted in the data set being quite small and although there were some anxieties at the time about whether enough data would be available, I feel there was sufficient data for the purposes of this project, however their generalisability is limited.
One of the important tenets of action research is to work collaboratively with others and in developing this project identifying a key member of staff I could work with was a key element of this. This key contact (one of the service managers) was extremely helpful in the early stages in not only some of the practical side of the project e.g. facilitating the setting up of focus groups as well as acting as liaison with other managers, keeping them informed and acting as a conduit for information but also in discussing the outcomes of the focus groups, helping to shape the following stages. However, a change of role meant this manager could no longer maintain the liaison role she had had. Without a key member of staff to liaise meant that it became harder to maintain a collaborative approach in trying to continue to develop the services on offer. In addition a change in my role and responsibilities and changes within the council which had an impact on the service (and continue to do so) has put additional pressures on my time leaving me with less time available to pursue this. I continue to work with the education worker, recently delivering 2 days of joint training with her and to offer consultations but am finding it difficult to maintain an action research approach given the constraints and difficulties outlined above.

8.6 Contribution to Knowledge

In reviewing the literature very little appears to have been written about EPs working with YOTs and where reference is made the work of the EP is not a central focus (e.g. Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). These studies often reference YOTs’ views of the usefulness of having access to EP but detailed studies of what they find useful has not been described. Only one paper has been found that directly describes the work of an EP working within a YOT. This paper by Ryrie (2006) describes his individual role in working with a YOT describing a range of activities that he had undertaken, including examples of casework, joint working and strategic and development work as well as training. This current study has focused on the development of one particular aspect of service delivery and offers some evidence that working with YOTs through the use of consultation model is one way in which EPs can support YOTs in their work.

Consultation is a widely used model of service delivery in Educational Psychology Services. However, much of the research in relation to the use of consultation by EPS has been in relation to its use in schools. This study has looked at the potential use of consultation with professionals other than those working in schools. The use of consultation with YOTs has been described by others. For example Callaghan et al. (2003) explored the use of consultation as part of a new model of service delivery for Primary Mental Health Workers within YOTs. However, their model of consultation differed from the current study, fitting within a wider referral model and had at its core, a mental health, rather than SEN focus.
This study focuses on the use of a particular model of consultation and how it might contribute to YOT workers understanding of the young people they are working with. Information from focus groups, whilst echoing findings in the research, helped to develop an understanding of the concerns and issues faced by youth offending workers in discharging their duties in relation to young people both with and without SEN. Of particular interest were the tensions with schools that were described. There may be work to be done supporting both YOTs and schools to develop a better understanding of each other’s contexts and sometimes competing agendas, to enable more effective, collaborative working.

In psychology, Cameron suggests ‘it is generally accepted that human behaviour is most usefully viewed from an eco-systemic perspective which emphasises the complex, interdependent and recurring nature of the links between a variety of contextual, personal, and interpersonal variables’ (Cameron, 2006, p293) and that applied psychologists approach issues with specific and well-established psychological perspectives in mind. Through the application of psychological perspective this study has highlighted some of the complex issues faced by YOTs in undertaking their work as well as illustrating how psychological knowledge through the application of a consultation model can be used to support YOTs in their work with young people. The findings of this study reflect the eco-systemic perspective with workers identifying how some factors present significant barriers to their work as well as illustrating some of the difficulties faced by workers in trying to reconcile some of the differing perspectives there may be in relation to the young people they work with and what should be put in place to support them.

In exploring the use of a consultation model findings from this study illustrated how introducing a psychological perspective as well as psychological knowledge enabled workers to (possibly) think about the problem or issue differently and/or leading to the possibility of working differently. Undertaking this study has helped develop an understanding of how these two areas contribute to the consultation process.

8.7 Implications for Further Research

This study examined one aspect of Educational Psychology Service delivery. Other research in the area is limited. Although there is some research where the work of the EP with YOTs is mentioned it has either been within the wider context of YOTs work (e.g. Welsh Assembly 2009) or within the wider range of work undertaken by EPs (e.g. Farrell et al. 2006). Searches using Google Scholar only revealed one article specifically about the work of an EP working with a YOT (Ryrie 2006). As Ryrie points out:-
There is evidence that young people involved in crime tend to bear many of the characteristics and have many of the needs that are typical of young people with special needs or who are vulnerable to disadvantage and social exclusion. These young people therefore should figure large in the sphere of interest of EPs (P 9 Ryrie 2006).

Further research therefore could sit at both a local and national level. At a local level, one extension of the work already done would be to explore the views of the young people themselves who are the subject of consultation. A criticism that is often levelled at research into the effectiveness of consultation is that it more often than not only seeks the views of the consultee and that the views of the subject of the consultation, i.e. the young person are not sought. This also reflects a limitation of the current study in that consultation may be seen to be helpful to the consultees but what is not known is the actual impact on the young people themselves. Did the consultations make a difference to them? And if so what might they have noticed.

Consultation was chosen as a model of problem-solving for a number of reasons. Firstly it is a model of service delivery that is familiar to me, secondly it is a method of service delivery that has grown in popularity amongst Educational Psychology Services nationally and finally it met the workers’ criterion of having direct access to an EP without having to go through any formal referral system. However, consultation is not the only approach. In discussions about training, Managers had often mentioned the use of case studies as a way of exploring particular issues. Providing a more structured framework for these case studies could be a useful way of introducing a more systematic problem-solving model. This could have an advantage over consultations with individuals in that it could be a more effective use of EP time. There are many problem-solving models but one that has been recently introduced into the EP service and has been used successfully with schools is Circle of Adults. It would be interesting to see if this approach could be translated to the YOT context.

A further avenue of potential research might be to examine implications for YOT in relation to the new SEN/D framework which promotes the use of person centred approaches where children and young people and their families are placed at the centre of the development of plans put in place to support them. There are potentially a number of challenges in incorporating risk based assessments and interventions with approaches which focus on working in a person centred way. The new indicative draft code of practice includes a section on Young Offenders but the emphasis is on sharing information. Working in pathfinder authority, work is already underway in relation to developing person centred approaches with children with special educational needs. One of the key principles
underlying the code is that the views and participation of children, young people and their parents/carers are central and that person centred planning is ‘used to place children and young people at the heart of the system’ (section 1.7, Department for Education, 2013). Currently pathfinders are working on scaling up their approaches and an important aspect of this will be to explore how these new systems might work for some of the more vulnerable groups of children including looked after children, children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and those known to the Youth Justice System.

As noted above there is very little research detailing the work of EPs in YOTs. Where is mentioned it is often not the main focus of the research. It would therefore perhaps be timely to have both qualitative and quantitative research looking at EP practice with YOTS in England and Wales. What is the range of work undertaken by EPs? To what extent is EP work with YOTs prioritised? And will this work continue to be funded in light of the current economic climate of cuts and efficiencies?

It would also be useful to have a more systematic evaluation of practice both of the work undertaken by YOTs and of EPS, particularly in relation to young people who have, or are suspected of having SEN. To what extent are the interventions put in place to address needs and risks identified through assessments using Asset or Onset successful in reducing reoffending? Are there differences in outcome based on SEN? If so, how might EPs best support YOTs in working with young people?
References


Sutherland, A. (2009). The 'scaled approach' in youth justice: fools rush in... Youth Justice, 9(1), 44.


YJB. (2010b). *A Review of YOTs and Children’s Services’ Interaction with Young Offenders and Young People at Risk of Offending.* London: YJB.


**Appendix 1 Consultation Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Consultations/Outcomes/Further Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology - Helen Wynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: 27 January 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consultation Summary**

- Student with learning difficulties has been identified during this consultation.
- The student is having difficulties with reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Strategies for improving literacy and numeracy have been discussed.
- The student's reading difficulties are being addressed through additional support.
- The student's progress will be reviewed in the next consultation.

**Concerns**

- Social skills: The student has difficulty interacting with peers.
- Attention: The student has difficulty maintaining attention during lessons.
- Motor coordination: The student has difficulty with handwriting and fine motor skills.

**Recommendations**

- Additional one-to-one support during literacy and numeracy lessons.
- Specialist support for social skills.
- Regular review of progress to monitor improvements.
Site A and not Site B
Appendix 2 – Selected Pages from Asset Including Education

### Core Profile

Additional information on answering the questions marked by asterisks on this form is given in the guidance notes.

#### Personal details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>First name(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other names</th>
<th>Gender: Male / Female</th>
<th>Date of birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Unique ID</th>
<th>*Police National Computer number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Address</th>
<th>*Postcode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone numbers (home, mobile, work)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Ethnic classification (2001 census)

- [ ] White
- [ ] British
- [ ] Irish
- [ ] Other White
- [ ] Black/Black British
- [ ] Caribbean
- [ ] African
- [ ] Other Black
- [ ] Asian/Asian British
- [ ] Indian
- [ ] Pakistani
- [ ] Bangladeshi
- [ ] Other Asian
- [ ] Mixed
- [ ] White/Black Caribbean
- [ ] White/Black African
- [ ] White/Asian
- [ ] Other Mixed
- [ ] Chinese/Other ethnic group
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Any other

#### Preferred language (other than English)

#### Information used for assessment

(Please tick all that apply.)

- [ ] Interview
- [ ] Case record
- [ ] Family/carer
- [ ] School
- [ ] Social Services Department
- [ ] Victim
- [ ] Police
- [ ] Crown Prosecution Service
- [ ] Solicitor
- [ ] Previous convictions
- [ ] Residential home/hostel
- [ ] Housing association
- [ ] Local education authority
- [ ] Careers guidance service
- [ ] General practitioner
- [ ] Mental health service
- [ ] Other health service
- [ ] Drug/alcohol service
- [ ] Young Offender Institution
- [ ] Secure unit
- [ ] Voluntary organisation
- [ ] Lead Professional

Other (e.g. club, religious organisation, local youth projects)

Give details of any particular difficulties in obtaining information.

Specify any significant pieces of information still to be obtained.

Assessment completed by __________________________ Date completed ________________
Offence details

* Primary index offence
  
Additional offences
  
Outline of current offence(s)

* Case stage
  
Referral Order
  
Mid Detection and Training Order
  
* Pre-sentence report
  
* Post-sentence
  
* Review
  
* Early order
  
* Other

* Victims (Please tick all that apply)

* Specific, targeted victim
  
* Vulnerable victim
  
* Repeat victim
  
Victim not known to him/her
  
Racially motivated offence

Details
Offence analysis

Please use the framework below to describe and analyse the young person’s offending behaviour regarding current offences.

* Actions and intentions
  * What was the offence?
  * Where, when, and with whom was it committed?
  * What methods were used?
  * What degree of planning was involved?
  * Were any weapons used?
  * What was the value of money or property stolen?
  * Were alcohol and/or drugs used at the time of the offence?
  * Was it a group offence? If so, was the young person a leader or follower?
  * What were the intentions of the young person?
  * What were the differences between their intentions and their actions?
  * Was the victim targeted/random/groomed/particularly vulnerable?
  * Were there any other aggravating or mitigating factors?

* Outcomes and consequences
  * What is the impact on the victim – in the immediate and the longer term?
  * What are the consequences for the young person (e.g. reaction to arrest and detention, response from family)?

* Reasons and motives
  * What were the young person’s personal and social circumstances at the time?
  * What were the young person’s motives?
  * What were the young person’s attitudes?
  * Does the young person have any particular attitudes/beliefs which might have influenced the offence (e.g. a belief that certain types of behaviour are justified, racial motivation, triggers, disinhibitors)?

* Patterns of offending behaviour
  * Are there any similarities or differences with previous behaviour?
  * Has there been an increase/decrease in seriousness and/or frequency?
  * Does the young person show a specialisation/diversity of offences?
  * Are there any gaps in offending patterns?
  * Has the young person made previous attempts to desist?

Analysis and evidence
### Criminal history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at first Reprimand/Caution</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at first conviction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of previous convictions</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous custodial sentences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Time since last conviction: Up to 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, 1 year, N/A, Don't know or pre-court disposal.

### Previous disposals

Please indicate whether the young person has ever received any of the following disposals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparation Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASBO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Punishment Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Rehabilitation Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Other disposals, e.g., fine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have there been any instances of failing to complete or comply with previous disposals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Details (Please explain reasons for any 'Don't know' responses.)
Is the young person's name on the sex offenders' register?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don't know

*Any other previous contact with YOT?
  (e.g. YISP, YIP, Splash, ARC, referral for Child Safety Order)

[ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don't know

Details (This does not include the information recorded above about previous disposals.)

---

### Care history and 'looked after' status

Please indicate whether any of the following apply to the young person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Accommodated by voluntary agreement with parents (s20 Children Act 1989)
- Subject to a care order (s31 Children Act 1989)
- Remanded to local authority accommodation (s23(1) Children and Young Persons' Act 1969)

If the young person is 16 or 17 and you have ticked a 'current' or 'previous' box above:

- *Is she an 'eligible child' (still in care and looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14)?*  
  [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don't know

- *(If 'No') Is she a 'relevant child' (has left care but was looked after for at least 13 weeks (from the age of 14, and for some time while 16 or 17))*

### Other social services contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- His/her name has been placed on the child protection register
- *Any other referrals to or contact with social services*
- Any social services involvement with siblings

Details (Please explain reasons for any 'Don't Know' responses and outline any aspects of the young person's care history which you consider relevant.)
**1. Living arrangements**

*Who has the young person been mostly living with over the last six months?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Grandparent/s</td>
<td>Friend/s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>Residents of home or institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
<td>By self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster carer/s</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling/s</td>
<td>Own child(ren)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If his/her current living arrangements are different, please specify below.

![Blank space for specification]

Please indicate whether any of the following apply to the young person.

*No fixed abode*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Unsuitable, does not meet his/her needs (e.g. overcrowded, lacks basic amenities)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Deprived household (e.g. dependent on benefits, entitlement to free school meals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Living with known offender/s*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Absconding or staying away (e.g. ever reported as missing person)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Disorganised/chaotic (e.g. different people coming and going)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Other problems (e.g. uncertainty over length of stay)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Evidence (Please explain reasons for any ‘Don’t know’ responses.)

![Blank space for evidence]

*Rate the extent to which the young person’s living arrangements are associated with the likelihood of further offending.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(0 = not associated, 4 = very strongly associated)
2. Family and personal relationships

Which family members or carers has the young person been in contact with over the last six months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth mother</th>
<th>Grandparent/s</th>
<th>Other significant adults (e.g. neighbour, family friend)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth father</td>
<td>Sibling/s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive parent/s</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
<td>Own child(ren)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster carer/s</td>
<td>Other family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate whether any of the following apply to the young person.

* Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in criminal activity

* Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in heavy alcohol misuse

* Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in drug or solvent misuse

* Significant adults fail to communicate with or show care/interest in the young person

* Inconsistent supervision and boundary setting

* Experience of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual, emotional, neglect)

* Witnessing other violence in family context

* Significant bereavement or loss

* Difficulties with care of his/her own children

Other problems (e.g. parent with physical/mental health problem, loss of contact, acrimonious divorce of parents, other stress/tension)

Evidence (Please explain reasons for any 'Don't know' responses.)

* Rate the extent to which the young person's family and personal relationships are associated with the likelihood of further offending.

(0 = not associated, 4 = very strongly associated)
3. Education, training and employment

Engagement in education, training or employment (ETE)

* Is the young person of compulsory school age? Yes □ No □

Which of the following best describe his/her current ETE situation? (Tick as many as apply.)

- Mainstream school
- Special school
- Pupil referral unit
- Other specialist unit
- Community home with education
- Home tuition

□ Work experience
□ Full time work
□ Part time work
□ Casual/Temporary work
□ Unemployed
□ New Deal
□ Pre-employment/skills training
□ College/further education
□ Other training course
□ Unable to work (e.g., incapacity)
□ Looking after family
□ Nothing currently arranged
□ Other

* How many hours of ETE are arranged each week? _______________________ hours

* How many hours of ETE is she/he currently engaged in/receiving per week? ______ hours

* Is there evidence of non-attendance? (Please tick relevant reasons and give details below.)

□ Permanent exclusion
□ Fixed-term exclusion
□ Family issues
□ Illness

□ Other non-attendance (specify)

Evidence (Please explain reasons for any "Don't know" responses.)

Educational attainment

Does s/he have any educational qualifications? Yes □ No □ Don't know □

Does s/he have vocational/practical qualifications? □

* Have special needs (SEN) been identified?
- If yes, does s/he have a statement of SEN? □
- Does s/he have difficulties with literacy? □
- Does s/he have difficulties with numeracy? □
- Does s/he have difficulties caused by a severe lack of English (or Welsh, if applicable) language skills? □

N/A
Evidence (Please explain reasons for any 'Don't know' responses.)

**Other factors relating to engagement in ETE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Negative attitudes towards ETE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Lack of attachment to current ETE provision (e.g. wants to leave, cannot see benefit of learning)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Bullied*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Bullies others*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Poor relationships with most teachers/mentors/employers/colleagues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Negative parental/carer attitudes towards education/training or employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Other problems (e.g. frequent changes of school/educational placement, school is unchallenging/boring, disability, lack of stable address meaning difficulties securing work, no money to buy books/tools/equipment).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Evidence (Please explain reasons for any 'Don't know' responses.)

*Rate the extent to which the young person's education, training and employment is associated with the likelihood of further offending.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix 3 Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form

Focus Group: Youth Offending and Special Educational Needs

Participant Information Sheet

The Educational and Child Psychology Service is seeking to improve the support it offers to the Youth Offending Service and Prevention Teams in their work with young people who may have special educational needs.

In order for us to plan effectively it will be important that we understand the work that you do and how issues around SEN impact on this work. To this end we would like to invite you to a focus group to explore the following areas:

☐ What do you already know about Special Educational Needs?
☐ What is involved in the work that you do?
☐ What are the issues that you face with this work in relation to young people who may have special educational needs?
☐ Identification of training and support needs

From the focus groups a small number of projects will be identified, planned, implemented and evaluated as part of an ongoing action research programme. As well as informing the work of the educational and child psychology service it will also form the basis for a doctoral research thesis.

Information provided from the focus groups will therefore be recorded and written up as part of this thesis. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish in order to decide whether you would like to take part. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Helen Wyton, Senior Educational Psychologist with support from colleagues in the Educational and Child Psychology Service

What happens to the data collected?

Each focus group will be facilitated by members of the educational and child psychology service and information gathered will be recorded both on flip charts and electronically. The data will be used to identify current strengths within the teams as well as identifying further training and/or projects that can be developed to support you and your colleagues in your work with young people who have special educational needs.

The data collected will also form part of a thesis which it is anticipated will be completed by September 2011.

How is confidentiality maintained?

I will be the only person who will have access to the raw data. Data used for research will be anonymised.
Who can participate?

Any one is free to take part with the agreement of their managers. It may be the case that there are more people wishing to take part than can be accommodated within the focus group. Should this be the case the possibility of running a further focus group will be explored.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you decide you would like to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

What is involved?

You will take part in a focus group which will last no more that 90 minutes.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The outcomes of this research will be an unpublished doctoral thesis.

Criminal Records Check (If applicable)

Although this research does not involve any direct work with children and young people I have undergone a satisfactory CRB.

Contact for further information

Helen Wyton
Senior Educational Psychologist,
Oldham Educational and Child Psychology Service
CPD
Rosary Road
Oldham
OL8 2QE

Telephone Number 0161 770 3204

What if something goes wrong?

Should you require further help or advice I can be contacted as above.

If you want to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

Next Steps

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you would like to take part please complete the proforma and pass the completed form to your manager.
Focus Group: Youth Offending and Special Educational Needs

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

FOCUS GROUP

TIME: 10:00 – 11:30
DATE: 24th June
PLACE: Room 1.3 Floor 1

Please check boxes

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant: ____________________________ Date: __________ Signature: ________________

Please check boxes
Appendix 4 Prompt Sheet for Focus Groups

Firstly could I say thank-you for attending this focus group.

I hope you will all have had time to look through the consent form and that you are happy to take part.

Before we begin I would like to introduce myself and then ask you just go round and say who you are and what your role is.

Just to remind you the aim of this focus group is to explore issues around SEN and the population of young people you work with and to try to identify ways in which we might work together on those identified issues. To help me it will be helpful to also have a little discussion around what work you do with young people and what skills and knowledge you feel you have around SEN. Each of these areas will be introduced in the form of a fairly broad question and I hope you don’t mind me recording the session.

It will be helpful to the discussion if only one person talks at a time and there are no right or wrong answers. I will be introducing the questions or themes and some possible follow-up questions. The discussion is confidential in the sense that any comments will not be attributable to identifiable individuals. If verbatim quotes are used in my write ups they will be attributed to a YOT worker.
Appendix 5 Service Leaflet re Consultation Pilot

XXXXXX Educational Psychology Service

Developing a Role within the Youth Offending Team.

Consultation: a pilot study

Context

A number of focus groups have been convened in order to identify how the Educational Psychology Service might be able to offer support to teams within the Youth Offending Team. Information from the focus groups identified three broad areas in which the Educational and Child Psychology Service may be able to offer support. These were:- resources and differentiation, knowledge of SEN and processes in the form of training or leaflets and opportunities to discuss issues or individual casework with an Educational Psychologist.

As a first step in addressing the areas raised by the focus group we would like to pilot the use of a consultation model with the Youth Offending Team.

What is Consultation?

Consultation is a way of working characterised by collaborative, equal, respectful partnerships with those most concerned with the issue or problem. Topics for consultation will vary but may be to do with developing an understanding around a young person, exploring alternative strategies for helping with engagement and/or understanding or aiding understanding around process in relation to special educational needs and school.

In consultation partners engage in finding solutions to ‘problems’ by using the expertise and specialist knowledge of the partners. The solution to the problem is arrived at jointly. By working together those involved in the consultation can identify ways of bringing about change and identify possible strategies that are mutually agreed and practical.

Consultation has a number of key features:

- Participants are seen as equal in status and in sharing expertise
- Consultees should be the people most concerned and should retain ownership of the problem

The goals of consultation are to facilitate reflection upon potential ways forward in the current context and to develop future problem-solving skills.
Theoretical Model

A joint problem solving model which is based on solution focused principles has been adopted by the EPS. As such developing a solution through consultation has the following stages:

- Describing the problem
- Developing well formed goals
- Exploring exceptions and creating possibilities for change
- Developing and agreeing next actions.

Within this framework other psychological theories and principles can be drawn upon.

How will it work?

In this pilot study, staff will be able to book an initial consultation which may last up to an hour. The outcome of this initial consultation and subsequent way in which the process continues will vary depending on the issue raised. However, the process for all identified concerns remains fundamentally the same:
Some issues may be resolved following the initial consultation and will not need anything further. Some problems may only need one plan-do-review cycle. Others may need two or more.

**How does assessment take place within the model?**

Assessment is about collecting information about the problem and in consultation, this can take place in a variety of ways:-

- consultation between EP and workers
- Observations in context
- Assessment of teaching/learning styles
- Dynamic diagnostic assessments
- Consultations and discussions with parents/carers and/or child
- Curriculum based or other forms of assessment.

**Planning an Intervention**

This begins when the EP and the person/s concerned begin to work collaboratively resulting in the trial of jointly agreed strategies.

**Reviewing the Success of Interventions**

This may involve:

- A successful solution and agreed end to involvement
- Identifying a need to collect more information
- Identifying a need to amend current strategies or adopt and trail further strategies
- Seeking the involvement of people not yet involved.

**Evaluation**

Although aspects of evaluation are integral to the model of consultation, data generated from the consultations will be used to evaluate the project. As well as looking at measures such as take up and types of issues raised consultees will also be asked to complete a simple questionnaire or to take part in a post consultation interview. Participation in these additional aspects of evaluation will of course be voluntary.

**Other work**

The development of other areas of work such as looking at resources and possible training issues need some further consideration. However, within the time allocated to the service it will be possible to offer some training sessions. How the content of these sessions is to be established requires further discussion at this time but could emerge from additional focus groups to clarify identified needs or from issues arising from individual consultations. Any identified training will of course need to be discussed and agreed with team managers.
Helen Wyton
Senior Educational Psychologist
Appendix 6 Pre-consultation Thinking

Educational Psychology Service

Pre-consultation Thinking

In order for the consultation to be as useful as possible it can be helpful if you are able to take some time before the consultation to consider the following questions. This however is not essential. Please feel free to make notes if this is useful, but written responses are not required:

What are your concerns around this young person/these young people?

What strategies and approaches have already been tried regarding your concern? (Please try to be specific and bring examples if you have them)

What effects have you noted (including what has worked, when and in what circumstances)?

How would you like things to change? (What signs have you seen of any changes/differences?)
What do you hope to get from this consultation?

Any other agency involvement?

Any other concerns?

Young Person’s views

Parents’/carers views
Appendix 7 Extract from Transcription: Case Managers Focus Group

CM2  If I have to go through hoops what must the parent have to do, what does the child have to do, because if they were honest with, and said yes I'm not very good at this, I'm not very good at that and I'm talking to a 13, 14 year old, I'm thinking so what happened from the age of 5 to 14 They weren't missing from school and absconding and being a criminal or whatever you want to call it from that age upwards. So they are disillusioned, they're not mythered, they're embarrassed by being in the school, they probably already have exclusions, they're probably stuck in the PRU, they're probably off site or they could have one hour of education a week and that was acceptable So you’re fighting all the time to motivate them back into it, to believe in the system, to say that I am going to support you that I am going to do something and your getting levels and levels of bureaucracy, and not and different agendas, People have different agendas

CM3  Can I give an example of a boy I've got who's statemented and I wasn't invited to a meeting which has led to his exclusion from an already excluded school the PRU and now on one-to-one tuition in a library which for 2 hours a day he was in year eight which were me thinking about the rest of the school life it's just not good enough when you involved with that person and you’re not getting invited you know there’s issues there because he’s not been properly spoken for do you know what I mean?

EP    Yes so is not getting his entitlement

CM4    Yes

CM1    I think the other thing what CM2 was saying earlier is there are so many levels I give you another example so that it makes it easier for you to understand what I'm saying here I've got young man I caseload and according to is education report his attendance was 100% and everything was fine, when I went through the assessment with the young
person he was saying that I'm on this not school.net which basically I got a laptop and I work from home and not bother switching it on for the last three months

EP Right

CM1 So one the one hand in getting information from school that his attendance is perfect, a hundred percent because theoretically he still on role, he's still (unclear)

CM2 very much massaging the statistics

CM1 but realistically there's nothing and that's not just the education side of it. It's the rest of it that goes for that young person attending a school. Social interaction and everything else that goes with it and none of that and again if I hadn't gone through that process, on paper you know Billy is going to school hundred percent attendance, he's doing well

CM3 but it also has risk issues as well because we could be thinking he's in constructive activity but from an offending point of view they have got school laptop at home but they could be out offending when you think there are in school so from our point of view that's an issue

CM1 so okay

CM2 so can I just say that the disruptive behaviour we also have to deal with I think can stem from the fact that I think they are illiterate
CM1  yes

CM2  and I think they are crying out for um one-to-one work or whatever it's the quality, it's a lack of quality they might tick a box and say oh yes they get an hour a week here for an hour a week there but what is it is the containment is telling them to sit down 5000 times you know a pen is it humiliating them in front of everybody else because is looked upon as something detrimental or it depends how it's done it depends on the quality of how you give the service

EP  okay so part of this if I'm reading it right part of the work that you do is that you do an asset assessment with every young person that you get

CM1  Yes

EP  and as part of that you are looking at issues around education and that what you talked about here are some barriers that you have identified. Is there anything else that you would say about that or shall we move on to look at other aspects of you work.

CM1  In the education side were in a really fortunate position in that we have connections PAs who are easily accessible to us so the opportunity to miss information is decreased because they're easily accessible and so on. However if we didn't have that if we simply couldn't walk across the room today the side of the building and speak to the PA

CM2  or a certain age group

CM1  getting that information across from schools I think is so much more difficult
CM2  I agree with you there

EP    okay

CM4  they’ve brought in the IPM (Individual Planning Meeting) meetings have they

CM1  Yes

CM4  so ideally you would have a YOT worker and an oasis worker if there are substance misuse problems and a connections worker whether that be a personal community adviser or someone from 16 to 19 or a school personal adviser for the younger age range

CM2  but we’re still 7 to 9 missing

CM1  Yes

EP    and that’s driven by your department rather than education it’s driven by your department here?

CM2  yes

CM3  Yes there is them gaps
CM2 you, I go through the Pastoral office or the head of year, the deputy head nobodies accountable

(Others unclear)

CM2 it's extremely difficult to find someone who's accountable

CM1 and once you've found somebody to get that information

Others yes

CM1 (cough) you are chasing tails. You are just constantly on the phone oh you said you'd fax over you'd email it, we still haven't received. It has a knock-on effect with the work that we deliver, the assessment and the delivery of service

CM2 we have admin who ask the school for a school report but it will be on attendance or something and then it would back to your 90% attendance which has no correlation with the actual facts that this young person is telling you see them get to bit a bit like the young person well what can we say (laughs) which is ridiculous

CM3 education is intrinsic in everything that we do and work in the attendance centres well which is with young people who offend I say to them when I asked them and have group discussions and stuff every single person in there always says I need a job or I need to get in education.

CM2 I need more qualifications
Yes and I can't access this because of that and what every single one of them says that what will stop them offending is getting into work, this is the old (unclear)

what is surprising is how low their basic skills are

very bad I'd say their reading and writing I'd say (unclear) beyond the level of a six-year-old it's that bad Maggie

okay

but because they're now doing GCSE's but I mean they don't have to be able to read and write to do GCSEs could you can have an inscriber (sic) so the whole thing is geared around getting through the GCSEs but not actually looking at the young person to after-school got six GCSEs, they go for a job but they can't read and write.

(unclear)

okay okay so what I'm picking up is part of the role is as I say doing the asset assessment and then trying to get information around school and you started to raise number of issues there around the barriers that can exist in getting information and barriers that exist for young people getting back into education

and it's the timescales as well it's very worrying

right
CM2 and the barriers for the work that we need to deliver that's been identified

EP because that's one of the things that I wanted to try, to sort, to talk a bit more about, that's one aspect of the work and then you've mentioned other aspects so what are the pieces of work to you do

CM2 well obviously we do intervention work on a one-to-one or group basis and (name of organisation) have a toolkit which we can access I question some of it only because it's new and and is not really geared up to the Youth Offending Team yet, cos we're only newly married in

EP so what's in the toolkit?

CM1 There's lots this lots of things

CM3 lots of activities

CM2 for self-esteem the motivational work and that type of thing

CM1 does lots of different sorts of provisions even down to the fact we do have access young people can access basic skills by that toolkit so for some of the young people that we deal with because of the asset assessment and everything else that goes with educational side there is an opportunity for to refer them to a basic skills tutor and that's done on a one-to-one basis but again the short fall for that again at the moment is in the current climate is running out of funding for that it's been a useful thing

CM2 incredibly useful
CM1 Little Billy we know what you’ve been through in school and this is the perfect opportunity literally with one-to-one not amongst other pupils to be sat with the tutor, you got the attention of the tutor, go from wherever you want to start and so on so it’s been really useful to that degree but I think because of the cuts and stuff I think that’s gone now so again another difficulty, I mean there’s lots of other provisions

CM2 and the fact that you may suspect that they may have like autistic spectrum

EP Right

CM2 trying to get anything to happen about that I mean I’ve had a 1516-year-olds come through and the so obviously autistic and yet they’ve not had a diagnosis of it and I’m thinking they went through the whole school and never had a diagnosis I know it's funding and know it's this and know it's that but unbelievable

CM4 we do offender offence focused work utilise the limited resources that we’ve got the accessed of to focus on effective change of use bits from team talk that you do on a one-to-one basis. And there’s a group literally just being organised for offending behaviour and and you do like victim empathy work

CM2 anger management is obviously another issue, who does that do we do it, does CAMHS do it, do you do it on a one-to-one or is it a group thing you basically hoping

CM1 again if it's a group thing you might have eight or nine young people all different levels as far as Little Billy is concerned he might not feel comfortable and confident doing the work amongst those people so again might be looking at work on a one-to-one basis
EP  okay

CM1  and because of your assessment you're going to have to adapt it according to Billy's

CM2  learning styles yes

CM1  so it's it's if we have the information at an earlier level and there's earlier interventions like (CM2) was saying earlier I think it makes the work a lot more effective

EP  just thinking about (name of Substance Misuse Team) are any of these issues are same for you or do you have

CM5  (name of Substance Misuse Team) is very similar when you're assessing a young person looking at the risk and protective factors. We've got an assessment form similar to the asset looking at all the similar areas because if there's problems in those areas this probably more likelihood that they'll turn to substances it's very similar to the youth offending, (name of Substance Misuse Team)