



# **Positive Parenting**

**The National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's  
Parenting Programme**

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**Policy Research Bureau for the Youth Justice Board  
September 2002**

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# Contents

	Page
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
<b>Contents</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>i</b>
<i>Introduction, policy background and research methods</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Objectives, medium and mode of delivery</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Throughput, referrals, assessment, and take-up</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Impact of the Parenting Programme on parents</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Impact on young people</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Key messages for practice and policy</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Overall conclusions</i>	<i>vi</i>
<b>Part 1: Introduction and policy background</b>	<b>1</b>
The new youth justice system, Parenting Orders and the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme	1
The national evaluation of the Parenting Programme (June 1999 to December 2001)	3
Structure of this report	7
<b>Part 2: Implementation and process aspects</b>	<b>8</b>
Introduction	8
Project structure and set-up	9
Project delivery	10
Programme Users: Aggregate demographic characteristics of parents and associated young people	19
Conclusions	21
<b>Part 3: Impact of the Parenting Programme</b>	<b>24</b>
Introduction	24
The characteristics of the impact sub-sample	25
Impact on parents	28
Impact on young people	42
<b>Part 4: Implications for practice and policy</b>	<b>54</b>
Project structure and set up issues	54
Project delivery issues	61
Reaching and engaging project users	66
Evaluation Issues	72
Summary of recommendations for practice and policy	73
<b>Part 5: Conclusions</b>	<b>75</b>
The context of the Parenting Programme	75
Process issues	76
Impact and effectiveness	77

<b>References</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<i>Appendix 1a: Local evaluation teams providing quantitative data and written reports for the national evaluation</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Appendix 1b: National Evaluation design: data sources, period of data collection, data type and number of returns</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Appendix 2: Sample of Questionnaires</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Appendix 3: Parenting Programme Reconviction Study – Technical Note and References</i>	<i>xvi</i>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme

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### Introduction, policy background and research methods

The last few years have seen profound changes in the youth justice system in England and Wales. One key and controversial innovation has been the introduction of a new disposal, the *Parenting Order*, for parents of young people who are at risk of or known to be engaged in offending, or who are failing to attend school. Under the terms of a Parenting Order, parents must engage with a parenting support and education service in a form directed by the court or their local multi-agency Youth Offending Team (YOT). Failure to comply with the terms of the Order can result in criminal 'breach' proceedings, a return to court, and potentially a fine or a further Order being made.

Yots are charged with the responsibility of providing or identifying suitable services for these parents, as well as other parents who are not in receipt of an Order but who may benefit from preventive intervention. In support of this, the YJB's Parenting Programme funded the development of 42 new parenting projects across England, set up and run by Yots in partnership with other local agencies, both voluntary and statutory. This report documents the results of a three year national evaluation of the effectiveness of the YJB's Parenting Programme, carried out by the independent Policy Research Bureau. The research took place between June 1999 and December 2001. Thirty four projects were included in the national evaluation, each of which were also assessed by locally-based research teams. Data collected by these teams form the basis of this report.

The research explored the process of setting up and implementing the projects, and the outcomes in terms of impact on parents and young people. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Around 800 parents and 500 young people provided information for the national evaluation. In addition, around 800 project workers provided assessments of parents' progress. The key findings on the impact of the Programme are based on a sub-sample of 200 'before' and 'after' questionnaires provided by participating parents, 78 questionnaires from young people, and a study of the official reconviction rates of nearly 300 young people using data from the Police National Computer.

### Objectives, medium and mode of delivery

- Diversity and evolution were the key terms that describe how the Parenting Programme developed. No two projects assumed the same form, and most evolved considerably from the original designs that were put forward at the beginning.
- Project aims and objectives varied in terms of whether they saw themselves as primarily 'preventive' in nature (aimed at a wide group of parents in need), or 'therapeutic' (aimed at the 'higher tariff' families, who were often in crisis and with entrenched psycho-social problems), or some combination of the two. However, almost all projects shared in common a focus on parents as their primary users; few succeeded in doing any direct work with young people or other family members, despite initial intentions to do so. The work with parents typically addressed:
  - ◆ Dealing with conflict and challenging behaviour by young people
  - ◆ Constructive supervision and monitoring of young people
  - ◆ Setting and maintaining boundaries and ground rules for young people
  - ◆ Communication and negotiation skills
  - ◆ Family conflict in general
- Most projects found that existing 'off the shelf' courses for working with parents needed adapting for the special challenges presented by parents of young offenders. Consequently, a great deal of time in the early stages of the Parenting Programme was devoted to developing and refining models of working. A

mix-and-match approach was common, using elements of existing courses with modifications introduced by individual projects.

- Many projects offered a mix of group-work interventions and one-to-one tailored work. This represented a pragmatic development – most intended to offer mainly group programmes at the outset but families' needs often meant one-to-one crisis-intervention was needed before group work could start.

### **Throughput, referrals, assessment, and take-up**

- Many projects took a long time to get up and running to capacity. However, this is probably part of a normal 'maturation process' for new initiatives. In some areas there were few referrals to start with, often corresponding to low numbers of Parenting Orders being given by some courts. Some reluctance to use the Parenting Order disposal was apparent, with some courts and Yots preferring to avoid compulsory referral except as a last resort.
- By the end of the evaluation period, over 4,000 parents and carers had been referred to the Programme, and of these, nearly 3,000 actually started a Parenting Programme project. 66% of initial referrals were via a voluntary route, and one in six (16%) were referred by Parenting Order. Information was missing for the other 18%. Route of referral appears to have varied more by geography (YOT area, attitudes of courts) than by case attributes, however.
- There was wide variety in the systems for referral and assessment, with no single standardised model in use.

### **Impact of the Parenting Programme on parents**

- Most of the parents who attended the services were white British (96%) and most were female (81%). Half were lone parents (49%). Parents reported very high levels of need – ranging from problems with debt and housing to problems with health and personal relationships. More than eight in ten said they particularly wanted help in managing difficult behaviour by their child.
- Parents showed high attendance rates at the projects: as group, they went to three quarters of all the sessions that were provided for them by the projects, and each parent attended an average of 6.4 sessions.
- By the time parents left their projects, they reported statistically significant positive changes in parenting skills and competencies, including:
  - ◆ Improved communication with their child
  - ◆ Improved supervision and monitoring of young people's activities
  - ◆ Reduction in the frequency of conflict with young people, and better approaches to handling conflict when it arose
  - ◆ Better relationships, including more praise and approval of their child, and less criticism and loss of temper
  - ◆ Feeling better able to influence young people's behaviour
  - ◆ Feeling better able to cope with parenting in general
- Though some parents had mixed expectations at the outset of what the Programme would be like (and parents on Parenting Orders were especially likely to feel negative), 'exit' ratings at the end of the Programme were very positive. Only 6% were negative or indifferent about whether the Programme had been helpful, and over nine in ten would recommend it to other parents in their situation. Parents were especially positive about the qualities and skills of the project staff.
- There was no difference in the level of benefit reported by parents who were referred voluntarily as opposed to being referred via a Parenting Order.

- Project workers were, on the whole, less optimistic than parents themselves about the benefits of the Programme. In spite of this, when asked to provide a retrospective, overall judgement on how much each parent they had worked with had benefited from the service, staff reported that nearly half (49%) of the parents they worked with had benefited substantially, and that only one in eight (12%) of parents had derived no benefit at all.

## **Impact on young people**

- Most of the young people who had been the cause of their parent's referral to the Parenting Programme were male (77%). Ten percent were aged under twelve, and 50% were aged between twelve and fourteen. Most of the young people were also taking part in interventions (or 'change programmes') provided by Yots.
- The young people were a very high need, difficult group. Three quarters (72%) had behavioural and emotional difficulties that would probably be rated as 'abnormal' by a clinician.
- They were also prolific offenders: in the sub-sample for whom we explored official reconviction rates before and after the Programme, 95% had committed an offence in the year before their parents took part in the Parenting Programme, and 89% had been convicted of an offence. Each young person had an average of 4.4 recorded offences in the same period.
- There was some mild (but mostly statistically non-significant) evidence of positive change for young people in various aspects of their relationship with their parent during the time their parent participated in the Programme. For example, young people reported perceptions of slightly improved:
  - ◆ Communication and mutual understanding with parents
  - ◆ Supervision and monitoring by parents
  - ◆ Reduction in the frequency of conflict with parents
  - ◆ Relationships with parents, including more praise from their parent, and less criticism and loss of temper
- And, in the year after their parents left the Parenting Programme, it was also the case that reconviction rates of young people had reduced to 61.5% (a reduction of nearly one third<sup>1</sup>), offending<sup>2</sup> had dropped to 56%, and the average number of offences per young person had dropped to 2.1 (a 50% reduction).
- These are encouraging results. However, though the Parenting Programme may have been a contributor to these positive changes, it is unlikely that the Programme alone was responsible for them, because parenting projects aimed their work at parents, not young people. Also, the projects were of relatively short duration and came at a comparatively late stage in young people's lives, when problems were already quite established. Parenting Programmes are unlikely to offer a 'quick fix' for entrenched antisocial behaviour by young people.
- Still, there were hopeful signs that the projects might have a preventive effect, as many parents and staff commented that the parenting of younger siblings might also change as a result of things parents had learned. At the very least, the Parenting Programme might have helped to 'apply the brakes' on a sharp downward course for young people.

## **Key messages for practice and policy**

A number of key learning points emerged from an analysis of the process of setting up and delivering the projects.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Unadjusted' figure, which could include 'delayed' convictions for offences committed more than a year ago.

<sup>2</sup> Not all offending – includes only offences that subsequently resulted in conviction.

### ***Interagency working***

- Achieving a good fit between two previously distinct areas of service provision (criminal justice and family support) took time in some areas. Differences in ethos between sectors and agencies emerged as a barrier to smooth service development in some cases, and needed to be acknowledged and worked through at the highest level to achieve genuine 'shared ownership'. Pro-active steering groups that met regularly were vital to this process. It was also important that individuals with key set up, management or frontline responsibilities felt committed to the partnership's overall mission, in particular, in terms of the siting of parenting support services within the framework of the youth justice system.
- Large partnerships with many members worked best with strong strategic oversight, and services often seemed to develop faster and achieve sustainability quicker when not split between sites and/or managers. Physical location of the service within the YOT itself may have facilitated an easier 'mesh' between youth justice system needs and expectations, and other agencies' cultures.
- Some partner agencies had pre-existing resource difficulties. This sometimes resulted in an inability to 'pull their weight' in terms of the partnership, and could jeopardise the development of the project overall if critical elements of support were withdrawn or did not materialise.
- Some projects did not specify and document goals and concrete (measurable) objectives clearly at the outset, making steering, management and response to issues arising more difficult.
- However, by the end of the evaluation, most projects were established and many were actively thriving. Some have become important resources for the local community. Many have developed good practice models for working across the statutory-voluntary divide.

### ***Human resources and staffing***

- Many projects found it hard to recruit and retain sufficiently skilled and experienced staff to do direct work with parents of troubled and troublesome adolescents. There is increasing demand for staff to work in the parenting support field, and a national strategy to address the current shortage may be required.
- Designated parenting workers had most success in driving forward a project when they were freed up from other responsibilities (e.g within the wider YOT), and when they were strongly supported by YOT managers.
- Apart from training in direct work with parents, evaluators noted that staff might also benefit from training in IT and data management to improve record-keeping and monitoring, which was poor in some projects. Other areas that staff themselves highlighted as areas for further training included child protection, family violence and substance misuse, to improve their skills and confidence in risk assessment and management. Staff also noted that they needed strong advocacy skills, as they often got drawn in to helping families resolve problems with other agencies.

### ***Reaching and engaging parents***

- In order to ensure maximum awareness of the service amongst referring agencies, and hence maximum numbers of referrals, projects needed to be very proactive in advertising (and regularly re-advertising) their existence. Some successful strategies included parenting staff talking directly with court and YOT staff, leafleting other agencies, and getting the project featured in local newspapers.
- Clear and standardised referral criteria and assessment procedures were important for ensuring that parents referred to the project were suitable and able to benefit. It was also important that all who dealt directly with parents were able to clearly explain the service on offer, and clarify the project's expectations of parents - especially when parents were referred by Parenting Order. A home visit prior to starting



work with a parent was felt to be a vital tool in helping to dispel hostility and anxiety on the part of parents.

- There was some evidence that voluntarily referred parents attended less frequently than those on Orders. These parents may need pro-active and persistent follow-up contact to encourage them to commit to regular attendance.
- The procedures for breaching non-compliant parents on Orders were reported to be in need of some re-thinking. They were described as over-lengthy, and difficult for projects to track once handed over to the police. Some Yots felt that when penalties were finally handed down, these were sometimes disproportionately light and undermined the 'seriousness' of the Parenting Order as a disposal.

### ***Parents' learning styles, and practical and logistical issues***

- Because of the wide range of needs that parents presented, ideally projects needed to be able to provide a flexible 'menu' of support. This flexibility needed to stretch to the mode of delivery (e.g. whether group work or one-to-one work), as well as the medium of delivery (e.g. written materials vs interactive styles of learning) and the content of the support (topics covered). Some parents with very high needs were not suited to group work but urgently needed one-to-one support, and some parents wanted more information about some topics than the courses were able to cover (e.g. substance misuse, tackling non-school attendance). Some had literacy problems or did not speak English well, and therefore could not use written materials. Cultural diversity and sex differences also needed to be accommodated. In general, parents' preferred learning styles included:
  - ♦ Avoiding formal, classroom-style delivery;
  - ♦ Avoiding over-reliance on written materials;
  - ♦ Using interactive methods e.g. video-clips, brainstorming, role playing, and informal discussion and debate
- Parents reported that messages should be as concrete and practical as possible. Parents found 'tips to take home and try' especially helpful.
- Parenting services should be delivered in places that are easy to get to (or else transport is provided), have convenient opening times, and where necessary childcare is provided. Rural services faced particular challenges in maintaining high attendance, and some had to move away from group work because of this.
- There was general feeling that an eight-week course (the typical length of an intervention under the Parenting Programme) was too short. Many parents wanted more than this, but few projects had the resources to establish follow-up services. Some projects facilitated peer-led follow-on support groups, but in general, some sustained professional involvement was required to ensure the continuation of these over time.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

- Evaluation and monitoring of projects is vital, but it may be pragmatic to distinguish between process and outcome aspects of evaluation. It should be recognised that not all 'infant' projects can support the burden of participating in onerous outcome evaluations. Process information, however, should be collected routinely and from the outset.
- However, once services have bedded down and developed a consistent model of delivery, systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed and implemented, wherever possible. These should include consistent and systematic gathering, analysis and feedback of throughput, output and outcome data, with guidance from a qualified researcher.

## **Overall conclusions**

The successful establishment of many thriving parent support projects within the context of the youth justice system was a major achievement of the Programme. There is now a growing body of expertise in this field and the time is ripe to draw this together, consolidate the learning, and document models of successful practice.

Although short-term programmes aimed at parents may be thought unlikely to have much immediate impact on young people's behaviour, there were some encouraging signs for young people associated with the Parenting Programme. These included mild improvements in young people's perceptions of the parent-child relationship, and drops in official reconviction rates. There were also some reasons to think the Programme might have a 'preventive' effect for later generations of children.

The Parenting Programme was clearly successful in having an impact on parents, according to both parents and staff. In the short term at least, participation in the Parenting Programme was associated with positive improvements in parenting skills and parent-child relationships, and with high satisfaction levels. Parents referred by Order and those attending voluntarily showed similar levels of benefit. Further research would, however, be needed to see if the benefits persisted in the longer term. Moreover, even though many parents felt 'reprimanded' when referred to a parenting support project – especially if they had also received a Parenting Order – the supportive (rather than punitive) reality of the projects was successful at dissolving initial reservations.

There does seem to be a place, in both policy and practice terms, for Parenting Orders. These may be a powerful way of reaching some parents who might otherwise never manage to set foot over the threshold of a parenting support service. However, a system which privileged a genuinely voluntary route, but with Parenting Orders held in reserve where voluntary engagement had failed might prove more acceptable to family support providers, opinion formers and parents themselves. This would help to reduce the initial barriers to engagement with a service arising out of parents' distress at receiving a Court Order, and help minimise the number of parents being drawn into the criminal justice system.

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## Part One Introduction and policy background

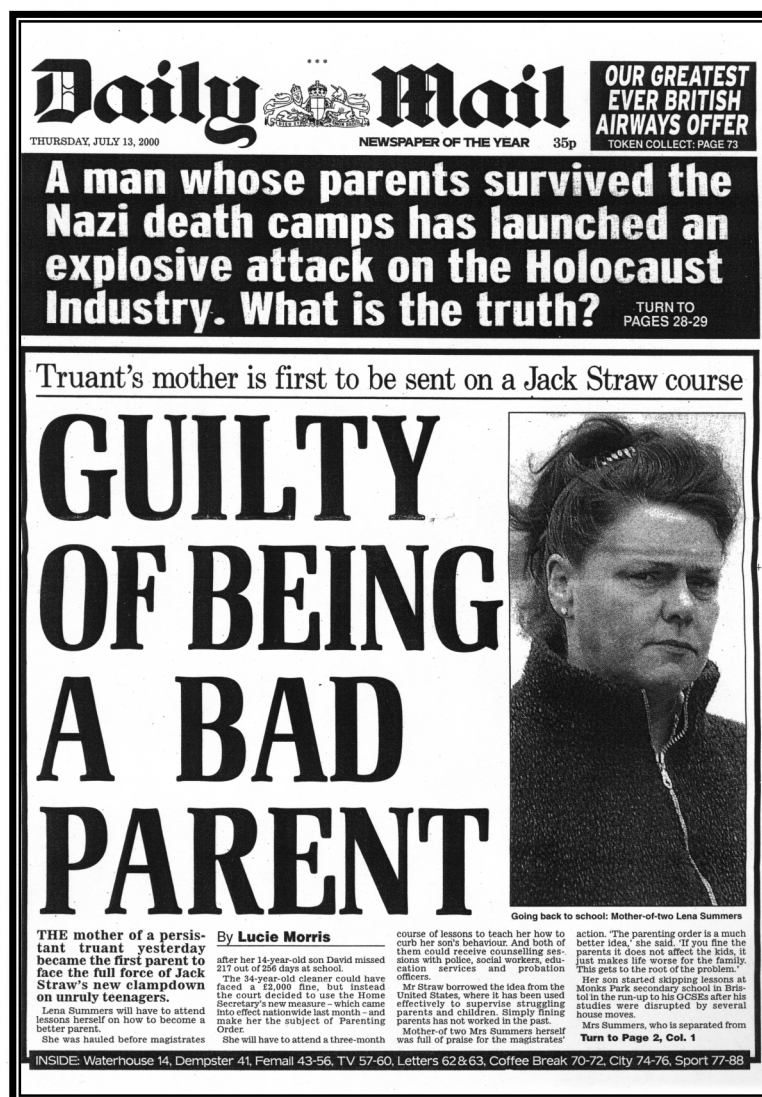
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### The new youth justice system, Parenting Orders and the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme

The last four years have seen profound changes in the youth justice system in England and Wales. Following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, 154 multi-disciplinary youth offending teams (Yots) were established, located within existing local authority structures but overseen by the new Youth Justice Board (YJB). Yots were charged with the responsibility of implementing the principal statutory aim of the 1998 Act, to 'prevent offending by children and young persons'. Controversially, the Act also stated that 'reinforcing the responsibilities of parents' to exercise control over their children should be a main objective. As part of this, amongst a range of new responses to youth offending that were made available to the courts after the 1998 Act, the *Parenting Order* was created, requiring mandatory engagement by the parents of young offenders and school refusers with various forms of parenting education and support. A civil penalty, a Parenting Order can be made either in response to criminal or anti-social behaviour by a young person (so-called 'criminal' orders), or in response to school refusal or persistent non-attendance ('education' orders). They carry with them a requirement that parents engage with a parenting support and education service, in a form directed by the court or their local YOT, for some period generally around three months. Failure to comply with the terms of the Order can result in criminal 'breach' proceedings, necessitating a return to court that may lead to a fine or to a further Order being made.

Parenting Orders began to be piloted in a number of areas from October 1998, and were introduced on a country-wide basis in June 2000. By enshrining in law the principle that young people's behaviour could be influenced by the kind of parenting they received, the Parenting Order marked a radical new direction for the youth justice system. As the national implementation process began, the media responded vociferously. Many commentators agreed with the underlying principle that parenting could influence child behaviour for better or worse, and few disagreed that parents struggling with challenging child behaviour could potentially benefit from support and help. However, from the outset the new Orders were labelled not as support but as punishment for 'bad parents', and the right of the State to involve itself in this way in how parents brought up their children became a topic of national debate (see figure 1.1). Concerns were expressed about the 'net widening' effect that this new gateway into the criminal justice system had created for families, now drawing in parents as well as young people. As we show later in this report, ambivalence about the principle underlying Parenting Orders and the role of the youth justice system in parenting support persists to the present time at all levels - judiciary, Yots, project staff, and parents themselves. These mixed feelings have formed an important backdrop to the implementation, and indeed to the evaluation, of the YJB's Parenting Programme.

**Figure 1.1**  
***From the front page of the Daily Mail, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2000.***



From the introduction of the new disposal, Yots were made responsible for providing or identifying parenting support services to cater to parents with Parenting Orders. The YJB also asked that these services be open to other parents who might benefit from them – for example, parents of young people identified as being ‘at risk’ though not yet known offenders. In 1999, Yots were also invited to make bids to a Development Fund, designed to support the development of these services. The services were to be set up and run by multi-agency partnerships, though beyond this no ‘national blueprint’ for project delivery was set. The Trust for the Study of Adolescence was appointed to act as a supporter to the Yots, to advise and provide resources to help Yots develop parenting services. The resulting set of thirty four projects, loosely described as a Parenting Programme, form the subject of this report<sup>1</sup>. In the chapters that follow, we explore the implementation and process issues the parenting projects encountered from their inception up until the end of 2001; the impact and outcome of their work both on parents and on young people; and the implications for practice and policy in the field. Since the YJB Parenting Programme

straddled a threshold between the penal system and the family support world, the learning from the first two years or so of these projects' lives has applications both for work in the statutory criminal justice system and for those who traditionally have seen themselves as providing family support services from a social care perspective; for example, social services departments and voluntary organisations.

## **The national evaluation of the Parenting Programme (June 1999 to December 2001)**

As a condition of funding, each local project in the Parenting Programme appointed its own independent evaluation team to provide an external assessment of project effectiveness at the local level. Further, shortly after the beginning of the Parenting Programme, the YJB appointed the Policy Research Bureau (PRB) to conduct an overarching national evaluation of the implementation and impact of Development Fund projects. In evaluation methodology terms, from the national perspective almost every key parameter was subject to variation. The projects to be evaluated were often very different from one another in terms of scope, target clients, and plan for delivery. In turn, this led to local evaluations that varied considerably in funding and shape. Local research teams also differed in their approach to the evaluation task, both for resourcing reasons and for philosophical ones. Some planned to collect quantitative data; others favoured an exclusively qualitative methodology, and felt that quantitative measurement techniques were insensitive and overly-challenging for use in the context of the Parenting Programme. Some planned to collect data themselves; others were dependent on project workers to assist, especially where research budgets were tight. Moreover, in most areas, local evaluation teams were in place before the YJB announced its intention to conduct an overarching national evaluation, and some had even begun designing their study by the time the national team were on board. In response, the national evaluation has tried to strike a position that retains some of the local 'flavour' of the individual project evaluations in the Programme, whilst collating core information in a standardised way that enables us to say something about the common threads and themes running through the Programme as a whole.

### **Design of the national evaluation**

The data on which the findings reported here are based come from a number of sources, including analysis and written reports provided by local teams, raw data collected by local teams to a national template and analysed by the national team at PRB, and raw data collected by PRB from Yots.

First, to explore **process and implementation** issues (how easy was it for projects to set up and start delivering services, what were their objectives and what did they actually do?), local evaluation teams were asked to provide both quantitative and qualitative data for the national evaluation. This includes, for example, information on the content and delivery of the project, data on referrals and throughput, and data on the characteristics of the parents who used the services. These data were updated several times during the course of the

evaluation process to reflect changes in the projects as they happened 'on the ground', though the constantly evolving nature of the Parenting Programme (see Part Two) raised a number of challenges for evaluators in this regard. To identify the key **implications for practice and policy** (what kinds of obstacles did projects encounter and how should these be tackled in future?), we asked local evaluation teams to give their views in written reports, based on observation from the field and interviews with staff and managers of the projects.

Second, we wanted to explore the **impact and effectiveness** of the Programme, both on parents, and on the child whose behaviour had led to the parent attending the project. We wanted to know whether projects had met their objectives, and whether services were associated with change in the way parents and young people felt or behaved. Most projects were working directly with parents, but not with children, so parents were seen as the primary targets of the Programme, and young people were seen as a secondary target.

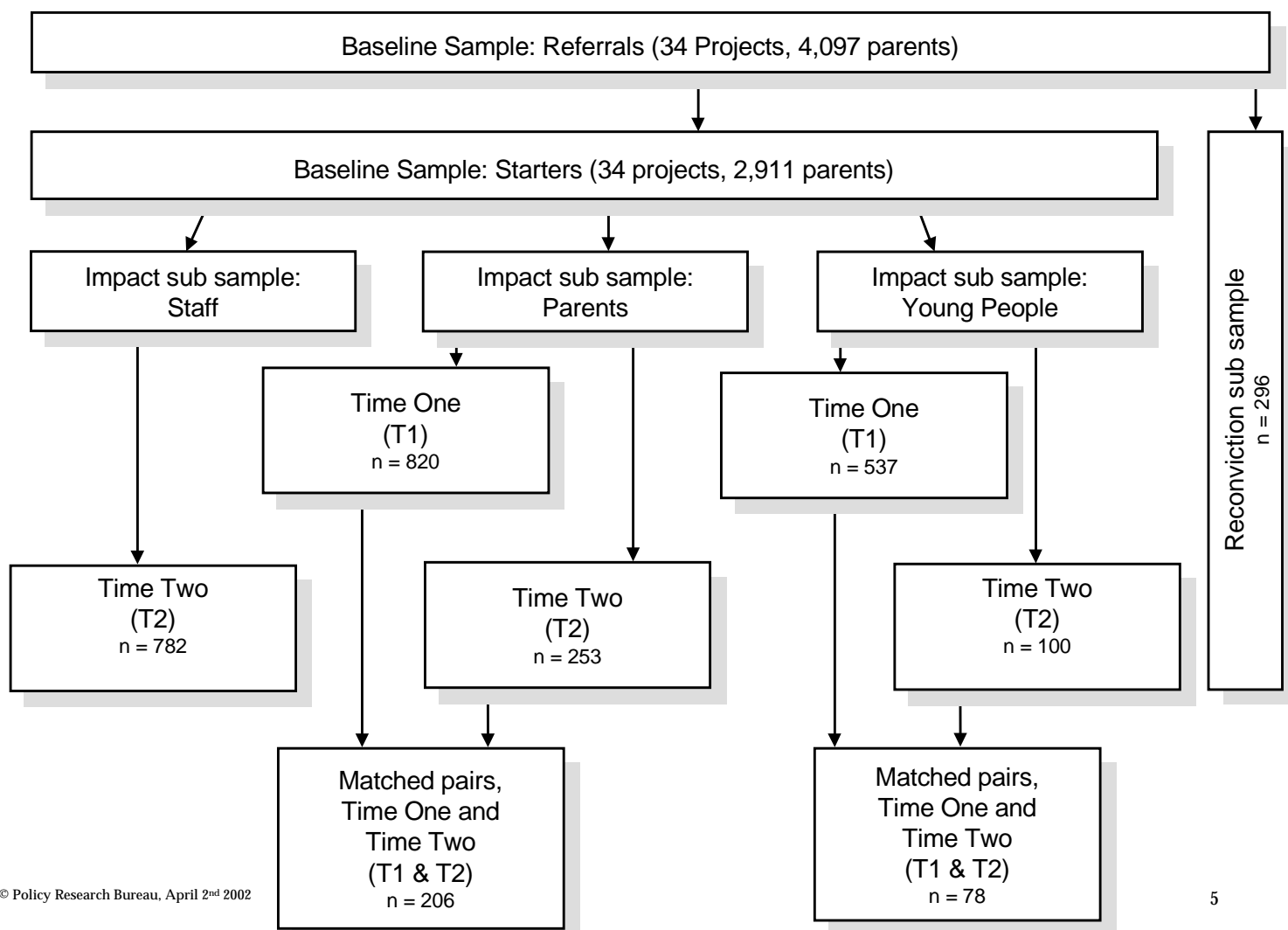
Local evaluators provided some analysis of these issues in written reports, but in addition to this primarily qualitative data, to measure impact on **parents**, local evaluation teams were asked to collate core quantitative data on parents' attitudes and experiences both at the start of their exposure to the project ('*Time One*'), and for those who stayed the course, at the end ('*Time Two*'). This was done using self-completion questionnaires designed by the national evaluation team (see Appendix 2). The questionnaires used a mixture of existing and new measures and focused on several key dimensions of parenting thought to be important in influencing outcomes for children, particularly in terms of antisocial behaviour. These included communication, supervision and monitoring, handling conflict, and warmth and hostility, as well as other general aspects of the parent-child relationship including levels of need, understanding, empathy, and perceptions of coping (e.g. McCord 1979; Loeber and Loeber 1986; Farrington and West 1990; Simons et al 1994; Straus et al 1997; Smith and Brooks-Gunn 1997; Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998). The questionnaire also explored parents' initial expectations of the services, and their overall satisfaction at the end. Research teams also sought data about parents from **staff** involved in delivering the projects, but only retrospectively, when parents had completed their contact with the project (i.e., at Time Two).

Measuring impact on **young people** was relatively more difficult because of the lack of direct access to young people themselves by the projects. However, where possible, both Time One and Time Two data were collected from the **child** whose behaviour had led to the parent attending the project, together with ASSET<sup>2</sup> data (information from YOT records on the background to the young person's offending), where relevant. Young people were asked to report on changes in their relationship with their parent, and on their own past and present offending behaviour. The national evaluation team at PRB also collected data about young people direct from each YOT with an operational parenting project at July 2001 and submitted this to the Police National Computer at the Home Office to explore the

official reoffending and reconviction rates of young people during the early life of the Programme.

Together, these various data sources have been aggregated for the purposes of this report into a “**baseline sample**”: a sample of 4,097 parents, for whom we have data on referral routes to projects, take-up and engagement levels, and, for those that actually started an intervention, information on their demographic characteristics. Most of the thirty four local evaluation teams contributed data on these aspects of the national evaluation. Data have also been aggregated into three different “**impact sub-samples**”, for whom we have information from the national evaluation questionnaires on general satisfaction with the Programme, and on a number of dimensions of parenting and child behaviour. These sub-samples consisted at Time One of 820 parents, 537 young people and 782 staff providing data via the national evaluation questionnaires, and reduced down to 206 ‘matched pairs’ of parents providing data on changes between Time One and Time Two and 78 similarly matched pairs of young people. In total, nineteen research teams contributed cases to the impact sub-samples (over 50% of the total number of projects being evaluated; see Appendix 1). Lastly, we also have aggregate data on young people as part of the **reconviction study sample**, collected from 25 Yots and consisting of cases referred to the projects during the second three months of the Parenting Programme’s life (July 2000 to September 2000). Figure 1.2 shows the structure of the national evaluation sample in more detail. Table A2 in Appendix 1 (b) shows the data sources and numbers of questionnaires in the final data set for the national evaluation.

Figure 1.2 National Evaluation of the Parenting Programme: Flow Diagram of Sample



## **Some implications of the evaluation design**

Collecting data ‘at arm’s length’ in a devolved design such as this one presents a number of difficulties, which were overcome with varying degrees of success during the evaluation period. Less successful elements were the substantial overall non-response rate, and the attrition rate in the sample between Time One and Time Two. These were attributable to a combination of practical difficulties, including relying on sometimes hard-pressed and not always willing project staff to organise questionnaire distribution and return; low motivation to participate by parents and young people; and substantial literacy problems that made a self-completion questionnaire impractical for some. However, a successful outcome was the collation of an aggregated ‘impact sub-sample’ group of over 200 valid matched pairs of ‘before’ and ‘after’ data from parents despite questionnaire returns from individual projects that were sometimes only in single figures. This represents the largest body of impact data on parenting support services that has been published so far in this country, and given the hard-to-reach nature of the sample, is a tribute to the substantial efforts of all at the local level who participated in the national evaluation.

It is, of course, likely that this sample under-represents, at least to some extent, parents who were seriously disaffected with the Parenting Programme, and those with the very highest level of need. These people were probably more likely to fail to complete a questionnaire than those who felt positive about the service. In addition, the reliance on staff to distribute and chase up questionnaires may also have introduced a level of selection bias towards the ‘easier’ cases. Lastly, the lack of a comparison group of parents who were not participating in any Parenting Programme intervention limits the confidence with which we can say that any changes that we observed were due to the Programme itself, rather than to other things that might have been happening in families’ lives, or to ‘natural’ change (Ghate 2001). As such, a certain amount of caution in interpretation of the results is warranted.

Nevertheless, a data set of this size gives us substantial ‘statistical power’ to detect change in the sample, and enables us to move beyond purely qualitative assessments of Programme effectiveness – something which is much needed by the UK evidence-base. In addition, we were able to access an official reconviction sample of 296 cases. Though there are special technical limitations inherent in this exercise (see Part Three), again, this represents the first reconviction study to have been mounted in England that explores the relationship of official reconviction and reoffending rates by young people to support services offered to their parents.



## Structure of this report

The rest of this report is structured as follows. In **Part Two (Implementation and Process Issues)**, we describe the objectives and structure of the projects that formed the Parenting Programme, as well as aggregate data on referrals, throughput, engagement levels and demographic characteristics based on information supplied by local evaluators. **Part Three (Impact of the Parenting Programme)** presents findings about the effects and effectiveness of the projects from both parents and young people's perspective, based on an analysis of the quantitative data included in the aggregated national data set and the national reconviction study, illustrated where appropriate with data from local evaluation reports. In **Part Four (Implications for Practice and Policy)**, we explore the learning that emerged from the evaluation for those involved in purchasing, planning, and delivering parenting support services within the youth justice system. What seem to be the most promising elements of practice in this area, and what acts to undermine the impact of these kinds of interventions? Lastly, in **Part Five (Conclusions)**, we summarise the key messages from the evaluation as a whole.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In total, forty two projects were funded as part of the Development Fund, but six dropped out of the national evaluation or were exempted by the YJB as the services they were providing did not involve direct contact with parents. A further two projects did not provide reports in time to be included in the national evaluation analysis. Note that the development of services for parents in Yots in general was not restricted to those areas that had grants from the Development Fund, as by law all Yots are required to provide services. The Fund simply provided Yots who had a particular interest in developing new and innovative services with the means to do so.

<sup>2</sup> ASSET: the abbreviation for the YJB's official Assessment Profile, supposed to be completed by YOT workers for every young person with whom the YOT is in contact. ASSET contains demographic data and an analysis of risk and protective factors underlying the young person's offending. Note that not all parents referred to the Parenting Programme were parents of convicted offenders (some were 'at risk' or were school refusers rather than offenders), and ASSET would not be completed in these cases

## Part Two Implementation and process aspects

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### Introduction

In this section, using data synthesised from the written reports provided by local evaluation teams, we describe the implementation and process aspects of the Parenting Programme. We describe its shape, structure and content. We also describe the baseline sample of users of the Programme – how parents came to be referred, what kind of take-up levels were reported in aggregate, and what were the demographic characteristics of parents (and associated young people) who took part. The implications of the various observations we make in this section are not discussed in detail here though, but picked up in Part Four, (Implications for Practice and Policy).

From the outset, two key words sum up the core features of the YJB Parenting Programme. Both reflect the innovative nature of the work, first in the sense that parenting support services themselves are only just beginning to get established in any widespread sense in this country, and second in the sense that parenting support services *within the context of the youth justice system* represented a particularly radical new departure for the UK. One of these key words was **diversity**. Few, if any, ‘tried and tested’ models existed for service delivery before the Parenting Programme, and most Yots were entering uncharted territory when they wrote their initial bids for funding. No parameters were imposed as to the design of the projects, other than that they should offer parenting support services to parents of young people who were either known to be offending, or thought to be at risk of offending, and that they should utilise a multi-agency approach. Beyond this, the general model for the Parenting Programme is best described as ‘let a hundred flowers bloom’, and the resulting range of interventions covered a broad spectrum of project design that can only loosely be described as a ‘Programme’ in an integrated sense. For example, even the client base for projects varied substantially, so that whilst some catered mainly for statutory cases attending as a result of a Parenting Order, others stipulated that they would only take voluntary referrals. Certainly, at times it has been hard to discern many common threads in the interventions that composed the Parenting Programme, other than that they were all working with some of the most needy families in the community.

The other key term that describes the Parenting Programme is **evolutionary**; indeed, it is hard to overstate the extent to which projects shifted and changed in shape and form over the life of the Development Fund. The agencies involved in delivering services changed; staff came and went, sometimes leaving long gaps between key posts being filled; projects that started out with the intention of working in one way ended up trying a completely different tack, and so on. All of this makes it hard to get a ‘fix’ on the Parenting Programme, and what we describe below represents only the situation as it appeared by the end of the evaluation period, rather than the full variety of arrangements that came and went over the course of time.

## **Project structure and set-up**

### **Management and interagency arrangements**

Almost all projects in the Parenting Programme were run by a partnership of two or more agencies, frequently from both statutory and voluntary sectors. Overall, around two thirds of the projects were managed by Yots themselves, with the remainder having external management arrangements. In structural terms, the variety of arrangements on the ground was large. Some built upon existing local partnerships (for example, that between Sunderland YOT and Barnardos, a large voluntary agency); others forged new ones. In some YOT areas the partnership consisted of the YOT plus one other agency; in others there were large partner groups: for example, in one area the partners included the YOT, the Social Services Department, Education, Probation, Health, Police, the Borough Council and Barnardo's North West, with the Clerk to the Magistrates and the Crown Prosecution Service represented on the Steering Group<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, though most partnerships straddled the voluntary/statutory line, some were between statutory agencies alone. In addition multi-agency Steering Groups were generally in place, but the extent to which these were thought to meet regularly and be active in driving the project's development was variable.

Within the Programme as a whole there were both success stories in inter-agency working, and some that not been such happy relationships. By the end of the evaluation period, according to local evaluation reports in at least eight areas partnerships had more or less ceased to be effective, and in three cases, Yots had taken over the management and delivery of all or part the project.

### **Staffing, and staff training**

Staffing for the projects was an ongoing problem throughout the period of evaluation. In at least seven cases (one fifth of the projects that remained in the evaluation until the end) evaluation reports give details of long gaps whilst posts were left unfilled, in some cases because projects took a long time to get the stage of being ready to recruit in the first place, but in others because key staff left and could not be replaced.

However, where staffing was not a problem, the pattern seems to have been for high quality staff, who generally received adequate if not good training, and who were in turn able to train up others to run the parenting interventions they had designed. Many had attended training specifically aimed at enabling staff to run particular 'branded' programmes; others were reported to have a wide range of other training and qualifications, including in social work, counselling, psychotherapy, youth justice work, child protection, family therapy, and teaching. Though most of the staff in the early days of the Programme came from fields outside youth justice (notably social work), many projects have been training up YOT staff to deliver the parenting work, so that responsibility for delivery of the interventions has gradually shifted over time from external providers to in-house youth justice workers.

## Project delivery

### Objectives of projects, and who they served

What were the projects trying to do, and who were they trying to reach? The key assumption underlying the YJB Parenting Programme is that parents whose children are engaging - or at risk of engaging - in antisocial or challenging behaviour can be supported (or educated/trained) to make changes to the way they interact with their child, and that this will help to prevent antisocial behaviour. Thus, though ambitious in scope, the YJB's agenda can also be seen as relatively narrowly defined, reflected in the desire to see measurable improvements in young people's behaviour as evidence of effective working. However many projects, and especially those that involved service providers from the voluntary sector, held a wider philosophical position, working to a broad 'social inclusion' agenda rather than a specific 'parenting skills-building' agenda. It is particularly important to note that whilst the legislation surrounding Parenting Orders may be interpreted in punitive terms (as has been perceived as such by many parents, service providers and by the Courts), projects themselves had no stated objectives that related to 'chastising' errant parents. The closest that any came to using this correctional language was one project that aimed "*to help parents address deviant attitudes*", and most projects saw their function as predominantly supportive. Overwhelmingly, the parents referred to the Parenting Programme had high levels of needs, as we discuss in Part Three. Many had multiple problems – with housing, finances, employment or lack of it, physical health, mental health, literacy problems – in addition to having a child who was behaving in an antisocial fashion. Moreover, though most of these problems were long-standing and had chronic effects, for many, referral to a parenting service (sometimes in parallel with the receipt of a Parenting Order, and an Order served on a young person) marked a definite 'acute' point of crisis in family life. Many parents therefore arrived projects in a state of high anxiety and stress, and in their own words 'desperate for help'. Though a systematic social needs assessment was not carried out on parents using the Parenting Programme, it is clear that 'parenting support' is a term that must be interpreted in a very wide sense for Programmes such as this one.

Whilst some projects explicitly stated that their focus was on **crisis and therapeutic-style** work with the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach parents, helping them "*to regain control and influence in their child's life*", others by contrast aimed at families in need more broadly and described their work as **preventive** and aimed at the 'lighter' or 'low tariff' end of the spectrum. This difference in emphasis was reflected both in the client bases of projects, and in the ways they delivered their services. Nevertheless, as a condition of funding all projects shared a common overarching aim of providing parenting support and education services with the intention of 'reducing and preventing offending by young people'. Some projects (about half of the sample) also had a specific objective of reducing non-school attendance and disruptive behaviour by young people in general. However, unlike other Development Fund programmes, the Parenting Programme had young people as 'secondary targets', to be reached through the medium of their parents. **Parents** were the primary target, and objectives in relation to this were described in various ways. Most projects wanted to build parenting knowledge and skills in specific dimensions. Some

stressed they also wanted to impact upon parents' well-being in more general terms. Other projects had an explicit objective of influencing parenting not just of older, offending children, but also younger siblings, with a 'preventive' model in mind. Most were ambitious, casting their net wide in terms of objectives, and hoping to impact upon numerous aspects of individual, family and even community functioning. One project described this as "*aiming to offer a comprehensive continuum of support*"; see table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Overarching aims of the projects in the Parenting Programme		
	Number	Percentage
Reduce offending by young people	34	100
Improve parents' skills and knowledge	25	74
Improve family relationships	23	68
Improve parents' well-being	17	50
Improve school attendance	17	50

Base = 34 projects

Broken down in terms of specific, measurable objectives in relation to parents, the table below shows the aspects of parenting that projects hoped to influence.

Table 2.2 Specific objectives of the projects in the Parenting Programme		
	Number	Percentage
<b>Build parents' skills:</b>		
Dealing with challenging behaviour	27	80
Communication	27	80
Boundary setting	24	71
Conflict resolution	23	68
Negotiation	22	65
Dealing with offending behaviour	21	62
Problem solving	20	59
Other	17	50
<b>Increase parents' knowledge:</b>		
Adolescent behaviour	26	77
Child development	13	38
<b>Enhance parents' well-being:</b>		
Confidence in parenting	23	68
Self-esteem	22	65

Base = 34 projects

## Mode, medium of delivery, and content of interventions

The activities that projects were reported to offer were many and various. In terms of broad **mode of delivery**, initial bids to the Development Fund indicated that group work, usually in the form of structured parent education courses held over a set number of weeks, would predominate. Due to the high level of need amongst many of the parents referred to the Parenting Programme, however, many workers found themselves dealing with urgent

'practical' problems (access to benefits, housing problems etc) on behalf of individual families as well as delivering support designed to boost parenting skills and competencies per se. In the end, twenty seven (79%) projects operated a group work programme, and slightly more projects (28 out of 34; 80%) offered one-to-one support, of which seven (21%) offered exclusively one-to-one input. This ranged from in-home visits, to private meetings at the project base, to ad hoc telephone support and advice. Six projects (18%) also offered support and resources for external professionals and volunteers as well as parents themselves. Relatively few projects (six, 18%) offered any activities for young people, though several intended to do so at the initial bid stage but were not subsequently able to pursue this. Projects had to be both creative and pragmatic in their mode of delivery for parenting support, and the table below shows the breakdown of the mode of delivery of project activities for the sample as a whole. Facilitated group discussions and professional one-to-one support topped the list, but these were supplemented by a wide range of other approaches; see table 2.3.

**Table 2.3 Mode of delivery of intervention by the projects in the Parenting Programme**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Group methods of delivery</b>		
Discussion facilitated by worker	23	68
Handouts and written materials for parents to keep	22	65
'Homework' exercises	16	47
'Formal' parenting education (e.g. child development), including accredited training courses	9	27
Written work	7	21
Discussion facilitated by peer	2	6
<b>One-to-one methods of delivery</b>		
Professional one-to-one support	23	68
Practical support and advice (e.g. benefits, housing, training)	16	47
Telephone helpline	8	24
Counselling/therapy by qualified professional	6	18
Parent advisers/mentors/befrienders	5	15
<b>Group or one-to-one methods</b>		
Personal development for parents, only indirectly related to parenting (e.g. self-esteem)	14	41
Other informal general support (incl. drop in)	13	38
TV, video and computer programmes	11	32
<b>Other methods</b>		
Family Group Conferencing	4	12
Other	11	32

Base = 34 projects

In terms of the **medium** of delivery, although a number of 'off the shelf' programmes for running parenting interventions exist, most projects reported difficulties in finding an existing model that fully met the needs of the parents with whom they were working. This resulted in a 'mix and match' approach in which workers often took elements of existing programmes, and supplemented or modified the material to suit their own clients' needs. Thus, although some projects nominated an existing parenting course<sup>2</sup> as being their

chosen model, the extent to which the course was closely followed was variable. In the end, there was a wide variety in the medium of delivery, as table 2.4 shows, with at least half of the projects designing their own programmes more or less from scratch.

Table 2.4 Range of intervention models used by the Parenting Programme				
Medium of delivery	Mode of delivery		Number	Percentage
	Group	Individual		
<b>Own customised programme</b>	✓	✓	17	50
<b>Teenagers in Trouble</b> (Video and discussion materials; produced for the Programme by TSA)	✓	✓	17	50
<b>Let's Talk Parenting</b> (Miller and Ward, Sunderland YOT)	✓	✓	6	18
<b>Living with Teenagers</b> (Centre for Fun and Families)	✓	✓	3	9
<b>Parenting Wisely</b> (interactive CD-ROM; Gordon and Kacir 1997)		✓	2	6
<b>Solution-focussed (Brief Therapy)</b> (e.g. Eileen Murphy Consultants)		✓	2	6
<b>Family Group Conferencing</b>	✓		2	6
<b>Handling Children's Behaviour</b> (NCH Action for Children)	✓	✓	1	3
<b>Strengthening families, strengthening communities</b> (REU)	✓		1	3
<b>Parenting skills programme</b> (Wirral YOT and Parentline Plus)	✓		1	3
<b>Parenting Teenagers</b> (Family Caring Trust)	✓		1	3

Base = 34 projects

Despite the variety of media used, however, the **content** of the interventions varied relatively little. Most covered a common core set of themes, which were, broadly speaking:

- Dealing with conflict and challenging behaviour by young people (and avoiding harsh responses)
- Positive/constructive supervision and monitoring of young people
- Setting and maintaining boundaries and 'ground rules' for young people
- Improving communication between parents and children
- Tackling family conflict more generally

Many also focussed on aspects of parent well-being and sense of self-efficacy, such as:

- Increasing confidence in parenting
- Raising self-esteem
- Accessing further resources

## Reaching and engaging project users – referral, assessment, attendance, and breach

Procedures for referral of parents to projects, assessment of their suitability and needs, monitoring of attendance, and (where relevant, for Court Ordered attendees) breach procedures for dealing with non-compliance all varied substantially across the Programme.

### ***Referrals and assessment***

One source of variation was the key distinction between **Court Ordered** and **voluntary** referrals. Though the Programme was primarily set up to service the new Parenting Orders, from the outset there was a strong commitment to offer services to parents on a voluntary basis as well. Indeed, feeling uncomfortable with the idea of ‘support by compulsion’ many projects have interpreted this to mean that referrals by Order should be a last resort. According to local evaluation reports, some Yots reported that they were committed to utilising parenting support provision preventatively, by engaging parents at an early stage in a young person’s offending career, hopefully reducing the chances of a court appearance and the imposition of a Parenting Order:

*“It is the policy of the YOT not to ask for Parenting Orders, but to work with parents on a voluntary basis”*

*“The project strives for voluntary engagement and (with the YOT operational manager) has done work to mitigate against inappropriate referrals and the imposition of Parenting Orders”*

*“The YOT has a policy of not referring parents to the project unless voluntarily....it can take time to persuade parent (to attend) but it pays dividends in the end”*

In practice, this has meant that whilst some projects have taken substantial numbers of parents on Orders, others have taken few or none. It has also meant that there has been a lack of standardisation of meaning of these basic terms: in some areas ‘voluntary’ means ‘persuaded to attend as an alternative to receiving a Parenting Order’ and may even have been triggered by a court appearance, whereas in other projects voluntary referrals included parents who had never been near a court, including genuine, ‘self-directed’ self-referrals. To this extent, the distinction between Parenting Order referrals and voluntary ones can sometimes be misleading; nevertheless, with this caveat in mind, we use these broad terms to differentiate between two somewhat different ways of reaching a Parenting Programme project. Overall, referrals to projects came from a wide range of sources. Though overall the national aggregate picture was for Yots to contribute the greatest proportion of voluntary referrals, a not uncommon and perhaps unexpected aspect was for evaluators to report that the project had had fewer referrals through the YOT than expected. Indeed, until relatively late on in the Programme’s life, throughput continued to be a problem for many projects, with many evaluators reporting ‘a slow start’. By and large, however, in most cases this was a receding problem by the end of the evaluation period, suggesting a ‘teething’ difficulty rather than anything more enduring and systemic.



### *Aggregate number of referrals, and referral routes*

During the period March 2000 to September 2001, **over four thousand parents were referred** to the thirty four projects that took part in the national evaluation; see table 2.5. The greatest proportion - nearly one thousand of these referrals (955 cases, 23%) - were located in the South East YOT region. The second and third most prolific YOT regions were the North West and North East, with 875 (21%) and 807 (20%) referrals respectively.

**Voluntary** referrals outnumbered Court Ordered ones (2,714 cases, or two thirds of all referrals). Youth Offending Teams were the single greatest source of voluntary referrals, contributing 1,204 cases (29%), and highlighting the role played by YOT staff in attempting to engage parents on a non-judicial basis. Finally, there was a substantial level of referral from social, education and health services (almost 30% of all referrals), many of whom were partner agencies to Yots. By contrast, the overall proportion of non-agency self-referrals proved to be low, at 208 (5%) cases.

**Parenting Orders** comprised just over one in six (16%, n = 656) of all referrals. Of these, 539 cases came from the 'criminal' route, in response to offending by young people (82% of all Parenting Orders) and 117 (18% of Orders) came via the 'educational' route, in response to persistent non-school attendance. As shown in table 2.5, there was an uneven geographical distribution of Parenting Orders, illustrating that the Courts' approach to the new disposal seems to have followed a far from uniform path. For example, two YOT regions – South East and North East - contributed over 60% of all 'criminal' Parenting Orders. As we discuss later in Part Four, a variety of reasons may underpin this pattern, from magistrates' attitudes towards the disposal, to Yots' communication strategies with the Courts, to the 'natural' learning curve effect in some 'pilot' regions (e.g. Wessex YOT) who were designated to pilot the new Orders ahead of other areas, and who thus had a 'head start' in terms of planning for the Orders and how to implement them.

Note that data on route of referral were missing for 18% of referrals.

Table 2.5 Number and Geographical Distribution of parents referred to the Parenting Programme

Referral Route by YOT Region												
YOT Region		Referral Route								Total		
		Court Route (POs)		Voluntary Route								Route Unclear
				Crim.	Educ.	YOT	Social Servs	Educ. Servs	Health Servs	Self- Referral	Other Route	
North West		13	3	322	176	31	11	4	33	282	875	22
Wales		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Midlands		39	2	61	6	13	1	5	2	86	215	5
South West		17	4	116	46	14	9	1	5	2	214	5
South East		227	19	176	123	91	27	14	13	265	955	23
London		74	13	139	89	97	5	79	63	60	619	15
East		3	0	104	0	0	0	0	0	14	121	3
East Midlands		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire		64	26	90	51	38	2	1	19	0	291	7
North East		102	50	196	174	65	83	104	15	18	807	20
Total	N	539	117	1,204	665	349	138	208	150	727	4,097	100
	%	13	3	29	16	9	3	5	4	18	100	

### *Referral and assessment systems*

Some projects had, by the end of the evaluation period, developed relatively sophisticated systems for **processing referrals**, using standardised forms (or some kind of written protocol) for completion by referring professionals. Others had abandoned detailed referral forms as they suspected these were inhibiting referrals by some agencies, and were dealing with referrals on a more ad hoc basis. The ASSET, the Youth Justice Board's key tool for the recording of referral and assessment information by Yots, was not always felt to be relevant to the Parenting Programme as it focuses mainly on young people and does not provide much information on parents. It was not, therefore, widely used as part of referral systems within the Parenting Programme.

Once a referral was received by a project, this would generally trigger some kind of formal **assessment**, often made by means of a home visit to the parents. Very few evaluators reported that much use was being made of 'stand down' assessments, carried out 'on the spot' in Court. During the assessment process, workers would make a judgement as to whether the service was appropriate, based around the parent's willingness to receive the service from the project, the assessed needs of the parent, and the ability of the project to meet these needs within the framework of the service it had developed. In some areas assessment involved the use of a standardised tool, and these varied from one project to the next. The TSA developed an assessment tool for the Parenting Programme, which some projects reported using and finding helpful, and several projects had developed their own customised tools. By contrast, a much more ad hoc process was in evidence in other areas, as one report noted: *"because the overwhelming majority of cases are involved on a voluntary*

*basis, the systems in place for referring, assessing and monitoring reflect an emphasis on providing support where 'compliance' and 'sanctions' are not relevant concepts".* Here, it was reported that standardised forms were rarely completed as part of the referral and assessment process, there was no 'monitoring' as such, and though a full assessment was undertaken at an initial home visit, this might or might not involve the use of a specific tool.

## ***Monitoring, and aggregate take-up and engagement figures***

### ***Monitoring***

As with the referral and assessment procedures, though monitoring was a standardised process in some area, other projects did not have clear systems for this (and it was telling that many local evaluators struggled to collate even basic data that could tell them how many people had been referred and accepted onto a project, and could not estimate attendance levels with any degree of accuracy). Not all monitoring systems were electronic, and the location of the central files or databases varied and were sometimes split across different sites of the same project. These factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the figures below, for take-up and engagement levels for the Parenting Programme as a whole.

### ***Take-up of Parenting Programme interventions***

As detailed in table 2.5, a total of 4,097 parents were referred to the Parenting Programme in the period covered by the evaluation. Over 70% of all referrals, that is, 2,911 parents (71%) **started** some kind of parenting intervention. The remaining 29% of referred parents did not take up any Parenting Programme service. The reasons behind this attrition between referral and take-up are multiple and are discussed in more detail in Part Four. However, some key factors include inappropriate referral (e.g. parent in need of mental health support rather than parenting support), parents subsequently declining to take part, service access problems (e.g. transport, childminding or time inconveniences) and service provision problems (e.g. 'waiting list' for joining parenting groups).

### ***Engagement with the Programme***

Looking now at the **level of engagement** of those parents that did take up a parenting intervention (that is, the extent to which active participation was sustained beyond initial contact), the data show that over half of 'starters' engaged *fully* with the intervention (1,575 parents, 54%). These parents attended all or most of the sessions offered as part of the intervention. On the other hand, 16% of starters (460 parents) engaged *erratically* with the intervention and one in ten of them (297 parents) engaged *poorly or not at all*. We are unable to comment on 579 parents (20%) due to unclear or unrecorded engagement level. It is important to note that this measure of engagement is not the same thing as 'attendance' level. Here, 'engagement' refers to the qualitative and quantitative assessment of staff and evaluators of the active participation of the parent in the various activities offered by the project (in the group, at home, on a one to one basis, etc.) and not just the number of times the parent 'had contact with' the project. Details of take-up and engagement levels are given in table 2.6.

Table 2.6 **Parents' take-up and engagement levels within the Parenting Programme**

	Referral and Take-up		Engagement Level	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Parents referred	<b>4,097</b>	100		
Parents starting	2,911	71	<b>2,911</b>	100
Full parent engagement			1,575	54
Erratic or irregular parent engagement			460	16
Poor or no parent engagement			297	10
Unclear or unrecorded parent engagement			579	20

### ***Mode of work with individual parents***

We showed earlier what the projects were doing in terms of mode and medium of delivery of their work. Looked at from the perspective of individual parents, the data confirm the project-level picture. The most prevalent mode of working was one-to-one (1,086 cases, 37%), often done in-home. The second most popular arrangement was group work, usually facilitated by the project's "Parenting Co-ordinator" or other professional parenting facilitators (985 cases, 34%). Some parents (368 cases, 13%) took part in a mix of both one-to-one and group work, see table 2.7.

Table 2.7 **Activities undertaken by parents starting an intervention in the Parenting Programme**

	Number	Percentage
Group work	985	34
One-to-one work	1,086	37
Mixed group AND one-to-one work	369	13
Other mode of work	68	2
Mode of work not recorded	403	14

Base = 2,911 parents starting an intervention

### ***Non-compliance and breach procedures***

Systems for responding to **non-attendance** (for voluntary referrals) and **non-compliance** (by Court Ordered parents) were still in their infancy, or non-existent by the end of the evaluation period. Many projects reported substantial non-attendance by parents who had joined the project voluntarily (and we return to this in Part Four), but few felt it was appropriate to pursue these in any formal way. One project (with a 31% non-attendance

rate) was reported to send a letter offering a place on a second course, and another had followed up a few cases by telephone.

Non-compliance by parents who had been directed to attend the project after receiving a Parenting Order was perceived as more problematic, however. Several projects reported that some parents like this had failed to attend, but most had not implemented breach proceedings. Though the low incidence of breach proceedings during the evaluation period most likely reflects the relatively low number of Court Ordered attendees for many projects, this may also reflect some important problems with the arrangements for breach. We were not able to collate systematic quantitative information on the overall number of breach proceedings that were instigated as part of the Parenting Programme. As noted in Part One and discussed further in Part Four, once a project had decided to recommend that proceedings be started against a parent, the matter was handed over to the police for investigation and action. Local evaluators reported that in most cases, the project itself then received little information on the progress of the case, unless staff were called to give evidence if the case was returned to Court. Records were not, therefore, generally available to be consulted. Furthermore, even where projects or Yots themselves did record information about breaches, the length of time that tended to elapse during the process made it hard to quantify the actual number of breaches that took place within the evaluation period.

## **Programme Users: Aggregate demographic characteristics of parents and associated young people**

### **Demographic characteristics of parents**

Probably unsurprisingly, out of 2,911 starters, the large majority of parents or carers were women, (n = 2,259; 78%). Male participants accounted for just 18% of the case load overall. With respect to age, two in five of the parents taking part were in between 35 and 44 years old. Parents aged 45 or older accounted for less than 10% of all starters. It is important to note however, that more than one in five parents were aged between 25 and 34 years old, which suggests that many of these were probably adolescents themselves when they became parents.

85% of those starting an intervention were described as white British. In terms of employment status, only 18% were reported to be in full time employment, and over half were reported as unemployed. Parents were more likely to be parenting alone than living with a partner (1,122 against 889 cases respectively). Table 2.8 below summarises main social and demographic data for all 2,911 parents starting a parenting intervention. Note that on some indicators, a large amount of data were missing.

**Table 2.8 Social and demographic characteristics of parents starting parenting interventions**

	Number	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Women	2,259	78
Men	532	18
Sex not recorded	120	4
<b>Age</b>		
24 or younger	65	2
25 to 34	631	22
35 to 44	1,150	40
45 or older	304	10
Age not recorded	761	26
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	2,464	85
Black	125	4
White and Black	36	1
Asian	45	2
Mixed White and Asian	12	----
Other	23	1
Ethnicity not recorded	206	7
<b>Employment status</b>		
Full time employment	521	18
Part time employment	348	12
Unemployed	1,642	56
Employment status not recorded	400	14
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
Living with a partner	889	30
Not living with a partner	1,122	39
Relationship status not recorded	900	31

Base = 2,911 parents starting an intervention

## Demographic characteristics of young people

Data about the young people who triggered the referral of parents to the Parenting Programme, based on 2,360 cases about whom we have information, show that 1,784 were male (76%) and 576 were female (24%). It is interesting to note the near mirror image of the breakdown of the data when sex of parents is put against sex of young people; while almost

four in five parents were women, four in five young people were men. In terms of the age of these young people, based on 1,922 cases for whom we have information, the data show the following: 181 were ten years old or younger (9%); 1,337 were eleven to fifteen (70%); and 404 were 16 years or older (21%).

Not all young people who triggered the parent's referral were known offenders, but establishing the precise background offending profile of the young people proved difficult due to patchy returns and large amounts of missing data. For example, for the baseline sample of parents who started on the Parenting Programme, we have data from local evaluation returns on one third of the cases only (n = 1,099 young people). For the impact sub-sample we have information from ASSET for less than half of all cases (n = 250), and though the reconviction sub-sample suffered much less from missing data as it was gathered direct from YOT files, it included only a small number of cases (n = 296) passing through the Parenting Programme at an early stage of its life. Thus, according to information on the baseline sample of parents who started on the Parenting Programme almost half of the young people were recorded as having no disposal, and thus were 'at risk' of offending or were school refusers rather than known offenders. Only 21% were in a 'high tariff' bracket (Action Plan Orders, Supervision Orders and Detention and Training Orders - DTOs). Data from the impact and reconviction sub-samples showed a rather more serious picture, however. Here, Action Plan Orders, Supervision Orders and DTOs account for 36% and 57% of all young people respectively; see table 2.9. A key message, however, is that despite the discrepant findings, collectively the data suggest that among the children of parents involved in the Parenting Programme, there was a sizeable group of serious offenders.

**Table 2.9 Type of disposal given to young people at the point of parent's referral to the Parenting Programme**

Type of order	Baseline sample ('starters') (N =1,099)		Impact sub-sample (N =250)		Reconviction sub-sample (N = 296)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
No order	542	49	Not recorded	---	50	17
Final Warning	139	13	42	17	27	9
Reparation Order	28	3	19	7	38	13
Action Plan Order	77	7	55	22	77	26
Supervision Order	132	12	34	14	76	26
DTO	26	2	Not recorded	---	16	5
Other order	155	14	100	40	12	4

## Conclusions : the Parenting Programme at the end of the evaluation period

At the interim reporting stage, in March 2001 (Ghate, Ramella and Bunn 2001) we noted that many projects had been slow to get off the ground. Various problems were identified at that stage, including low numbers of Parenting Orders being made and low throughput in general in some areas, staffing difficulties, and the time and resources taken to fix upon a suitable model for delivering an intervention.

By the end of the evaluation period, most of the thirty four projects who remained in the sample were 'up and running' and were reporting more confidence both in their structure and their functioning. Early staffing problems seemed to have settled, though there clearly remained a shortage of suitably qualified professionals able to work with parents within the youth justice context (see Part Four). The inter-agency partnerships that were a core feature of the Parenting Programme projects had proved to be a mixed bunch, though more often successful than not. In some cases, the original project and the YOT had completely parted company, with Yots taking over the service or developing their own, rather separate service. In other cases, however, strong relationships had developed in which all agencies were reported to feel they had a stake, and that seemed to be providing good practice models for multi-agency collaboration in family support. All of these issues are discussed in more detail in Part Four.

Though low throughput remained a problem for some, others projects by contrast had developed into major resources within their local area, and had client lists in the hundreds by the end of the evaluation period. Most activities had been focused on parents with only a minority of projects targeting the whole family or doing direct work with young people. At the time of writing, diversity and evolution continue to characterise the Programme. There has been convergence in terms of the broad aims of the projects within the Programme, which have been uniformly ambitious, but objectives have varied around a preventive/ therapeutic axis, as have modes of delivery. Projects have responded creatively and imaginatively to the relative freedom to develop interventions. In time, most projects have fixed upon a particular model for the content of their interventions, and have had the opportunity to try it out and make modifications, so that something approaching a 'settled' course of work has evolved in most areas. Though no two projects claim to be using exactly the same intervention model, common themes and convergent approaches in their work are apparent, and more may develop over time.

Referral and assessment procedures, though still undergoing changes at the time of writing, were also beginning to settle in most areas, though these still need some work to achieve systematisation. Though the conceptual distinction between voluntary and Court Ordered routes of referral is blurred at the operational level, 'voluntary' referrals have dominated (comprising two thirds of all referrals), sent through the Yots. Only one in six parents were referred to the Parenting Programme as a result of a Parenting Order, reflecting the determined efforts by many to develop and retain a 'non-punitive' ethos for the projects. Systems for monitoring, and handling non-attendance by voluntary referrals and non-compliance by Court Ordered parents are, however, unformed in many areas.

In terms of project users, a unifying theme has been the high need nature of the parents referred to the Programme; see Part Three for more details on the needs of the project users. Beyond this, though data are patchy in some places, the sample of 'starters' was predominantly white, female and not in paid employment, mostly aged over thirty five, and with an adolescent son that had been the basis for referral. Though not all young people were known offenders, a sizeable group were on 'high tariff' disposals. Some diversity was present, however; men and minority ethnic parents were amongst those referred to the projects, and some parents did have troublesome daughters as well as sons,



however. Though there was substantial attrition between the point of referral and the point of starting an intervention, at least half those who started were deemed to have achieved full, active engagement with the service offered, and a further 16% engaged at least to some extent. Parents were as likely to participate in group work as they were to receive one-to-one support from workers. Given the high need, hard-to-reach characteristics of the baseline sample of parents, this was no mean achievement.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Steering groups are also referred to as 'local reference groups' by some.

<sup>2</sup> See Coleman, Henricson and Roker (1999) for more detail on the origins and underlying philosophy of some these programmes.

## Part Three    Impact of the Parenting Programme

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### Introduction

This section discusses the impact and effectiveness of the Parenting Programme. To what extent did the Programme achieve its objectives of supporting parents to make changes in their attitudes, behaviours and relationship with their children? To what extent did changes at the level of parents ‘filter down’ to changes at the level of young people? To address these questions, we look first at the Programme’s impact on **parents**. We explore evidence of change in key dimensions of parenting as outlined in Part One, and parents’ attitudes towards the interventions both before and after taking part. The data on which our impact analysis is based are both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data, drawn from local evaluators’ written reports and based on interviews with parents, young people and staff is used to illustrate or further articulate findings from the quantitative data analysis. Quantitative analysis is based on data gathered via questionnaires designed by the national evaluation team and administered to parents, staff and young people through the local evaluators. Copies of the questionnaires used with parents, staff and young people can be found in the Appendix 2.

In order to measure functioning in respect of specific key dimensions of parenting, we asked parents and young people to self-report on the extent to which various statements about their relationship were true ‘at the present time’. By comparing what respondents said at the beginning of their contact with the Parenting Programme (Time One) and what they said at the end (Time Two), we were able to explore changes that appeared to be associated with participation in the project. Statistical procedures also allowed us to determine the extent to which any changes that we see are ‘significant’<sup>1</sup> (highly likely to be ‘real’), or by contrast non-significant - that is, likely to be attributable to random variation that is inherent in any measurement technique. We say ‘associated with’ the Parenting Programme rather than ‘caused by’ because of course there may be many other competing explanations for why changes did, or did not, occur. Amongst other things, home circumstances, personal circumstances, other services with which the parents or young people were in contact, and changing interpretations of what the questions meant could all have impacted upon how people responded to the questionnaires. Moreover, most interventions were short, lasting a matter of a few weeks or so, and many are sceptical about the ability of brief interventions to achieve lasting change in family functioning. We also remind the reader that the impact sub-sample represents a sub-set of all those who started an intervention, who might not be fully representative of the total population. It is not unlikely that the responses obtained reflect the views of relatively more ‘satisfied customers’ and that information on less positive outcomes did not reach the national evaluation with the same strength. Finally, as noted in Part One, the lack of a comparison group of parents who did not participate in the Parenting Programme means we cannot be absolutely sure if any changes we see might have happened anyway, with the passage of time. It is important to bear in mind these limitations when interpreting the data.

Second, we examine the extent of change in **young people** during the period of their parents' participation in the programme. We assess young people's reports of changes in their relationship with their parents, and in their involvement in offending. We also assess evidence from a one-year follow up reconviction study, based on official PNC data and data gathered direct from Yots by the Policy Research Bureau team<sup>2</sup>, carried out with a sub-sample of young people whose parents were referred during the early days of the Programme, between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2000 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2000. Similar limitations noted in relation to the parent data apply to the data young people; in addition, the difficulties of collecting data were magnified in relation to young people since most projects and evaluators did not have direct contact with young people, but only their parents. Again, it is important to note these factors when interpreting the data we present below.

## **The characteristics of the impact sub-sample**

Before presenting evidence of the impact of the Parenting Programme on participants, then, we briefly review the characteristics of the parents who provided data for this part of the evaluation. This information both provides a 'validity check' on the make-up of the impact sub-sample, and also helps us to understand the background circumstances of the families involved.

### **Social and demographic characteristics of parents**

The 'impact sub-sample' of parents from whom our evidence of impact was taken was a sub-set of all those who started an intervention, drawn from nineteen out of a possible thirty four projects in the Parenting Programme. We commented in Part One that relative to the baseline sample of all 'starters', this sub-set may perhaps under-represent parents who were the most disaffected with the Programme, to an extent that cannot be measured. However, there are some measurable indicators of the representativeness of the sub-sample that we can use, that help us to form a view about the likely validity of the impact results. For example, we can check whether the impact sub-sample differed in any systematic way from the social and demographic profile of the baseline sample. If the differences are not dramatic, we can feel more reassured that the impact sub-sample is a reasonable reflection of the whole baseline sample, and that the impact results we have obtained are likely to be reliable.

As shown in table 3.1, comparisons between the impact sub-sample and the baseline sample in terms of social and demographic characteristics in fact showed very few differences. This gives us confidence that the impact sub-sample of parents was, in socio-demographic terms at least, reasonably representative of the overall baseline sample of those who started an intervention across the Parenting Programme as a whole.

Table 3.1 Comparison of social and demographic characteristics of the impact sub-sample* and the baseline sample				
	Impact sub-sample		Baseline sample	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>				
Women	662	81	2,259	81
Men	154	19	532	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,791</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	763	96	2,464	91
Black	14	2	125	5
Mixed white/black	4	--	36	1
Asian	13	2	45	2
Mixed white/Asian	3	--	12	--
Other	1	--	23	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,705</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>				
24 or younger	7	1	65	3
25 to 34	163	28	631	29
35 to 44	297	52	1,150	54
45 or older	108	19	304	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Employment status</b>				
Full time employment	82	16	521	21
Part time employment	75	15	349	14
Unemployed	346	69	1,642	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,512</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Relationship Status</b>				
Living with a partner	245	49	889	44
Not living with a partner	259	51	1,122	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,011</b>	<b>100</b>

\* **Note** Proportions in this table have been calculated to exclude missing data. The base number of parents responding to any one question may be lower than the total number of parents in the sub-sample. This is due to item non-response (missing responses to particular questions).

## Referral route of parents in the impact sub-sample

Relative to the baseline sample of starters on the Parenting Programme, parents referred by Court Order were somewhat over-represented in the impact sub-sample. If we discount missing data in the baseline sample, 656 (20% of all referrals if missing cases are removed from the base) of these parents were reported to have been referred via a Parenting Order, whereas in the impact sub-sample, 34% (n = 178) of parents reached the Programme through this route, according to project staff reports. Missing data may be obscuring the real picture for the baseline sample here, but whatever the reason for this finding, it does at least help to reassure us that the views of parents most likely to feel

disaffected with the Parenting Programme (i.e. those compelled to attend it) have been adequately captured in the impact sub-sample. Those on Parenting Orders were certainly not missing from the impact analysis; quite the reverse, in fact.

## Parenting support needs

Understanding the needs of parents helps us to understand the challenges that projects in the Parenting Programme were up against in supporting the parents referred to them. We can explore this both in terms of social needs, and needs related specifically to parenting. Table 3.1 showed that around half of the parents using the Parenting Programme were parenting alone, and that very few of them were in paid employment. We can infer from this that many families were living on very low incomes. In addition, many local evaluators commented on the high incidence of other psycho-social problems such as poor parental mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence, housing problems, debt, and literacy problems amongst the parents in contact with projects. Indicators of need specifically associated with parenting within the impact sub-sample were provided by information gathered at the beginning of contact with an intervention (Time One) on the aspects of parenting support parents themselves viewed as important to get help with, and the extent of difficulties they faced with their child in terms of emotional and behavioural problems.

What did parents themselves want help with? Parents were asked to indicate on a list of potential areas of support whether help in these areas was *urgently* needed, *some help* was required, or whether *no help* was required. As can be seen from table 3.2, at the start of the Programme, most parents wanted help with most of the areas on the list, indicating a high demand for support in general. The areas of support that were felt to be least pressing, according to parents, were handling conflict with partners, and improving children's school attendance. Managing difficult behaviour by children was reported as the most pressing area, with 85% of parents saying they wanted at least some help in this regard, but it should be noted that one third of the sample did not identify actual offending by young people as problematic.

Table 3.2 Parenting support areas and level of help needed by parents

	Percentage		
	Urgent help	Some help	No help
<b>Managing the child's difficult behaviour</b> (n = 461)	47	38	15
<b>Setting boundaries, disciplining the child</b> (n = 458)	40	42	18
<b>Improving the child's school attendance</b> (n = 441)	39	19	42
<b>Handling arguments with the child</b> (n = 462)	36	44	20
<b>Communication, talking to the child</b> (n = 465)	31	50	19
<b>Dealing with the child's offending</b> (n = 432)	31	34	35
<b>Handling arguments with (resident) partner</b> (n = 211)	14	31	55

Base: varies from 211 to 465 according to number of parents answering each question

Another way of exploring the level of need within the sample is to look at problems with young people's behaviour, and hence the challenges posed for parents by their children. To measure this, parents were asked to complete the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire*

(SDQ; Goodman, 1994, 1997). The SDQ is a 25-item checklist of child behaviours that is widely used and well-validated. A 'Total Difficulties' score is calculated for each child showing the level of emotional and behavioural difficulty, based on whether specific problems are assessed to be 'certainly' 'somewhat' or 'not at all' present. By comparing the results for the children of parents in the impact sub-sample relative to 'normed' results (ie results from using the scale with 'normal' community populations as opposed to this 'high risk' one), we can determine the proportion of the young people who would probably be rated by a clinician as having 'abnormal' levels of emotional and behavioural difficulty relative to the wider population of children. In this respect, almost three quarters of young people (72%; 343 out of 480 cases of young people whose parents in the sub-sample returned validly completed SDQs) were reported to fall into this category<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, in terms of the degree of emotional and behavioural difficulties, while 16% of parents of high scoring young people reported that the difficulties experienced by their child were, broadly speaking, *minor*, 41% reported these were *definite* and 38% that they were *severe*. Thus, almost four out of five of these young people were experiencing difficulties of a definite or severe nature, equivalent to well over half the sample of young people overall.

In summary, the data indicate that parents attending Parenting Programme interventions were subject to unusually high levels of need across a number of dimensions. As one mother put it, "*I was desperate for help and advice*". Whilst this finding should not surprise anyone, it is important to keep in mind the challenge created by this situation for projects in trying to offer effective support to parents in these situations, and the obstacles that long-term, entrenched needs place in the way of achieving change in family functioning.

## **Impact on parents**

### **Attendance and compliance by parents in the impact sub-sample**

Given the high needs of the Programme participants, and the fact that families in these situations are generally considered to be 'hard-to-reach' from a service perspective, the first real indicator of the Programme's impact can be found in the high levels of attendance that were reported (also referred to as 'compliance' in the case of Court Ordered attendees). According to staff reports, parents were expected to attend an average of almost nine sessions per intervention. The most popular length of intervention was between six to eight sessions, with over 50% of parents scheduled under this kind of arrangement. Parents attended an average of 6.4 sessions between them. Table 3.3 shows the *total* expected/actual level of attendance broken down by the length of the interventions.

Table 3.3 Levels of expected and actual attendance by parents within the Parenting Programme		
Number of sessions	Percentage	
	Expected attendance	Actual Attendance
0 to 2 sessions	1	14
3 to 5 sessions	3	22
6 to 8 sessions	56	44
9 to 11 sessions	29	14
12 or more sessions	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Average number of sessions</b>	<b>8.96</b>	<b>6.40</b>

Base = 530 parents

Further, attendance rates at the level of individual parents rather than at the aggregate level show that almost 30% of parents (153 cases) did not miss any of the sessions scheduled, and 53% attended at least three quarters of all scheduled sessions. On the other hand, at the 'low' end of the attendance level just under 5% of parents did not attend any of the sessions scheduled, and 19% attended less than half of the sessions. Overall, the average attendance level was 73%; that is, parents attended almost three quarters of the sessions that were scheduled for them by the interventions. Table 3.4 below also gives a breakdown of individual attendance level according to referral route. Not surprisingly, perhaps, parents on Parenting Orders had a somewhat better attendance record than parents referred on a voluntary basis. Nevertheless, the difference between the two groups was not substantial. While one in three parents on Parenting Orders attended all scheduled sessions, the equivalent rate was one in four for those referred on a voluntary basis. Overall attendance level was 74% for parents on Orders and 72% for voluntarily referred parents. Court Ordered parents were somewhat more likely to attend all or most scheduled sessions, and conversely there was a slightly higher 'early drop-out rate' among parents on voluntary referrals. It may be that while the 'low' end difference may be attributable to genuine disenchantment with the intervention, the difference at the 'high' end may be illustrative of the pressure placed on parents on Parenting Orders to comply.

Table 3.4 Attendance level according to referral route within the Parenting Programme			
Attendance level	Percentage		
	Voluntary referrals (n = 532)	Court Ordered referrals (n = 178)	All referrals (N = 530)
Full (100% of scheduled sessions attended)	26	36	29
76% to 100% of sessions	27	20	25
50% to 75% of sessions	23	23	23
One or more sessions, up to 50%	21	17	19
None	3	4	4
<b>Average attendance level (%)</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>

## Changes in key dimensions of parenting

Did participation in a Parenting Programme intervention help parents improve their parenting competencies and skills? We addressed this question by exploring changes during the period of attending a project in key dimensions of parenting that are thought to be related to antisocial behaviour by young people. In particular, we explored changes between Time One and Time Two in **communication**<sup>4</sup> between the parent and the child, parental **supervision and monitoring**<sup>5</sup> of young people's movements and activities, **handling conflict**<sup>6</sup> between parent and child, the parent-child relationship in terms of **warmth and hostility**<sup>7</sup> shown by the parent to the child, and finally, parents' **confidence and sense of coping**<sup>8</sup> with parenting.

**Communication** between parents and young people, and how to improve its quantity and quality, was a major focus for most of the projects in the Programme. Many workers regarded lack of mutual understanding between parent and child as a root cause of family conflict and as depriving parents of effective means of influencing their child's behaviour. Here, the findings were encouraging. Though no significant changes were reported by parents in terms of the frequency with which they had been talking to their child, all other aspects of communication that we measured had improved during the period of contact with the intervention. For example while at Time One, two in five parents reported that the child *listened to the parent's point of view* when they were talking (40%), almost three in five parents reported this was happening at Time Two (57%). Similarly, while at Time One the proportion of parents reporting that whenever they tried to talk to the child they *ended up fighting* was 37%, at Time Two this figure had gone down to 18% of parents.

Combining the responses to the questions on communication into a overall 'constructive communication score', data from 180 parents who reported on communication aspects at both Time One and Time Two also showed encouraging changes. Scores on the scale could range from zero to a maximum of 20, with low scores indicating low overall levels of constructive (positive) communication between parent and child, and high scores indicating high levels. Whereas the mean (average) score on the scale at the start of the intervention was 12.2, by Time Two the mean score had risen to 13.6, a significant improvement<sup>9</sup>. Collectively, these results seem to suggest that there was an increase in constructive communication between parents and their children associated with participation in the Parenting Programme.

Qualitative data reported by local evaluation teams certainly seemed to support this conclusion. Some parents reported that increased efforts at talking and listening to their child had begun to pay dividends, in the sense that they felt better able to hold their child's attention and to sustain more two-way communication. A typical comment from parents was that they felt better able to negotiate solutions to problems with their child after having practiced techniques for this as part of the intervention:

*"Our relationship is much better – we talk more."*

*"He seems to be talking to me more."*



The extent to which parents are able to **monitor and supervise** their child's movements and activities is thought to be an important influence on the likelihood of antisocial behaviour in some young people. It is also something that becomes increasingly challenging for parents as children grow into adolescence, and can be the source of much conflict. With this in mind, many projects explored techniques for increasing 'constructive monitoring' by parents. Following a procedure similar to the one described in relation to the measurement of communication, parents were asked how often, when their child was absent from home, they knew *where the child was*; *who the child was with*; and *what he or she was doing*. They were also asked if they knew at *what time the child would return home*. All of these aspects of supervision showed improvement between Time One and Time Two. For example, while at Time One 31% of parents reported that most of the time they did not know what time the child would return home after going out, at Time Two just 18% of parents felt this way.

As with the analysis of communication, we scored parents' answers in a way that allowed us to combine results to assess eventual differences between overall parental supervision at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Results were again encouraging. Data from a group of 181 parents showed a statistically significant increase in the average score on an overall 'supervision and monitoring score' between Time One and Time Two<sup>10</sup>. In other words, by the time parents finished the parenting intervention, they reported exercising greater supervision and monitoring of their child.

**Handling conflict** with young people more effectively was another major focus of many of the projects' work. Many interventions sought to help parents identify ways of reducing both the overall frequency of conflict, and the extent to which they dealt with conflict by harsh rather than constructive responses (thus tending to escalate conflict rather than to calm it down). Many parents reported that this was a constant issue at home, with differences of opinion frequently escalating into full-blown rows and parents being unsure how to get their own views heard and taken into account by young people. We analysed this dimension of parenting by asking parents how often they found themselves in situations of verbal and physical conflict with their child, and how they had tended to respond to these situations in the recent past. Again, comparisons between data at Time One and data at Time Two yielded mixed but broadly encouraging results. Whereas at Time One, over half the sample (51%) reported that it was 'very' or 'fairly' true that there were *a lot of arguments* between parent and child, by Time Two this proportion had decreased to one third (32%).

In terms of specific responses to conflict, parents were asked how often they responded to conflict by *discussing issues calmly* with the child in the preceding week. We did not find a statistically significant improvement in this respect<sup>11</sup>, and the proportions of parents using this method remained more or less stable at Time One and Time Two at around 75%. However, regarding verbal conflict, parents reported statistically significant reductions in the *frequency of shouting and swearing* at their child<sup>12</sup>. For example, the proportion of parents reporting having shouted or having sworn at the child more than once in the previous week went down from 45% at Time One to 15% at Time Two. With respect to ineffective methods of responding to conflict such as conflict avoidance (ie ignoring the issue and thus failing to deal with it) parents also reported statistically significant improvements, in terms of a reduction in their own frequency of *refusing to talk or simply*

*ignoring* the source of aggravation<sup>13</sup> and of *sulking or stomping off in a huff*<sup>14</sup>. Finally, with respect to physical conflict, parents also reported encouraging improvements. Indeed, there was a statistically significant reduction in the frequency of the parents *threatening* their child (i.e. threats to throw something at or hit their child)<sup>15</sup>, as well as a reduction in the frequency of parents admitting to actually having *hit, or thrown something at* their child<sup>16</sup>.

Qualitative and quantitative evidence from local evaluations consistently suggested that conflict reduction and better management of conflict had been a major achievement of some interventions. Parents reported finding the 'anger management' techniques that they had been taught extremely helpful, and there were many reports of parents learning to avoid becoming embroiled in escalating conflicts with young people. For example:

*"We no longer have situations where [child] is aggressive and verbally abusive as we (parents) will not even go down that path with him."*

*"I have learnt not to scream and shout in the house, and they are not screaming back at me."*

*I am so chuffed as things are much better now. I don't shout as much, and [child] listens more now."*

A fourth dimension of parenting we explored was the extent to which parents reported changes in the parent child relationship, in terms of **warmth** and **hostility**, during the period of involvement with the Parenting Programme. Though relatively few projects explicitly set out to influence this aspect of the parent-child relationship, warmth and hostility consistently appear in the literature on parenting as mediating factors in outcomes for children, with hostility and criticism aggravating many other aversive factors and warmth and approval, on the other hand, acting as a protective factor. It was hypothesised that changes in the degree of warmth or hostility between parents and children could be regarded as an indicator of an overall improvement (or deterioration) in the quality of the relationship. In this respect, although we did not find statistically significant changes with respect to parents *telling the child they loved or cared for them*<sup>17</sup>, we did find statistically significant positive change in the frequency of *praising* their child<sup>18</sup>. For example, while at Time One almost 40% of parents reported not praising the child often (39%), at Time Two this figure had gone down to 28%. With respect to hostility and criticism, parents reported statistically significant changes in *losing their temper* less with their child<sup>19</sup>, and in *criticising* their child less<sup>20</sup>. In short, comparing the situation before and after the parenting interventions, parents reported showing somewhat more warmth, and substantially less hostility towards their adolescent child.

The last key dimension of parenting that we examined was overall **confidence and sense of coping**, including sense of understanding and empathy with the child, ability to influence the child's behaviour, and, more generally, parents' sense of being able to cope with parenting their child. Many projects hoped to boost parents' sense of 'self-efficacy' in these areas, and improvements during the course of participation in an intervention, if

reported, could be taken to indicate that projects had been successful in helping parents to feel better equipped to deal with the challenges of parenting.

For empathy and understanding, quantitative results appeared to be positive. By the end of the parenting intervention, parents reported a greater frequency of feeling they *understood the reasons behind their child's behaviour*<sup>21</sup>, and also a greater sense of *knowing how their child was feeling*<sup>22</sup>. Some local evaluations were sceptical about the 'real' nature of these perceived changes, however, suspecting that parents were still more likely to 'blame the child' for difficulties at home rather than take responsibility for these themselves, and that there had been relatively little gains in terms of parents developing greater understanding of children's position. Nevertheless several local evaluation reports cited indications of positive changes at the local level. As one evaluator commented:

*"Project workers.... felt they had engendered greater understanding, empathy and patience (in respect of parents' relationships) with their children."*

Particularly encouraging given the overarching aims of the Parenting Programme, there were statistically significant changes three key aspects of parents' perception of their ability to influence their child's behaviour. First, parents reported *feeling more respected* by their child<sup>23</sup>. Second, they felt more able to *solve problems* between them and the child without losing their temper<sup>24</sup>. Third, parents felt more able to get their young people to *comply with their requests*<sup>25</sup> and to *take parents' views and wishes into consideration*<sup>26</sup>. Interestingly, however, we did not find statistically significant changes in parents' perceptions of their *ability to set 'ground rules'* for the child<sup>27</sup>.

As regards parents' perceptions of their ability to cope with parenting in a general sense, very positive changes were reported between the start and end of interventions. There were statistically significant changes in the following aspects of coping: a reduction in the frequency of situations in which parents felt *pushed to breaking point* by their child<sup>28</sup>; an improvement in the sense of *being able to trust young people to behave responsibly*<sup>29</sup>; an increase in feeling *better informed about where to turn up for help with parenting issues*<sup>30</sup>; and an increase in *general sense of coping with their child*. This last result is illustrated in table 3.5, showing the trajectory of sense of coping across the period of the interventions. While at the beginning of the parenting projects, over one in four parents felt that they were coping 'fairly' or 'very' badly with parenting (47 out of 175 cases, 27%), the proportion of 'poor copers' had reduced to just over one in ten by the end of the interventions (18 out of 175 cases, 11%)<sup>31</sup>.

Table 3.5 Parents' overall sense of coping before and after the Parenting Programme					
		Coping with child AFTER the intervention (Time Two)			
		Percentage			
		Very/fairly well	Neither well nor badly	Very/fairly badly	Total
Coping with child BEFORE the intervention (Time One)	Very/fairly well	47	5	2	54
	Neither well nor badly	11	7	1	19
	Very/fairly badly	11	8	8	27
	Total	70	20	10	100

Base = 175 parents

These results were borne out at the local level too, with several evaluations reporting that though many families were still experiencing high levels of problems, parents' sense of being able to cope with the problems they faced had been enhanced. In a sense, this may be one of the most important achievements of the Programme at the parent level: to help bolster resilience to problematic situations. As one local report commented, even though the project in question had in many ways not achieved its objectives:

*“(As a result of participating in the project)...several parents were able to feel less personally devastated by their children’s behaviour through being able to see some of it context...that other children could also be a problem.”*

Table 3.6 below summarises the main changes across all the key dimensions of parenting that we explored, for the impact sub-sample as a whole.

Table 3.6 Statistically significant and non significant improvements in key dimensions of parenting during the Parenting Programme interventions		
Key dimension of parenting	Significant improvement	
	Yes	No
<b>Communication</b>		
Talking together (frequency)		x
Child listens to parent	✓	
Child understands how parent feels		x
Talking ending in fights	✓	
Overall 'constructive communication score'	✓	
<b>Supervision</b>		
Knowing where child is	✓	
Knowing what child is doing	✓	
Knowing who child is with	✓	
Knowing what time expected home	✓	
Overall 'supervision and monitoring score'	✓	
<b>Conflict</b>		
Overall frequency of arguments	✓	
Discussing issues calmly with the child		x
Shouting at child	✓	
Swearing at child	✓	
Sulking or refuse to talk to child	✓	
Stomping off in a huff	✓	
Threatening to hit or throw something at the child	✓	
Hitting or throwing something at the child	✓	
<b>Warmth and hostility</b>		
Praising the child or say that has done something well	✓	
Telling the child that is loved/cared for		x
Losing temper with the child	✓	
Criticising the child or say they are bad	✓	
<b>Confidence in parenting</b>		
Understanding why the child behaves the way they do	✓	
Understanding how the child is feeling	✓	
Taking parents' views into consideration	✓	
Getting the child to comply with requests	✓	
Setting 'ground rules' for child		x
Solving problems without losing temper	✓	
Feeling more respected by child	✓	
<b>Coping with parenting</b>		
Pushed by the child to breaking point	✓	
Trust the child would behave responsibly	✓	
Know where to turn for help with parenting issues	✓	
Coping with child in general	✓	

### ***Did impact vary by referral route?***

A key question for the Programme as a whole was whether the referral route by which parents reached the interventions (i.e. Court Ordered or voluntarily) made a measurable difference to the impact on parents in terms of improvement in skills and competencies.

Though a few local evaluations reported a tendency for voluntarily referred parents to benefit more from the intervention than Court Ordered parents, overall, our conclusions at the national level were that referral route did not make a difference to the level of impact that parents reported. The impact sub-sample of parents who provided both Time One and Time Two becomes rather small when split by referral route, limiting the power of statistical analysis for some variables. However, we were able to test some key results, such as whether there was an improvement in overall 'constructive communication' or overall 'supervision and monitoring' scores, and in a selection of other key variables. Close examination showed that the patterns of change were very similar for both groups: the route of referral did not appear to make a difference to the extent to which parents reported changes during the period of involvement with the Parenting Programme. Perhaps tellingly, one local evaluation report noted after interviewing various staff and participants about their attitudes to the service:

*“Both the project and the voluntary attenders thought the perceptions and outcomes of the project would have been less positive if they had been compelled to attend through a Parenting Order. However, the three parents on Parenting Orders did not share this view.”*

## **Parents attitudes towards the parenting interventions; expectations and satisfaction**

### ***Initial expectations and satisfaction levels***

In addition to exploring the measurable impact of the Parenting Programme interventions in respect of specific parenting competencies and skills, a key aspect of impact was the overall attitudes held by participating parents to the Programme and the service it offered. To what extent did parents expect the service to be helpful at the outset, and how satisfied were they with the service they received?

As we noted in Part One, there was - and is - continuing controversy surrounding the incursion by the youth justice system into the field of parenting support services, previously the preserve of social care and health agencies and voluntary organisations. This, and the fact that some parents were compelled to attend the services rather than attending of their own free will might lead us to expect hostility to the Programme from some quarters, with parenting interventions within the youth justice system potentially regarded as stigmatising, and hence to be avoided. To explore this, at the beginning of the contact with an intervention, parents were asked their initial expectations of the service. Overall, expectations of those who answered this question at Time One (n = 506) were in fact reasonably positive: three quarters of parents expected the service to be *very* or *fairly helpful* (47% and 29% respectively). Only a small proportion were frankly negative (2%; 12 cases), but one in six (16%) were *unsure* of what to expect. Route of referral (voluntary or Court Ordered) did make some difference to both initial expectations, however. Voluntary referred parents were significantly more likely to expect the intervention to be helpful at the outset (94% compared with 78% of parents on Orders)<sup>32</sup>. The minority of 'hostile' parents certainly made their presence forcefully felt at the project level, and a number of evaluators commented on the anger and stigmatisation felt by some parents at being sent to the Parenting Programme on a mandatory basis. Qualitative data provided graphic indications of this, particularly when penalties for young people themselves were felt to be light. As one parent said:

*“(When I got a Parenting Order), I felt I got punishment and [son] walked away laughing.”*

‘Exit’ ratings of helpfulness at Time Two were however more positive. Overall, of parents who provided these data (n = 250), the vast majority (65%) reported that they had found the project *very helpful*. A further 28% said they had found the project *fairly helpful*. Only 6% reported neutral or negative appraisals. Comparing change in views across the two time periods, a significant proportion of parents had become more positive by Time Two.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, well over nine in ten participants (92%) who completed a Time Two questionnaire said they *‘would recommend the programme to other parents in my situation’*. The exit ratings were somewhat less positive for parents on Court Orders, because these parents were significantly less likely to say the intervention had been helpful on completion than those referred voluntarily (90% compared with 96%)<sup>34</sup>; nevertheless, irrespective of referral route these parent assessments are resoundingly positive. Moreover, local evaluation reports were replete with positive comments by parents about their overall sense of how helpful the Parenting Programme had been. Many parents who had expressed initial reservations and even outright hostility were, by the end, saying wholly positive things about the intervention. Some parents described the project as having acted like a ‘lifeline’ at a time of crisis, and almost all reported having found immense relief from discovering they were ‘not the only one’ having problems with children. Typical comments included:

*“When I first went I wasn’t that keen, but after the first couple of groups I started to enjoy it.”*

*“I saw some people like me and felt a bit more relaxed. I (had) thought I was on my own!”*

*“I will miss coming to the groups.... it was something to look forward to.”*

*“I would have liked to attended more sessions than I did.”*

*“This project should be known to all parents – it’s been a tremendous help.”*

And most tellingly:

*“Had I not found this programme, I don’t know what I’d have done.”*

*“These sessions should be made essential for anyone in similar circumstances.... I may have had a breakdown without them.”*

To obtain an alternative view on user satisfaction with the Parenting Programme, we also asked **staff** to provide Time One and Time Two assessments of parents’ attitudes towards participation in the project. Specifically, parenting workers were asked to judge the parent’s attitude towards the intervention at the point of entry, and subsequently, to judge whether and to what extent the parent was satisfied with the intervention at the time of exit. Staff were consistently somewhat more reserved in their judgements than parents themselves. According to project staff, only just over half of the parents held positive attitudes at the beginning of the project, one fifth were neutral and just over a

quarter were '*not happy*' about attending the project. However, by the end of the intervention, staff felt that the vast majority of parents were satisfied with the service they had received, in contrast to only 6% of parents (29 cases), who were thought to have left the intervention feeling dissatisfied<sup>35</sup>. What is interesting here is that although staff reported a relatively muted level of initial positivity towards the interventions, they reported a high number of parents who arrived holding a very negative attitude towards the project it and left holding a very positive one. This high perceived 'conversion rate' pays tribute to the success of projects in offering services to recipients who were not necessarily well-disposed towards the help on offer in the first place.

Table 3.7 below reports the result for the pool of 459 parents for whom staff provided data. The shaded areas of the table indicate the key 'conversion' figures.

Table 3.7 Staff assessment of parents' attitude to attending the intervention before and after the Parenting Programme (retrospective report)					
		Parent's satisfaction level AFTER the intervention			
		Percentage			
		Very/fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very/fairly dissatisfied	Total
Parent's attitude to being on the programme BEFORE the intervention	Very/fairly happy about it	45	4	1	51
	Neither happy nor unhappy	12	6	2	20
	Very/fairly unhappy about it	21	5	4	29
	Total	79	15	6	100

Base = 459 staff reports

We also analysed the staff reports of attitude change by the referral route by which parents reached the intervention. Staff perceived a much more dramatic difference between the starting attitudes of parents in relation to their referral route than the self-reports of parents themselves indicated. Staff reports assessed that 69% of parents who were voluntarily referred (209 cases) held a *very* or *fairly* positive attitude towards the idea, but that only 14% (22 cases) of parents on Parenting Orders felt like this. Staff appeared to believe that 'compulsory' referral to a parenting intervention encountered a strong degree of resistance from parents, even though parents' own views were on the whole less negative. On the other hand, the picture painted by staff of parents' views **after** the intervention appears to undergo a significant shift. Though still absolutely more conservative than parents' own assessments, it converges more with the pattern that parents themselves reported. The wide gap dividing Court Ordered and voluntary referred parents seems to have narrowed substantially. The number of parents leaving the programme *very* or *fairly happy*, is according to the staff assessment, of 244 cases (81%) for



voluntary referrals and 112 (74%) for Court Ordered referrals. 72% of all parents holding a negative initial attitude are reported to have changed views and to have left the intervention *very* or *fairly happy*.

Tables 3.8 and 3.9 provide details of this breakdown.

Table 3.8 Court referrals by Parenting Order - staff assessment of parents' attitudes before and after the Parenting Programme (retrospective report)					
		Parent's satisfaction level AFTER the intervention			
		Percentage			
		Very/fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very/fairly dissatisfied	Total
Parent's attitude to being in the programme BEFORE the intervention	Very/fairly happy about it	13	1	1	14
	Neither Happy nor unhappy	14	5	2	21
	Very/fairly unhappy about it	46	12	6	65
	Total	74	18	8	100

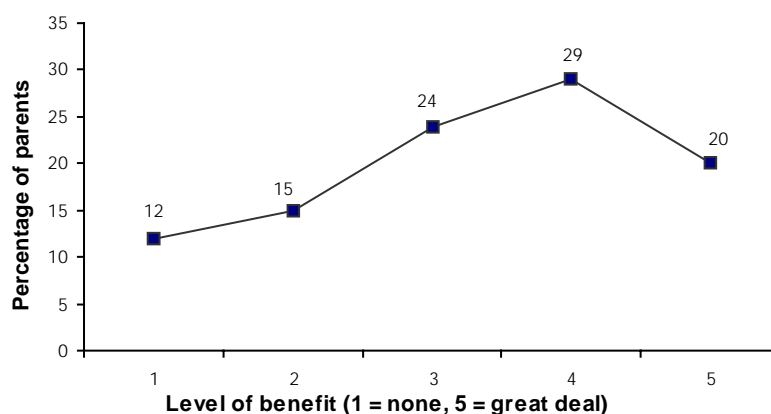
Base = 152 staff reports

Table 3.9 Voluntary referrals - staff assessment of parents' 'before' and 'after' attitude towards the programme (retrospective report)					
		Parent's satisfaction level AFTER the intervention			
		Percentage			
		Very/fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very/fairly dissatisfied	Total
Parent's attitude to being in the programme BEFORE the intervention	Very/fairly happy about it	62	6	2	69
	Neither Happy nor unhappy	11	6	1	19
	Very/fairly unhappy about it	8	2	2	12
	Total	81	14	5	100

Base = 301 staff reports

Lastly, we also asked staff to provide an independent, ‘broad brush’ assessment of the extent to which they thought individual parents had benefited from using the project. At the end of the intervention, we asked staff to score the benefit to each parent on a scale of one to five, from ‘no benefit at all’ to *benefited a great deal*. In around one fifth of cases, staff thought parents had derived a great deal of benefit from the project, and in only around one in eight cases was the assessment of no benefit at all, see figure 3.10

Figure 3.10 **Staff assessment of overall benefit derived by parents from participation in the Parenting Programme**



Base = 478 staff reports

### ***Reasons for satisfaction***

What were the factors underlying these high levels of satisfaction with the Programme? The data presented in table 3.8 below suggests that a crucial element that may have contributed to parents’ satisfaction related to the high quality of the staff who provided the service. Almost all parents reported that they felt *staff listened to what they had to say*, that *staff understood their feelings*, and that *staff knew what they were doing*. Qualitative data from local evaluation reports substantiates this. For example one mother had written to a project worker after leaving the intervention, saying:

*“You have been of great benefit to us...(I have made) the discovery that there are people out there who really care.”*

And another mother said this about the project worker:

*“She was just like a mum – I could talk to her about anything.”*

And one evaluator commented that though at first parents often felt they were being punished by attending the project, *“the supportive reality of the project soon dispelled that”*.

In addition to appreciating staff's contribution, parents reported finding the programmes *interesting* in general, and generally at ease with both the *time* and *location* of the interventions. Time and location issues are of particular importance because they may constitute practical barriers to participation and engagement with interventions. As we highlight in Part Four (Implications for practice and policy), in projects where these criteria were not met this formed an important reason why the projects had not met their objectives.

Table 3.11 Parents' assessment of parenting interventions: satisfaction with staff quality and practical aspects			
	Percentage		
	Very/fairly true	Neither true nor untrue	Very/fairly untrue
The staff listened to what I had to say (n=249)	99	0	1
The staff knew what they were doing (n=247)	98	1	1
Programme was interesting (n=240)	95	3	2
The staff understood how I was feeling (n=249)	93	5	2
Sessions took place at a convenient time of the day (n=240)	88	7	5
Sessions took place at a convenient location (n=240)	87	7	6

Base: varies from 240 to 249 according to number of parents answering each question

## Impact on parents: conclusions

Despite the controversial nature of the Parenting Programme, most parents reported reasonably positive attitudes to the projects at the start of the intervention, though as expected Court Ordered parents tended to be less positive at the outset than those who were referred voluntarily. Staff judged parents to be less optimistic overall however, and perceived far more resistance by Court Ordered parents than parents' own reports lead us to expect. Though parents providing information for the evaluation may, perhaps, have been a disproportionately positive group, an equally valid explanation for this disparity may be that staff were more anxious about the feelings of Court Ordered parents than was warranted. Certainly, though some parents were very vocal about their anger at being 'sent' to parenting support services, it may also be that in the end the high level of need of these parents and their desperation for help overcame these reservations. The average attendance rate of three quarters of all session, which was the same for both voluntarily and Court Ordered referrals, seems to support this.

By the end of the intervention, however, all sources converge in suggesting high levels of satisfaction and benefit, and though overall, voluntary referrals were somewhat more positive about interventions at the end than Court Ordered parents, even parents who had been compelled to attend the services were generous in their praise and appreciation. By parents' own reports, the services had certainly met a need, and staff on the whole agreed that they had made a difference, even if they were unsure of the long-term impact of their work. Certainly, the opportunity to meet and share experiences with others in similar situations was, quite simply, a revelation for some parents, and rapidly became a source of enjoyment as well as support.

Furthermore, based on self-report by parents, the evaluation found substantial and consistent evidence of change in parents' skills and competencies across a range of dimensions during the period of contact with an intervention within the Programme. Communication between parents and children, supervision and monitoring by parents, warmth towards the child, and general confidence in and sense of coping with parenting all increased. The frequency of conflict decreased, as did in frequency of responding to conflict in harsh or unconstructive ways. Parents also reported feeling less hostility towards their child. Of course, we have no independent verification (for example, by external observers) of these improvements, and no way of knowing whether they were sustained in the medium to longer term after parents left the projects. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the short term at least, participation in the Programme was associated with positive improvements in parenting skills and parent-child relations. Moreover, there appeared to be no major difference in the impact of the Programme according to route of referral, with Court Ordered parents benefiting just as much as voluntary participants.

Parents attending parenting interventions reported substantial needs for support and help across a wide range of areas, and most were simply extremely grateful for any help that was offered. Nevertheless, for a variety of reasons this is not an 'easy' client group to reach or to engage. The skills and high quality of the staff at projects appear have been fundamental in explaining parents' satisfaction with and benefit from the Programme, and these no doubt played a significant part in dissolving the initial reservations of parents on Parenting Orders.

## **Impact on young people**

So far, we have concentrated our efforts in trying to understand the effect of the Parenting Programme on parents. Now we move on and try to address the following and more difficult question: Did parents' participation in the Programme have any measurable impact on the young people? As for parents, we draw on both quantitative and qualitative data to address this question. The question is more difficult because most evaluators – and indeed most projects – did not have any direct access to the children of the parents who took part in the Programme. A small amount of qualitative data was provided by local evaluators in their written reports, and to measure impact quantitatively along a Time One - Time Two trajectory, evaluators were reliant on asking parents to take questionnaires home for young people to complete and then return. This is far from an ideal research design and not surprisingly, questionnaire returns from young people were low (see Part One) and subject to substantial amounts of missing data. We did however, have more data to go on by means of the reconviction study, which gives us access to official reconviction and reoffending rates by a sub-sample of young people. The results of the analysis of these various data sets are given below.

### **The impact sub sample: social and demographic characteristics of young people**

Our 'impact sub-sample' of young people was made up of 77% males and 23% females (534 total cases), not significantly different from the baseline sample data. Age ranges were as follows (496 cases in total): 10% of young people were aged eleven or younger,

50% were aged between twelve and fourteen years, 36% were aged fifteen to sixteen, and 4% were aged seventeen or more. As reported earlier, parent reports suggested that these young people had uncommonly high levels of psychosocial difficulties. Moreover, the large majority of them were known to the youth justice system and whilst the parents were taking part in a parenting intervention, the young people themselves were court ordered to a variety of interventions aimed directly at young people, known as 'change programmes'. The simultaneous occurrence of interventions at the parent and at the child level not only tells us about the high level of need in the client group as a whole, but also highlights the conceptual and methodological difficulties in trying to unravel the impact of these multiple interventions on those who take part in them.

### Impact on parent-child relationships

Did young people report any changes in parenting and in parent-child relationships between Time One when parents began the intervention and Time Two when they left? Following a methodological strategy similar to that employed with parents, young people were asked to answer selected questions about their relationship with their parent in four key dimensions: communication, supervision, conflict, and warmth/hostility. Due to the small number of cases available (n = 78 matched pairs) we did not obtain many results that were statistically significant, so we are not in a position to rule out the possibility that these findings may have happened by chance; however, analysis showed that there was some mild evidence of positive change in all four parenting dimensions. Young people reported slightly better **communication** and **mutual understanding** in some respects with their parents. For example, at Time One, one third of young people (33%) reported that their parent *did not understand their feelings*. By Time Two only one in five young people felt that way (23%). There were also positive changes in elements of **supervision and monitoring**. Whereas at the start of the Parenting Programme only two thirds (67%) of young people thought *their parents knew what they were doing* when they were absent from home, by the end of the intervention, the proportion stood at three quarters of the sample (75%)<sup>36</sup>. **Conflict** was perceived to have decreased in some respects, with changes in young people's behaviour reflecting two-way improvements that matched some of the positive changes reported by parents in relation to their own conflict tactics. Young people reported less *shouting at their parents*, for example (63% had shouted or yelled at a parent in the past week at Time One, compared to 55% at Time Two), and a reduction in *physical conflict*<sup>37</sup>. They also reported slight improvement in parents' **warmth** and praise as well as a reduction in **hostility** and criticism, so that for example at Time One, 39% of young people said their parent *often lost their temper*, but at Time Two, this proportion had almost halved to 23%.

Local evaluation reports presented a similar "*slightly encouraging*" picture. As we noted earlier, some suggested that improvements in relationship between parents and young people were showing indications of change at the level of the child as well as at the level of the parent, with parents reporting things like:

*"He's a different child – he's calmed down a hell of a lot."*

*"My child's attitude problem seems to have (improved)."*

However, it must be said that most evaluators did not unearth much supporting evidence and were of the view that since projects did not generally work directly with young people themselves, there was probably little scope for change at the level of the child – and certainly not change that would be visible in the immediate term – other than the indirect benefit that might accrue from improvements at the parent level.

## **Changes in young people's behaviour: self report, and official reconviction data**

### ***Self-reported offending***

In addition to asking young people to report on their relationship with their parents, we asked them to complete a standardised self-report offending questionnaire (Graham and Bowling, 1995), in which young people were asked to report on any offences they may have committed, even if they weren't caught. Due to the low numbers of cases available for analysis, we restricted our analysis to looking at the overall number of offences reported by the young people in the four weeks previous to their parent's first contact with the Parenting Programme, compared with those reported in the four weeks just prior to their parents leaving the Programme. Young people reported an average of 4.04 offences each at Time One, and a virtually identical average of 4.12 offences each at Time Two (315 and 322 offences respectively reported by a sub-sample of 78 cases). In this respect, then, no change in young people's behaviour is discernible.

### ***Official statistics on young people's reconviction***

One important way of telling whether criminal justice interventions are working has always been to check and see whether the offender's name turns up again in the official police statistics after he or she has completed the intervention. In the UK, one main source of this type of information is the Police National Computer (PNC). The PNC is a live operational database developed for the police, and contains information on all court-based convictions recorded against a person's name. Data are obtained after liaising with New Scotland Yard and the Policy Information Technology Organisation in Hendon.

There is a large and rather specialised literature within criminology that is based on these types of analyses, and as a result reconviction studies can be quite methodologically and statistically complex. What we present here is along the lines of a 'pilot study', tracking outcomes for a relatively small sample of young people whose parents were on the Parenting Programme during a set period, to see whether the young people were reconvicted in the year after the Programme. Follow-up work with a larger sample is underway at the time of writing. Until the full data set is available, we have restricted our analyses here to some simple and straightforward summary statistics. These results should thus be regarded at this stage as preliminary and approximate. In addition, unlike other reconviction studies, while the rationale for the Parenting Programme as a whole was, in the longer term, to have an impact on young people's behaviour, this was not the primary focus of individual interventions, which was instead directed at parenting skills. It is thus a conceptual leap to seek a direct relationship between participation of parents, and antisocial behaviour of young people, particularly within a compressed timescale (typically, an intervention lasting six to eight weeks).

Before looking at the results, there are some important points to note about using official police data to evaluate whether the parenting courses impacted on the young people:

- Official crime data are useful, but are also limited in that they only reflect crimes that are processed by the criminal justice authorities. We know from other research that this only accounts for around three per cent of actual offending behaviour, as so many offences are either not detected, or not prosecuted.
- The PNC only contains court disposals (offences that are dealt with by the courts), not offences that resulted in lower tariff, pre-court disposals such as cautions, reprimands and final warnings (administered by the police). It will thus seriously underestimate the total amount of offending that results in action by the youth justice system, and tend to be skewed toward the 'higher tariff' offences.
- We have restricted the study to young people whose parents were referred to the Parenting Programme through the YOT. This excludes young people whose parents were referred to projects in the Parenting Programme via other routes bypassing the YOT. The reasons for this were practical, but the result is that the group of young people we were tracking are those who are 'worse' offenders (ie more serious, or more persistent) than those who came into contact with the projects through non-criminal routes. Their rates of offending and subsequent reconviction are likely to be more serious than for many young people whose parents are referred to Parenting Programme projects.
- Because this was not a controlled experiment, there was no comparison group available for us to compare with the young people whose parents had been on the Parenting Programme. We are thus restricted in the extent to which we can attribute changes in officially recorded convictions to the parenting projects *per se*. In order to be definite that any positive benefits were actually the result of family involvement in the Parenting Programme, we would have needed a separate sample of young offenders who were similar in all respects, except that their families did not attend the Programme.

For all these reasons, the results presented in this section have to be interpreted with some caution.

### *Sample and methods*

The reconviction study focused on reconvictions acquired during a one year follow-up for a sample of young people whose parents were referred to the Parenting Programme during a key observation period (1<sup>st</sup> July 2000 – 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2000). The period was chosen by the Youth Justice Board, so that it could be standardised across the whole series of national evaluations of various intervention programmes due to report to the YJB at the same time in Spring 2002. There needed to be a time-lag between the end of the qualifying period and the point at which we analysed the data, as it can take some time for offences to get into the official system. We allowed two months, but it may not have been long enough.

A total of thirty two Yots had parenting projects that qualified for the observation period of 1 July 2000 to 30 September 2000. All agreed to take part in the research but in fact only twenty six were included (see Appendix 3 for further details on sampling and methods). Within these Yots, identifying and background data and some limited information on

engagement with the parenting programme were collected from the files of 383 parents/carers and their children. Names, dates of birth, sex and PNC numbers of the 383 young people were then sent to the Home Office for searching for reconvictions on the national police database. The data returned by the Home Office were checked for consistency, and a total of **296 cases** (77%) were deemed reliable enough for inclusion in the study.

The group were, on average, 14.2 years old at the start of the intervention period (July 2000), ranging from 10 to 17 with the largest proportion rated as 15 years old. They were largely male (78%) and white (90%). Two thirds of their parents were voluntary YOT referrals to the Parenting Programme, just under a third were referred via 'criminal' Parenting Orders and the remaining cases (4%) were referred via 'educational' Parenting Orders. This group of 296 young people, all of whose parents were receiving a parenting service of some kind, were also the focus of considerable other criminal justice system activity. Over two thirds (70%) were on one or more YOT 'change programmes' (other interventions) at the same time as their parents were referred to the Parenting Programme. As already noted, it is particularly important to bear this in mind when interpreting the reconviction data. We cannot, thus, attribute any changes directly to the Parenting Programme alone. For each young person, the PNC data were summarised into a series of variables that reflected reconvictions both before (previous year) and after (following year) their parents took part in the Parenting Programme. This enabled us to make some within-sample 'before-and-after' comparisons, as well making comparisons between this group and other similar groups.

#### *Simple summary statistics on reconviction*

Generally, past studies have reported one year reconviction rates of between approximately 20% (for first time offenders) to approximately 80% (for persistent young offenders). Recent unpublished Home Office analyses that have been shared for the purpose of this study suggested one year reconviction rates of 25% for offenders receiving cautions, 61% for those receiving supervision orders, and 79% for offenders with two or more previous imprisonments, for a sample of over 11,000 young offenders in 1999 (Jennings and Howard 2002).

Looking simply at the numbers of young people with reconvictions within the follow-up period, overall, we found that **61.5%** of this sample of 296 young people whose parents were referred to parenting projects were **reconvicted** at least once within the follow-up period from 1 October 2000 to 30 September 2001. In absolute terms this seems fairly high, but in fact even more had been convicted the year before referral to the parenting programme (89%). The reduction represents a statistically significant change.<sup>38</sup> While the caveats on use of these types of data without a comparison group have to be emphasised, this is a hopeful finding and one that begs further research. Of course it is possible that young offenders would have begun to cease offending of their own accord around this time irrespective of any other factors (since the peak age for offending by young men is at fifteen years), but at least *absolute* levels of conviction went down, rather than up.

These analyses give us a 'ball-park' figure for reconviction. However, analysts of reconviction data are often concerned with what are termed 'pseudo-convictions', that is, convictions recorded within one period but actually related to offences committed earlier



(e.g., before the intervention happened). For this reason, we re-ran the analyses using the date when the offence was committed, rather than the date of conviction for that offence, and the results are presented in the next section. If the offence was committed during the follow-up period, then we counted it even if the subsequent conviction for that offence fell outside the period. Similarly, if the conviction fell within the period but the offence did not, we excluded it. This enabled us to be more confident that we were looking indeed at behaviour taking place *after* the Parenting Programme. For ease of reference we have called this new measure 'reoffending' for the purposes of description in the remainder of this chapter, but readers should note that this is a rather different use of the term from that normal in the criminological literature. Strictly speaking it means '*reoffending within the follow-up period that resulted in reconviction at some point*'.

### ***Reoffending within the follow-up period***

Overall, **56%** of the sample were reported to have offences that resulted in reconviction and that were *definitely committed* on dates during the one year follow-up period. Again, this reflects a considerable improvement against the rate of the group during the preceding year, which stood at 95%. Looking at this a different way, the average number of offences committed in the preceding year, was 4.4 per offender. By the follow-up period it had reduced to **2.1 per offender**, a significant reduction.<sup>39</sup> The reduction is even more noteworthy given that the level of offending in the preceding year was very high, even for young offenders within the criminal justice system. This was a challenging group of really quite prolific young offenders.

As table 3.12 shows, reoffending varied along the lines expected for sex, and by extent and type of previous offending history. Males were more likely reoffend, and the more serious and extensive the previous history, the higher the probability of reoffending.

Reoffending rates for young people convicted of burglary and violence were higher than for those whose 'trigger' offence (the offence that resulted in their parent's referral to the Parenting Programme) was criminal damage or fraud (although there are some anomalies in this list – reoffending for robbery would be generally expected to be higher based on previous research, but the absolute numbers were very low). We would offer a word of caution about over-interpretation of the data concerning the relationship of reoffending to the type of offence that triggered the parent's referral. As we showed in Part Two, the process of referring a parent to a parenting intervention is more often than not the result of a combination of factors, of which the type of offence committed by the young person is one among many others, including the level of need of the parent. While looking at the kind of offence within a certain period or as the trigger for a referral may be of interest in another context, this indicator, and several others on this list, should be 'handled with care' in the context of the Parenting Programme. No particular patterns emerged for ethnicity, or for age.

**Table 3.12 Relationship between background and criminological variables and reoffending<sup>1</sup> within the 12 month follow-up period for young people whose parents attended the Parenting Programme**

	Percentage reoffending during follow-up period (as recorded in official data)
<b>Age at start of cohort period<sup>2</sup></b>	
<14 (n=76)	51
14 (n=75)	57
15 (n=93)	55
16+ (n=49)	53
<b>Sex*</b>	
Male (n=230)	62
Female (n=66)	33
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White (n=265)	56
Other (n=31)	52
<b>Offended in preceding year*</b>	
No (n = 15)	13
Yes (n=281)	58
<b>Type of offence triggering referral<sup>3</sup> *</b>	
Drugs (n=7)	86
Burglary (n=19)	68
Violence (n=50)	66
Criminal damage (n=11)	64
Theft (n=67)	58
Fraud (n=3)	33
Robbery (n = 7)	29
Other (n = 58)	63
Offence unclear (n = 74)	38
<b>Number of convictions before referral*</b>	
None (n = 19)	21
One (n = 33)	30
Two-three (n = 67)	57
Four-nine (n = 110)	58
Ten or more (n = 67)	73
<b>Disposal triggering referral*</b>	
No disposal (n = 50)	32
Final warning (n = 27)	56
Action Plan Order (n = 77)	52
Reparation Order (n = 38)	61
Supervision Order (n=76)	72
DTO (n = 16)	81
Other (n=12)	25
<b>All*</b>	<b>56</b>

Base = 296 \* = Chi-square significant at the p<.05 level or lower

<sup>1</sup> Strictly 'reoffending within the follow-up period that resulted in reconviction at some point'

<sup>2</sup> Age unclear in three cases

<sup>3</sup> Note, there some very small numbers in some of these categories. We have kept them separate but there is an argument to treat those based on an 'n' of less than 50 as very unreliable.

### *Exploring the impact of involvement in the Parenting Programme*

Table 3.12 told us that, with the exception of age and ethnicity, the same sorts of variables that predict offending in other samples seem to be related to offending in this group too. However, it tells us nothing about the role of the relationship between the family and the Parenting Programme. In table 3.13, the rates of reoffending (resulting in reconviction) within the follow-up period are presented in relation to a set of variables concerning referral routes and engagement with the Programme and other change programmes.

Table 3.13 illustrates that rates of reoffending were very similar for young people whose parents were referred voluntarily, compared with those who were referred through a Parenting Order. The lack of distinction here may reveal something about the kind of parents who are reaching the Programme (i.e. they are parents in need, regardless of how the need comes to be recognised), or it may reveal a lack of criminal justice system consistency about who was referred through which route. There were too few young people (in this sample of YOT cases) for the statistic for those on educational Parenting Orders to be reliable. Reoffending is also clearly related to the number of other change programmes that the young person is on (concurrently with their parents' attendance on the parenting programme), so that those on four or more other change programmes have the highest probability of reoffending. Presumably the more troublesome the children are, the more services they are receiving through the youth justice system.

With respect to levels of engagement by the parents, again our initial interpretation of this table, in the broader context of results presented elsewhere in this report, is that this is a reflection of high levels of need for help among parents who are most engaged. Those with the most difficult to manage children may be more likely to attend regularly. It seems most unlikely that high levels of engagement are causally related to reoffending, or that erratic engagement leads to lower reoffending. However, it is interesting to note the exact mirroring in the results of their children, as shown in the table, where erratic engagement in their own change programmes (cognitive behaviour, mentoring, restorative justice etc) leads to *higher* criminal record activity. Here we may hypothesise that there are several different causal factors underlying the results leading to what seems like a rather heterogeneous picture. In addition, the different pattern for the parents and their children emphasises our point about the rather distinct nature of an intervention, which was not actually targeted at the young people themselves. Further, more detailed, research would be necessary to untangle these results with any confidence.

Table 3.13 Relationship between selected variables criminological variables and reoffending <sup>4</sup> within the 12 month follow-up period for young people whose parents attended a Parenting Programme	
	Per cent reoffending during follow-up
<b>Referral route via which parents reach a parenting intervention</b>	
Voluntary via YOT (n=191)	56
Criminal Parenting Order (n=92)	58
Educational Parenting Order (n=13)	31
<b>Level of parent's engagement with programme</b>	
Full engagement (n=166)	58
Erratic engagement (n=66)	47
Poor or none (n=64)	59
<b>Number of change programmes being attended by the young person*</b>	
No change programmes (n=88)	43
1-2 change programmes (n=127)	60
3 or more (n=81)	63
<b>Young person's engagement with own change programme*</b>	
Full engagement (n=132)	51
Erratic engagement (n=73)	78
Poor or no engagement (n=47)	47
No change programme (n=44)	43
<b>All</b>	<b>56</b>

Base = 296 \* = Chi-square significant at the p<.05 level or lower

### *The reconviction study: summary remarks*

These initial and preliminary results are very positive. Although absolute levels of officially recorded reconvictions were quite high in the year following family involvement in the Parenting Programme (an unadjusted estimate of 61.5%), these rates represented quite a drop from their offending levels prior to involvement of the family in the parenting programme. However, it would be dangerous to attribute these effects to the family's participation in the Parenting Programme per se. At least some of the young people were just passing the peak age of offending; there were several interventions going on with these young people in addition to the intervention involving their parents; there was no comparison group with which to compare these rates. Thus, it is hard to be confident that the Parenting Programme itself is giving added value over and above the other substantial activity of the youth justice system over this period. Variables in our analysis that were specific to the Parenting Programme only seemed to show us that those most engaged with the programme were most likely to have young people who reoffended. In this regard, we suggest that though the results are broadly encouraging, they tell us as much, if

<sup>4</sup> Strictly 'reoffending within the follow-up period that resulted in reconviction at some point'

not more, about need within the client group as they do about the impact of the Programme.

### **Impact on young people: conclusions**

Though there is evidence that leads us to be confident that the Parenting Programme had a positive impact on parents, there is much less evidence to suggest that this has filtered down to young people. We found only mild and mostly statistically non-significant evidence of change in the parent-child relationship for young people, and very little sign (by self-report) that young people's own behaviours or attitudes had changed. Local evaluators' reports tend to confirm this equivocal national picture. Some reported (weak) indications that there had been positive spin-offs for young people resulting from parents' increasing competence at dealing with difficult situations and their own feelings of stress, but few were willing to conclude that antisocial behaviour or offending by young people had improved during the life of the Programme. Several suspected that the imposition of a Parenting Order had 'pulled young people up short', with youngsters for the first time realising that their offending could have bad consequences for their families (one mother reportedly said, for example, that going to the parenting group had made her son "*realise for the first time what he was putting me through*"), but there was no hard evidence to confirm a real impact on child behaviour.

As we have repeatedly stressed, it is a conceptual leap to expect that an intervention almost entirely targeted at parents would lead to measurable change in adolescent behaviours, particularly in the short term. The interventions were mostly fairly short in duration, and, most importantly, taking place at a comparatively late stage in the family life cycle. Problems were already extremely entrenched for both parents and children, and it would be unrealistic to expect the Parenting Programme to provide a 'quick fix' at any level. This is not, however, tantamount to evidence that the Parenting Programme was ineffective in having an impact on young people. The preliminary results from the official reconviction study, for example, do show a decrease in reconviction rates for young people whose parents were on the Programme, even though we cannot be entirely sure what this is attributable to. Moreover, though our other data do not show many clear improvements for young people, neither do they show a worsening of the situation. Given the poor prognosis in terms of outcomes for 'at risk' youngsters that is shown by most of the existing research in this field, and given the persistent and prolific nature of much of the offending carried out by young people in the sample, this is at least a sign that intervention may perhaps have the effect of 'applying the brakes' to an otherwise downward trajectory. Moreover, the clear positive effects at the parent level give us some cause for hope that with time, parenting interventions may be shown to have a preventive effect. Many local evaluators and indeed parents speculated that younger siblings might in the end prove to be the main recipients of benefit from the inputs into parenting made by the projects, though only time will tell us if this is so. Overall, the message seems to be that we need to be patient in searching for evidence of impact at child level.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All results that are reported as statistically significant are based on the 95% level of confidence or greater ( $p < .05$ ). All tests are two-tailed unless otherwise stated. Some tables may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>2</sup> PNC data refers to the Police National Computer official statistics on the criminal careers of offenders known to the criminal justice system.

<sup>3</sup> SDQ scores are generally higher for boys than girls, and in this sample (77% male) we might expect substantially higher than average population scores. By comparison, however, note that in a recent nationally representative survey for the Department of Health of families living in areas of high social and material disadvantage environments – an appropriate comparison group for this study – only 14% boys aged eleven or older had ‘abnormal’ SDQ scores by parent report (Ghate and Hazel in press).

<sup>4</sup> To measure **communication**, parents and young people were given a list of four statements about communication and negotiation, and asked to say to what extent the statements described their own relationship, on a 5-point scale from ‘very true’ to ‘not at all true’. The statements covered talking together, listening, mutual comprehension, and discussions that ended in conflict. By plotting the extent to which individual parents moved up or down each scale between Time One and Time Two using a statistical technique known as the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, we are able to assess the extent to which there were significant improvements (or deterioration) in these aspects of communication. We were also able to calculate an overall ‘**constructive communication**’ score by combining these four items additively within a single scale, where a higher score indicated a greater number of ‘positive’ responses overall, and a lower score more negative responses. Overall scores give us the capacity to identify mean (average) scores for the sample, and to test the significance of changes in average scores between Time One and Time Two.

<sup>5</sup> To measure **supervision and monitoring**, respondents were asked to report on the frequency with which parents knew the details of their child’s movements and activities, on a scale from ‘always’ to ‘hardly ever/never’. The four questions in this group included knowing where the child was, who they were with, what they were doing, and when they were due home when they went out independently of the parent. In the same manner as the constructive communication scale, we combined responses to these items into an additive ‘**overall supervision and monitoring**’ scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of supervision of the child.

<sup>6</sup> To measure **conflict** between parents and children, we asked parents and young people to tell us the frequency with which they had arguments, and how often in the previous week they had employed a range of responses to conflict, abstracted from the well-known *Conflict Tactics Scales* (Straus et al 1975). These ranged from calm discussion through shouting and swearing to physical punishment. We combined these into ‘miniature’ scales comprising *verbal conflict*; *conflict ‘avoidance’* (sulking, stomping off); *threatening violence*; and *actual violence*.

<sup>7</sup> To measure **warmth and hostility** in the parent-child relationship, we asked respondents to tell us generally how often they praised or told their child that they loved or cared for them (*warmth*), and how often they lost their temper or criticised their child (*hostility*).

<sup>8</sup> To measure **confidence in parenting skills and coping with parenting**, we asked parents to self report on their sense of *understanding and empathy* with the child (knowing how the child is feeling; understanding the child’s behaviour); sense of efficacy in *influencing the child’s behaviour* (solving problems without conflict; setting and maintaining boundaries and ground rules at home; feeling respected by the child); and *coping with parenting* (trusting the child to behave responsibly; feeling stressed by child; knowing where to find help with problems and sense of coping in a global sense).

<sup>9</sup> Differences of means have been tested using the paired T-Test. Mean  $T_1 = 12.2389$  (SD = 4.18); Mean  $T_2 = 13.6222$  (SD = 3.96);  $t = -4.396$ ;  $df = 179$ ;  $p < .001$ .

<sup>10</sup> Mean  $T_1 = 12.8785$  (SD = 4.72); Mean  $T_2 = 13.8232$  (SD = 4.50);  $t = -3.118$ ;  $df = 180$ ;  $p = .002$ .

<sup>11</sup>  $N = 168$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -0.605$ ,  $p = .545$ .

<sup>12</sup> Shouting:  $N = 172$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -5.271$ ,  $p < .001$ . Swearing:  $N = 159$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -3.997$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>13</sup>  $N = 153$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -2.659$ ,  $p = .008$ .

<sup>14</sup>  $N = 157$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -3.404$ ,  $p = .001$ .

<sup>15</sup>  $N = 126$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -2.528$ ,  $p = .011$ .

<sup>16</sup>  $N = 130$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -2.042$ ,  $p = .041$ .

<sup>17</sup>  $N = 183$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -0.252$ ,  $p = .801$ .

<sup>18</sup>  $N = 180$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -3.842$ ,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>19</sup>  $N = 180$ , Wilcoxon,  $z = -6.064$ ,  $p < .001$ .

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- <sup>20</sup> N = 177, Wilcoxon, z = -3.562, p < .001.  
<sup>21</sup> N = 168, Wilcoxon, z = -2.744, p = .006.  
<sup>22</sup> N = 159, Wilcoxon, z = -3.088, p = .002.  
<sup>23</sup> N = 163, Wilcoxon, z = -3.105, p = .002.  
<sup>24</sup> N = 172, Wilcoxon, z = -4.146, p < .001.  
<sup>25</sup> N = 175, Wilcoxon, z = -4.358, p < .001.  
<sup>26</sup> N = 174, Wilcoxon, z = -3.844, p < .001  
<sup>27</sup> N = 179, Wilcoxon, z = -1.680, p = .095.  
<sup>28</sup> N = 177, Wilcoxon, z = -5.495, p < .001.  
<sup>29</sup> N = 174; Wilcoxon, z = -2.370; p = .018  
<sup>30</sup> N = 153, Wilcoxon, z = -5.696, p < .001.  
<sup>31</sup>  $\chi^2 = 46.115$ , df = 4, p<0.001 [2 cells expected values <5]  
<sup>32</sup>  $\chi^2 = 19.910$ ; df = 2, p<.0001  
<sup>33</sup> N = 191; Wilcoxon, z = -5.421; p<.0001  
<sup>34</sup>  $\chi^2 = 7.681$  df = 2, p<.05  
<sup>35</sup>  $\chi^2 = 39.929$ , df = 4, p<0.001  
<sup>36</sup> N = 67, Wilcoxon, z = -2.539, p = .011.  
<sup>37</sup> N = 60, Wilcoxon, z = -2.537, p = .011  
<sup>38</sup>  $\chi^2=16.9$ , df 1, p<.001.  
<sup>39</sup> t=6, df 1,295, p<.001.

## Part Four Implications for practice and policy

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In this section we discuss the implications for policy and practice that have emerged from the local and national evaluations. Drawing on data presented in Parts Two and Three, as well as additional information contained in local evaluators' reports, we assess the learning both for those providing services for parents at the ground level, and those planning services at the policy level. It must be remembered that the Parenting Programme was initiated by and embedded within the youth justice system, and the primary beneficiaries were intended to be families 'caught up' in that system. Though part of the initial remit of services was to be preventive and not just treatment-focussed, the requirement to provide services to Court Ordered parents has to be seen the key driving force of the Programme. This raised novel challenges as well as opportunities for projects developing family support services within this context, and carried with it special implications for practice and policy, which we highlight below.

### Project structure and set up issues

#### Interagency working: structural and management issues

The large majority of projects in the Parenting Programme Development Fund initially began life as multi-agency partnerships. The newly created multi-agency Youth Offending Teams were to lead the partnerships and hold the funds, but the projects were to be set up and delivered by means of active collaborations between local agencies, both statutory and voluntary. Indeed, the extent to which organisations joined together across agency and sector boundaries was perhaps one the most exciting and innovative features of the Parenting Programme. In some cases, extensions to existing local partnerships were proposed; in others, new collaborations were forged. Some partnerships were highly productive, benefiting all involved: *"There has been excellent close co-operation with the local family centre, and a two-way referral process between the two..."*

However, multi-agency working often proves challenging, and in the Interim Report on the national evaluation we highlighted a number of problems that projects were experiencing at that time. By the end of the evaluation period, some, but not all, of the problems had been resolved. Of those projects that remained 'live' and were in the final evaluation sample (N = 34), three partnerships had broken down entirely, resulting in Yots taking over the management and delivery of all or a significant part of the project. In several others the multi-agency partnership was only limping along. Below we highlight some of the possible reasons for these problems, and potential future solutions.

#### ***Tensions in voluntary/statutory partnerships***

Though some cross-sector collaborations were reported to result in excellent examples of inter-agency working, others suffered from tensions that were attributed by evaluators to **differences of ethos**. The traditional clientele of the two types of agencies may be diverse



and may not blend harmoniously, and there can be tensions over practice, for which mechanisms for management must be in place (for example, tensions around confidentiality and the sharing of information between agencies). For example, one evaluator noted that the principle of inter-agency working in this area seemed a good one, in that it brought together unique combinations of expertise. However,

*“A supportive and therapeutic regime fits well with voluntary agencies’ ethos, but can be at variance with the compulsory nature of the Parenting Order.”*

In another example, where a YOT joined forces with a long-established voluntary organisation providing family support, it was reported:

*“Bringing together an established voluntary organisation and a new statutory one raised a number of policy and practice issues....This was a pre-existing project with voluntary participation a founding principle. The project has struggled to accommodate the youth justice system issues...the emphasis on the youth offending issues has blurred the (service delivery) issues. (The project) is only just coming to terms with this...There are two different views of how to support parents.”*

In some cases, voluntary organisations **lacked the experience** to work with the high-need families that became involved in the Parenting Programme. For example, some had previously worked mainly with parents of younger children, and were unprepared for the challenges that parents brought with them in dealing with troubled and troublesome adolescents. Others found that voluntary engagement with ‘youth justice system’ parents was hard to sustain, yet vigorously resisted any element of compulsion or active ‘chasing’ of non-attending parents as unethical or counterproductive – resulting in very low attendance numbers in some places, and almost certainly higher drop-out rates for the most needy and chaotic families than the more ‘amenable’ ones. In return, a number of Yots failed to see how projects could meet their needs, and did not refer cases to the projects, beginning a vicious cycle that seemed hard to break; see below.

Overall, it seemed that successful partnerships were harder to sustain where bridges between the two differing approaches could not be built. This was particularly difficult when **key individuals** with ‘power’ within the project (such as Project Co-Ordinators) held strong positions of principle that were at odds with the given context of the Parenting Programme (ie, as an integral part of the youth justice system). This was perhaps an inevitable outcome of the joining of the social care model that is typical in the voluntary family support sector and the more ‘correctional’ approach traditional to the criminal justice system, and it is perhaps a testament to the success of the Parenting Programme overall that these issues did not occur more often. However, the implications for practice here are that the outlook of key individuals may be critical to the success of a project. Powerful individuals who hold views that do not mesh easily with the structural context of an intervention may act as a barrier to the smooth course of development.

### ***Tensions in statutory inter-agency partnerships***

However, it was not just voluntary/statutory partnerships that came under pressure. Statutory agencies also experienced difficulties working together. In some cases, there were **tensions over resources** and the inability or unwillingness of one agency to 'pull its weight'. Social Services Departments (SSDs) were particularly mentioned in this regard. In one case, a planned collaboration between a YOT and an SSD failed because the family resource centres that were central to the delivery of the service could not make an active contribution. In another, despite "*impressive commitment shown by the YOT manager and members of the steering group ...it sometimes appeared that some agencies were carrying more responsibility than others*". At one point, the SSD tried to withdraw a key worker, leading to reduced staff capacity to continue with a programme of parenting groups for a while. Yet another project found that it was "*...hard to sustain inter-agency working, because the Family Centre component broke down (due to escalating demands on resources within family centres, who found themselves unable to provide rooms, crèche facilities etc) and the original plan had to be changed*". Clearly, there must be a question mark over the wisdom of developing new inter-agency collaborations with agencies that are already under intense resource pressure, since a failure in one part of the partnership can have serious implications for the whole.

### ***Large partnerships and split service provision arrangements***

Though some projects had only two partners, a substantial number involved collaborations of five or more agencies. Some of these partnerships worked very well. One was described as "*a successful multi-agency project...(where) there has been wide and strong support for the YOT (from other agencies) that has been reflected in its success*". Another highly successful project that had expanded substantially over the course of the evaluation period and had involved several hundred local parents reported: "*The project is established and thriving. It is very popular with local agencies, and with parents*".

In some cases, however, there were indications that large partnerships could be difficult to manage, with '**too many cooks**' impeding the decision-making process. There were also indications that services themselves function better when they are not split between providers (e.g. based at two different sites, or within two different organisations). One 'inter-YOT' project in collaboration with an established voluntary agency that had started life as two separate services in two YOT areas found that differences had emerged in their way of working early on. Their solution had been to join the two projects together as one, and as a result "*the project has developed an even stronger identity as a joint programme*". In another (highly successful) partnership across the statutory/voluntary sector boundary, a key recommendation from the local evaluation was, however, not to have more than one organisation actually providing the service (though several might be involved in planning and managing).

### ***Barriers to 'shared ownership' by partner agencies***

A number of projects suffered from problems in developing a genuine sense of shared ownership of the service. This seemed to be a particular danger when one partner agency was primarily responsible for initial design and delivery of the service, and also where the

project was both physically and structurally distant to the YOT itself. In at least eight cases, **Yots were reported to have failed to engage fully** with the projects, failing to refer parents, or referring them half-heartedly and without sufficient encouragement for the parents to get over their initial misgivings and attend the project beyond the first visit (see below, engagement issues). Although it is fair to say that slow referrals were probably normal for the projects in the Parenting Programme at the outset, if the problem persisted, it could have a crippling effect on an embryonic project. Indeed, this seemed to have been the root cause of difficulties for a number of projects that were still not functioning to capacity by the end of the evaluation period. For example, one local report noted:

*“There was a lack of shared ownership between the voluntary organisation running the service, and the YOT. The YOT did not have a role in providing the programme, and lacked a sense of involvement and concrete understanding of how the project could be of use to parents. They therefore did not ‘sell’ the programme to parents, or help motivate them to attend.”*

Another report, documenting a project that had been dogged by problems throughout its life and had not achieved its objectives by the end of the evaluation period:

*“The practice implications all seem to centre on the YOT, who failed to refer parents to the project.”*

One element in ‘drawing together’ a project appeared to be the extent to which the YOT itself was actively engaged in delivering the project. As one evaluator noted: *“Provision (by the partner voluntary agency) was limited by lack of direct involvement of the YOT”*. Where YOT staff were directly involved as parenting workers, or where projects were physically located within the YOT premises, establishing a sense of ownership at the YOT seemed to be far easier (though see below; practical and logistical issues). In one case it was reported that *“value has been added by locating the project within the YOT”* and that because of the daily contact between project staff and wider YOT staff and the opportunities for networking and dissemination of information that were thereby created, this had helped with ‘joining up’ the project. Another reported, *“The project is located within the same office as the YOT, and this has been useful for enabling the work of the project to be integrated into the mainstream work of the YOT”*

Other reports specifically recommended that future services should always be based at the YOT in the interest of integrated working and a smooth flow of referrals. This may be especially important in voluntary/statutory collaborations, as one report concluded:

*“Close work is possible between a voluntary organisation possessing the expertise and a YOT, and perhaps this working relationship is particularly benefited when the project is based at a YOT.”*

### ***Steering groups and formal planning***

**Steering groups** (or 'local reference groups') seemed to have played an important role in the success (or lack of it) that projects experienced when negotiating the hurdles that inter-agency working presents. Many reports spoke of active and energetic commitment by steering groups that had tackled problems head on and provided a mechanism for the discussion and resolution of tensions. In other cases, steering groups had failed to meet. Relatedly, projects that did not develop formal action plans, service level agreements, or written accounts of their objectives and activities often fell prey to a level of confusion and disorganisation that inhibited their functioning.

*"For the whole period of the evaluation, this project has been running without an action plan and no multi-agency steering group ..it has lacked focus and direction during the initial stages of development".*

*"The project's effectiveness was limited by a lack of clarity about its objectives... and a lack of written records... There were misunderstandings about who was responsible for co-ordinating the parenting activity, lack of a devolved budget...and limited support from the YOT"*

There were mixed messages about who should be represented on steering groups. Some reports suggested that steering groups worked better when they contained senior members of both commissioning and provider agencies, as this was good for strengthening professional networks and building a sense of ownership between partner organisations. Others however felt that it was more important to have front-line staff represented, so that a more direct link could be forged between potential users of the service and those providing it. One report noted that the senior nature of the project steering group had been useful initially, but counterproductive later *"because they couldn't publicise the project once it got going"*. Overall, the key message in relation to the role of steering groups seems to be that they were essential to the successful set up and delivery of Parenting Programme projects, and have four clear functions:

- To plan the direction of the service at the outset, including agreeing clear and specific objectives
- To launch the service amongst potential referring agencies
- To provide a mechanism for the discussion and resolution of issues and problems that arise in the course of developing and delivering the projects – both practical and 'philosophical'
- To send out messages about the ownership of, and commitment to, the service by partner agencies

### ***Importance of specifying delivery objectives clearly***

Finally, whatever the structural model that was fixed on, it was likely that some projects had slowed their own development by **failing to be clear about their objectives** for delivery, both in relation to the intervention as a whole and in relation to specific individual parents who took part. This made it hard to control the type of referrals to the project, and hard for the staff to focus clearly on their own end goals. It also made projects impossible

to evaluate, since what cannot be defined cannot be easily measured. A typical comment was:

*“Projects ought to develop a more rigorous approach, with programmes of intervention is more transparently linked to SMART<sup>1</sup> objectives....(Generally) there is a need for a more rigorous approach to both inputs and outputs.”*

## **Staffing issues**

### ***Shortage of skilled staff***

In Part Two we noted that many projects had suffered from **problems in recruiting and retaining key staff**. One outcome of the apparent shortage of skilled and suitable staff for this kind of work was that many projects, and especially the smaller ones, were heavily dependent on one individual. This meant that staff sickness or resignation could put the whole service on hold. In one extreme but not unique case, a project was intending to close after December 2001 following the departure of the Parenting Co-ordinator, and in another, the evaluator noted that the project had *‘had a one year gap due to no staff*. Though a good worker had been located by the end to the evaluation period, a clear implication is that if projects are allowed to lapse in this way, it may take double the effort to regenerate them anew. Dependency on one key individual also means, of course, that projects were heavily influenced by the views and working style of this particular individual. In one case it was reported that though the project had been very successful, its success *“perhaps depended too much on people rather than process... (whereas) a good method should be transferable”*. Clearly, there are important implications here for the sustainability of projects in this field, and increasing the pool of suitably skilled and qualified specialist parenting workers must be a policy priority if programmes such as this one are to thrive in the future.

### ***Deployment of staff***

Given this pressure on staff, it was perhaps not surprising to find that in some projects, **deployment** of key project staff (especially those who were also YOT staff) **was less than ideal**. In some projects, it was reported that key workers also had to get involved in mainstream YOT work with young people, which in one case *“has taken away a significant amount of time from developing the parenting scheme”*. In other cases, there was no designated parenting project manager, which damaged the development of the project overall. In practice terms, a learning point is that sufficient resources must be allocated to staff to allow them to specialise in developing and delivering parenting work from the outset if new services are to thrive.

### ***Staff skills and qualities***

As we showed in Part Three, the successful delivery of family support work depends crucially on the skills and personal qualities of the workers delivering the service. Parenting projects within the youth justice context are no exception to this; indeed, the nature of the client group - high need, often chaotic, and potentially hostile in the case of Court Ordered referrals - make this even more the case. Several local evaluators commented on the challenges inherent in working directly with many of the families

referred to the Parenting Programme, and the **need for staff to be appropriately skilled and experienced** in this area. One project led by a person with long experience of working with parents of challenging adolescents was described as follows:

*“The experience, skills and commitment of the main parenting worker who has developed and co-ordinated this programme has been crucial to its success.”*

On the other hand, workers who were not used to this client group found it initially difficult:

*“It is difficult and challenging working with these families....(Before the start of the project) staff were mainly used to working with parents of under fives, so extending the age range (to include adolescents) had serious implications. These families were older, had more history, and the ‘lightness’ was missing.”*

This study did not allow us to carry out a full analysis of the precise skills and qualities that make a ‘good’ youth justice parenting support worker, though in many ways the skills required are probably no different to those needed by family support workers in any field. However, given the stigma felt by many of the parents who find themselves referred to a YJB Parenting Programme projects, the ability to respond to parents in a non-judgmental and impartial way was frequently mentioned as a critical quality.

Finally, in terms of professional issues, all ‘ground level’ staff working in the Parenting Programme projects and in their host Yots needed to be prepared and **willing to work across agency boundaries**, and it was clear that some did not fulfil this criteria. One report noted that it was not enough to have a committed steering group:

*“Though there may be a good commitment to multi-agency working at the management level, this may not translate to the operational level.”*

Various problems were cited between staff on the ground, including:

*“Lack of communication, defensiveness about own areas of work, limited insight into the roles of staff in other agencies and different working practices...different agendas and reasons for involvement, unwillingness to share information, overwork, and resistance to change.”*

Again, the commitment of staff to a multi-agency model of service provision – as well as managers – appears to be fundamental to project success.

### ***Staff training***

Though many staff came with previous backgrounds in social care or youth work, a number of additional areas for training were identified by local evaluators. On the practical side, training in IT was reported to be required by some staff. In the view of some evaluators, *“training in IT would have helped with the project’s monitoring and record-keeping*

tasks”, particularly given the expectation that projects would have access to electronic referral, assessment and monitoring systems such as ASSET, YOIS etc.

The other areas for potential further training again reflected the high-need nature of the client group. Several evaluators noted that in some referred families there were “issues in recognising and managing risk” – for example, in relation to **child protection** issues. One report considered that it was “*vital that the project was managed by someone with knowledge of this area of work and legislation so that workers did not get inappropriately ‘embroiled’*” in child protection cases. Some projects reported a high incidence of **domestic violence** cases, and other noted that **substance misuse** issues were common, and considered that staff needed to be better equipped to deal with these issues. In general, **advocacy** skills were also needed by many staff, who found themselves having to help families deal with a multitude of social problems on a one-to-one basis.

## Project delivery issues

In this section we review the messages for practice in relation to project delivery. Again, the novel nature of the YJB Parenting Programme created some tensions for projects, but also resulted in creative and innovative solutions and new learning about the delivery of family support amongst hard-to-reach client groups.

### Mode and medium of delivery

#### ***‘Pitching’ at the right level – preventive versus therapeutic and crisis intervention work***

Finding the right level at which to pitch the content of their work presented some dilemmas for projects in terms of what mode of delivery to use. As we noted in Part Two, whilst some projects intended to work with a broadly ‘preventive’ remit, reaching a wide population of families in need, others intended to focus on a smaller number of ‘high-tariff’ families, doing intensive therapeutic work aimed at solving entrenched and acutely problematic issues. Though some managed to stay true to their initial vision, many projects had to be flexible. In particular, the level of psycho-social need with which parents presented when referred to projects led many workers to conclude they needed to do one-to-one ‘crisis’ work with some parents in preference to (or in advance of) group work. As one evaluator wrote:

*“Parents in crisis may need help with sorting out pressing problems...before they are able to give attention to a ‘full’ programme. This led to ‘solution-focused’ interventions in many cases.”*

In addition, even within groups, it was sometimes hard to judge the ‘level of problems’ to assume. In one project running a carefully thought-through group programme, the evaluator noted: “*(After initially joining the group), a few parents withdrew because they felt their problems were not as bad in comparison to others’ and that the content of the group course would be irrelevant*”. Clearly, this is an issue which has to be judged afresh with each new client, requiring a certain amount of **flexibility** in terms of the mode or the content of work with

families, or as it was described by some, “a ‘*menu of services*’ approach, matched to parents’ needs” rather than a fixed programme<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Group-based services versus one-to-one support***

The issue of whether to provide a service based around group-work or personalised, one-to-one support preoccupied many projects. The majority of Development Fund projects had anticipated providing group work, and although some also intended to do this in tandem with one-to-one support, the general assumption about the Parenting Programme in the early months seemed to be that it would be primarily a group-based Programme.

In the event, projects providing mainly or solely group work were in a minority. Though group work seemed to offer a cost-effective mode of delivery, it proved hard to establish in some areas. One problem was **low throughput** for some projects, meaning that the critical mass needed to establish a group was lacking. For a group to work well, members must all attend regularly, and must have enough in common to be able to identify with and learn from one another. A typical story, however, was that small numbers of parents with too diverse a range of circumstances and problems had been referred. Where referrals were also mixed in terms of ethnicity or language these problems were compounded. In rural areas, lack of transportation to the meetings was also a problem (see below, practical and logistical issues). Furthermore, the very high-need nature of the client group for most of the projects in the Parenting Programme presented special issues in terms of mode of delivery. Parents in crisis, or who have especially entrenched problems (or specific types of problems, for example with mental health or substance dependency) may not be able to participate in group work. They may not attend, or be too chaotic or distressed to be able to cope with interacting in a group situation. Thus, particularly for projects where a relatively large proportion of referrals came through Parenting Orders, a typical situation was that the nature of presenting problems was so severe that parents were not deemed suitable for a group programme, or else failed to attend if referred.

Most projects therefore found it necessary to provide at least some one-to-one work, sometimes as a complement to group work to ‘prepare’ parents for later participation in a group course; sometimes as an alternative. A major draw-back of one-to-one delivery is, however, its resource-intensive nature. Several projects found that disproportionate amounts of staff time were consumed in offering one-to-one support, especially where this was done in-home (as was often the case) and as one evaluator pointed out: “*Quality one-to-one work can only be done with very small case-loads at any one time*”. Sometimes, senior staff got drawn into working with families to meet this need (instead of playing a more co-ordinating role) and again, in rural areas, these issues were even more pressing, with staff spending substantial amounts of time travelling to see clients on an individual basis. The in-home nature of the work also had other practical difficulties, with workers sometimes unable to see parents privately or away from other distractions. In one project, whose central model of working was based on home-visiting, a question raised by attempting to transfer the model to work with more challenging ‘youth justice system’ parenting issues was “*whether the home-visiting model is right for this age group (ie parents with adolescents) – it may work better at the ‘lighter’ end*”.



Group-based projects were able to offer services to far greater numbers of parents, and the most 'successful' projects (in terms of throughput) were those that focussed their resources and attention on providing a regular programme of high quality group courses.

Nevertheless, it was clear that most projects, unless they deliberately steered away from taking referrals of high-need and Court-Ordered cases, found they needed to offer the facility for one-to-one support in addition to any group work. Where projects were unable to resource any one-to-one support, this was generally identified as a deficit. As one report stated: *"This has been [a highly successful] group programme, but there is clearly a need for one-to-one support for those parents who cannot travel, or who are not suited to groups"*. Nevertheless, as an evaluator of one such mixed-mode project reported, though this might be considered the gold standard for future projects, this is "a deluxe" model, and requires significant resourcing to work well.

### ***Other modes of delivery: outreach, drop-ins and telephone support***

In an effort to offer maximum flexibility, some projects implemented outreach work with parents, community-based 'drop-in' sessions, and also telephone helplines. Although there is as yet insufficient evidence to comment definitively on the relative success of these modes of delivery for parenting support, some early indications indicate mixed results.

One project offering a drop-in concluded that this service *"had not been an effective deployment of resources to date"*, whereas another set up in the heart of a housing estate had developed into thriving self-help group and other services. One telephone help-line reported *"a high uptake of one-off calls"* but relatively little further engagement; another reported that the helpline had been *"spectacularly unsuccessful"*, having only one call in its entire lifetime. It had not been entirely clear why this had been the case, though accessibility had been limited by only having staffing for a few hours each week. The evaluator speculated, therefore, that these types of provision *"may only be feasible at a national level, with a continuously staffed resource"*. It seems therefore that further experience of these less mainstream types of provision of parenting support within the youth justice context is required before we can assess whether and in what circumstances they are effective.

### ***Length of the intervention, and lack of follow-up***

Most interventions under the Parenting Programme were around eight weeks in length. For group-based programmes, parents were generally enrolled to attend for a once-weekly session, lasting around two hours. For those receiving one-to-one support the amount of contact varied. A few projects found that it was hard to sustain full engagement with parents over eight weeks, and in at least one case a planned eight-week course had been reduced to seven or six weeks. However, in general, most evaluators that reported on issues of length concluded that interventions were **too short**, especially in terms of making an impact upon parents with very entrenched problems. For example, one report stated:

*"Most parents reported that the course [in this group programme] was too short: they wanted more weeks and twice a week meetings."*

And another commented:

*“Families with longstanding problems.....may be hard to reach through short Parenting Programmes.”*

Certainly a major gap in the Parenting Programme overall was identified as a **general lack of ‘follow-up’** of parents who had attended an initial course. Though several projects had intended to provide follow-up support to ‘graduates’ of their intervention, either by means of facilitated follow-up session, or by encouraging parents to meet on a self-help basis, relatively few achieved this in practice. This left many parents feeling they had been abandoned to their problems. In one project it was reported that the abrupt end to the support she was receiving caused a loss of confidence and precipitated a crisis for one parent. Another quoted a parent as complaining: *“Once it finishes that’s it, and you’re stuck”* and another who said, at the end of the programme: *“Where am I going to go now? This (programme) is like something you hang onto, you know?”*. Summing up the conclusions of many local evaluators, the report stated:

*“There is great demand for a longer term intervention, and the project has not responded.”*

It seems clear, then, that in general there was a strong requirement for longer-term interventions. These might take the form of single interventions lasting longer than the present norm, or perhaps a series of ‘stages’ of an intervention, beginning with a standard six to ten week course, but then moving to a less intensive style of provision, in the form of opportunities to reconvene groups and review progress and continuing issues. However, the expectation that parents would be able to organise their own peer-led support networks once a structured course came to an end was in general not fulfilled. Though some services (mainly working with ‘low-tariff’ cases) reported that parents had made informal friendship support networks as a result of attending Parenting Programme courses, it was more often the case that parents had not, in the end, kept in touch or met with one another despite good intentions at the end of their course. Thus a further message from the national evaluation was that in general parents require ongoing encouragement and assistance from parenting workers if self-help follow-up groups are to become a reality.

## **Content of interventions in the Parenting Programme**

### ***Lack of parenting interventions suited to the youth justice context***

Problems connected with fixing the content of the intervention to be offered were encountered by many projects at the outset of the Parenting Programme, irrespective of the broad mode or delivery that had been selected. We noted in Part Two that projects in the Parenting Programme reported problems in finding suitable off the shelf, pre-existing models for providing interventions. In particular, the ‘high need’ nature of the parents attending most projects, and the fact that they were seeking support in parenting adolescents, rather than younger children, created problems. This comment was typical:

*“Most existing programmes...were found to be unsuitable as most were developed for parents of children under ten... there is a lack of provision for parents that is suited to the youth justice context.”*

Other courses were found by parenting workers to be ‘too middle class’, or at least to focus on difficulties in parent-child relationships which seemed to fall short of the serious problems many parents who were attending the Parenting Programme were facing.

This, and the lack of central guidance, resulted in most projects devoting a substantial amount of time to developing ‘**customised**’ courses, sometimes based around pre-existing programmes (see Part Two table 2.4), but sometimes not. Thus, there now exists a substantial ‘resource base’ of different interventions arising out of the Parenting Programme, all tried and tested in the field, many complete with course materials for use with parents. Unfortunately the sheer diversity of models within the Programme has meant that quantitative evaluation of the precise components of interventions has not been possible at a national level. However, in the future, it is to be hoped that rather than ‘re-inventing the wheel’, new projects will be able to use the work already done by the Parenting Programme projects, though some focused effort is now required to draw together and document what seemed to be the ‘most successful’ elements of each course and combine these into a usable, manualised programme. What follow are some observations from local reports and from the national overview of the practice implications arising from the work done by projects to develop a suitable medium of delivery for their parenting work.

### ***Communicating with parents: learning styles***

Most projects and most parents reported that the “*opportunity to talk and be listened to*” was the most valuable feature offered by the Parenting Programme. Parents in groups reported feeling reassured and empowered by the sharing of experiences that occurred in group sessions, suggesting that learning was greatest where **interactive**, ‘**talk-based**’ methods were used. Some projects also experimented with other forms of interactive learning, notably the use of interactive computer programmes (such as the Parenting Wisely CD-ROM based course). Here, however, the high incidence of literacy difficulties (including insufficient English amongst Asian parents) amongst referred parents inhibited the success of the method (not helped by the theft of the computers from the YOT early on in one project’s life!). Literacy problems also reduced the helpfulness of written materials provided as part of course resources, with a typical observation being: “*The project makes too much use of hand-outs and written materials*” that could not be used by and caused embarrassment to non-reading parents. On the other hand, many projects made use of **audio-visual materials**, showing clips from films and videos (including the video produced for the Parenting Programme by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence), and were reported to be “*more accessible to parents with literacy problems*” than written materials. Finally, several evaluators noted that the more projects could avoid formal ‘classroom style’ settings the better. One evaluator wrote that in an effort “*to detract from a possible classroom feeling, the project has used relaxation techniques, and parents seemed to love this*”.

### ***Subjects to be covered***

In terms of the subject tackled by projects, qualitative research data collected from parents showed that parents especially appreciated the 'practical' aspects of programmes – concrete tips and **practical strategies** for handling challenging behaviour and attitudes by young people, for example – that they could take home and try out (often with some success, reportedly). One such aspect of many interventions that was noted as an important omission was the absence of guidance on how to promote **school attendance**. Given that many parents had been referred to the Parenting Programme via Education Parenting Orders (for persistent non-school attendance by their child), this was perhaps surprising. One evaluator reported: *"No help was given with handling school non-attendance or school work, though this was a major issue for parents"*. Following the idea of a 'menu' approach to content, other projects were thought to have benefited potentially from covering issues such as substance misuse by young people. However, parents noted that programmes needed to be 'fun' as well as educational and informative, in order to engage them for the full course.

### **Catering to a range of circumstances**

Finally, it was notable that relatively few projects had large numbers of **minority ethnic parents** referred to them, and that men were also under-represented. In terms of catering to minority ethnic parents, projects reported that tailoring content suited to a range of cultures (and languages) was problematic. Practice expertise at working with these parents appears to be limited, as yet. Overall, several projects were working with **men**, though many projects suspected they were not engaging with men as effectively as with women. A key finding by a number of projects was that fathers attending projects using group-based work preferred mixed groups to single sex ones, and that men's groups set up to cater to fathers were often poorly attended. This mirrors other research that has looked at men's participation in family support services such as family centres. However, women may sometimes prefer single sex groups and some projects found that having two partners attending the same group could be problematic. Managing the distribution of individual users within a service may therefore require some creative and flexible thinking. As one report noted in more general terms: *"Parenting Programmes need to be relevant to a wide range of parenting circumstances"*.

## **Reaching and engaging project users**

### **Referral and assessment issues**

#### ***The importance of standardised criteria***

As we noted in Part Two, procedures in respect of referrals and assessment varied across the Parenting Programme as a whole. However, there was also a considerable lack of standardisation at the project level as well as the Programme level. By far the most common practice message that emerged for the local evaluation reports concerned the importance of having **clear, rigorous protocols** for referring parents to projects, and for assessing their needs and suitability to receive the service on offer. In one project, *"shared*

*assessment materials (between the referring YOT and the project) was important to the effective and quick implementation of the parenting work in this project".* However, in other areas, variations between different referring agencies in the absolute criteria for referral, and differing conceptions of the relative thresholds for referral led to problems at the delivery end, and for some projects had a profound effect on throughput, with parents being turned away from the projects, and the flow of referrals from Yots sometimes drying up almost totally. For projects who were intending to run groups, a slow flow of referrals of parents all with differing situations and needs could make it impossible to ever get groups off the ground.

In one project, workers:

*"found difficulties with the appropriateness of referrals from the YOT. (It appeared that) there was not sufficient time or experience with working with families at the YOT to conduct thorough assessments..."*

Many evaluators commented that training for, and clear communication with, YOT staff was essential in order to ensure that referrals were appropriate, since in many cases it was observed that not all YOT members had a sound knowledge of the criteria for referrals or the content of the programme. In another project initial difficulties stemmed from unclear procedures for transfer of cases from court to the project, where voluntary referrals were concerned, leading to cases 'falling through the cracks':

*"(Some) parents who had agreed to attend voluntarily at court did not attend, and decisions and agreements made in court were not always followed through. The referral route between the court staff and the project ...was vague and without any clearly designated responsibility."*

### **Communication issues**

In fairness to referring agencies, some of the responsibility for problems in standardising the systems for referrals lay with projects, who were not able to spell out eligibility criteria for referral clearly, and some of whom apparently had no written protocols for referral or assessment. The clear message here was that projects needed to spend time clarifying and then clearly **communicating** the specific criteria for referrals to all potential referring agencies, and to Yots and other youth justice personnel in particular. Examples of successful practice in this respect included one project that invited YOT staff to observe parenting groups in action to get a better feel for the work they were doing. As noted in Part Two, other projects were reported to have detailed and thorough assessment procedures, using standard tools, that were helpful to the project workers. Procedures needed, however, to be reasonably streamlined and not overly complex or labour-intensive to complete, as one report noted:

*"The project has a simplified assessment form (not ASSET) which is perceived by YOT workers as being significant in encouraging referral to the project."*

Moreover, as many evaluators reported, projects needed to put substantial effort, on a regular and ongoing basis, into **raising awareness** of the project amongst potential

referrers. As we have noted previously, many projects experienced a painfully slow throughput of parents to projects at the outset, and many evaluators commented that for future new projects, education of potential referrers was needed to avoid the slow wind-up at the start. As one report put it, “*YOT workers may need reminding about the project (from time to time) to be encouraged to make early referrals*”. Examples of good practice here included one project in which:

*“The worker has been very active in publicising the project in talking to both court staff and offenders at the Youth Court, where he has become a familiar face... He also talked to a local journalist....which led to an increase in self-referrals (by parents).”*

Other projects were reported to have held training and awareness-raising sessions for participating agencies and to have produced information leaflets. However, it is worth noting that even active promotion of parenting projects to other agencies cannot be successful unless the ground is fertile for the partnership to work: in at least one case, despite the worker’s attempts to educate YOT staff, court clerks and parents about the project, and despite the project having a link-worker, the YOT was still reluctant to make referrals.

### ***Managing the flow of referrals***

Lastly, in terms of problems with referral and assessment, was the issue of how to deal with **over-referral or wait-listed referrals**. Most of the projects in the Parenting Programme had not yet faced this problem (rather, they were not running at full capacity); however, as the projects in the Programme mature, it is likely that many more will encounter this issue, given the obvious high levels of need that exist for Programmes such as this one. Some projects running group programmes found that it could be some time before they had sufficient suitable referrals to form a ‘critical mass’ for a successful group. During this time, parents had to join a waiting list, and in some cases, it was unclear whether and to what extent the YOT was able to provide interim support. For this reason, some Yots were not willing to have parents wait-listed to receive services. This, in turn made it hard for projects to accumulate sufficient numbers suitable for group work; a major implication for practice here is that where referrals are sporadic and low in number (e.g. rural areas, areas with low numbers of Parenting Orders), this could effectively preclude the project doing any kind of group-based work.

### ***Engagement issues for voluntary and Court Ordered referral routes***

Many projects found that engaging parents with the service presented numerous challenges. This was especially true of projects providing group-based services. It is one thing to get a parent to accept a referral to a Parenting Programme, and even to ensure people attend a session or two, but it is quite another to achieve a level of engagement with the service such that parents attend regularly, are in a frame of mind to be receptive to the learning on offer, and able to derive genuine benefit from participation. Though, as we showed from the positive comments from parents in Part Three, many parents did ultimately feel they had benefited from the Parenting Programme, projects had to overcome a number of barriers to the process to achieve this.

The first barrier was **high drop-out rates for voluntarily referred parents**. For example, we noted earlier that there was substantial attrition between initial referral and starting an intervention. Though we are not able to comment on the characteristics of parents in this group from a national perspective as we have no data, some local evaluators suggested that many voluntary attenders did not attend projects beyond an initial assessment. This was especially a problem, perhaps, where ‘voluntary’ referrals had been made under pressure (for example, as an explicit alternative to a Parenting Order). One report noted:

*“Parents who agreed to attend voluntarily in the excitement or unreality of the court setting did not necessarily feel so bound or enthusiastic later on.”*

And another, whilst noting that “*the Project Co-Ordinator has found the voluntary route a more constructive way of working with parents and that those who attend voluntarily are more likely to keep appointments and accept support*” also stated: “*The project actively tries to promote voluntary engagement, and only applies for Parenting Orders when parents are unwilling*”, suggesting that the conceptual distinction between ‘voluntary’ and ‘Court Ordered’ status was a rather thin one in practice. This makes it hard to be definitive from a practice or policy perspective about which method of referral promotes better engagement. As we showed in Part Three, there may be little to choose between the two, though it may be that in some cases, an Order is the stronger method of ensuring that parents do take up services. Certainly, though many may feel that voluntary referrals are preferable to more draconian Orders, voluntary referrals that are not wholly self-motivated will need **active follow-up and persistence** to engage.

A second barrier to engagement with the Programme was the **initial hostility and anger of Court-Ordered parents** about being referred to an intervention, as noted in Part Three. Some projects reported distinct difficulties in getting parents to attend “at the first invitation”. It seemed however that several factors could help improve engagement levels for Court Ordered parents. One was to undertake careful and reasonably extensive **preparatory work beginning at the point of referral**, especially where the aim was to offer parents a place on a group course. Much of this work has to be done by the referring agency, and not just delegated (or left to) to the project and the parents, since if the professionals making the initial referral seem less than enthusiastic about the service, parents are unlikely to feel enthusiastic themselves. As one evaluator summed it up:

*“Referrers to the project need the appropriate skills and commitment to engage the interests of participants .....more work needs to be done motivating parents to attend. Additional publicity and training sessions for (referring) staff could be helpful, and more could be done by the YOT officers to promote attendance.”*

As noted earlier, being prepared to offer support on a tailored, one-to-one basis prior to referral to a group programme may also be necessary for parents in crisis.

Second, early **home visits** by project staff as soon as referral has been received – and preferably more than just one of these – were especially helpful here, to ‘put a face’ to the programme, establish needs, dispel anxieties, and begin the process of diffusing the anger

generated by the imposition of the Order. Third, the routine offer of a **second chance on a repeat course** for those who drop out half way was recommended by some, though this needs to be assertively made and vigorously pursued, probably in person by a parenting worker, to help parents find the confidence to try again. Simply sending a letter inviting parents to re-enrol, for example, does not appear effective in this regard. Lastly, as we discuss below, **clearer information** for parents about the terms of their Order and the conditions of compliance might also help ease this problem.

## **Managing non-compliance and breach procedures**

We noted in Part Two that there was a relatively low incidence of instigating formal breach procedures. In part, rather than reflecting uniformly high attendance by parents, the low incidence of breach proceedings indicates the sensitivity of the circumstances in legal terms when a Parenting Order is flouted; that is, it is at this point that parents begin to cross the threshold between civil and criminal proceedings. Some projects had tried and failed to activate breach proceedings, and there were a number of concerns raised about the length of time involved and, in some cases, the low magnitude of the penalty invoked as a result of ‘successful’ proceedings.

Both parents and project staff reported being confused about the precise terms attached to a Parenting Order, and it was noted that “*these are not well-explained at Court*” in many places. Several local evaluators drew attention to problems with the existing arrangements for handling non-compliance by Court referred parents. Projects were unwilling to breach parents, not least because this drew parents into criminal proceedings that ‘upped the ante’ for all concerned. Moreover, it was reported that once the decision was taken, Yots found it hard to get the proceedings started, and then found that long delays between starting the process and the parent being returned to court simply served to imply that the Order was not something parents had to take seriously. Other reports noted that breached parents often got only small fines or another Order (that would again be breached, in time), once again seeming to undermine projects’ attempts to convey the seriousness of the situation to parents. As one evaluator summed up:

*“The penalties for non-compliance are arcane and ill thought-through. The lack of a clear-cut breaching procedure does not stimulate those who are otherwise diffident about conforming to the Order.”*

There seemed to be a general view from the field that the existing arrangements for breach require further thought and clarification at a policy and procedural level.

## **Practical and logistical issues in project delivery**

### ***Physical location***

Various learning points have emerged from projects’ struggles with the practical and logistical aspects of implementing their interventions with parents. Perhaps the most prominent area of debate concerns the best location for projects. On balance, the weight of



evidence suggests that at this stage in the evolution of the YJB Parenting Programme, projects are perhaps **best situated within YOT premises**. Many parenting workers expressed initial scepticism about the effects of physically locating projects within 'youth justice system' buildings, feeling that this would deter and stigmatise parents. Most family support projects in the social care and voluntary sector strive for warm and welcoming, 'homely' surroundings, and for workers coming from these backgrounds, the often clinical and institutional feel of some YOT buildings felt unsuitable. However, again, the special nature of the Parenting Programme projects, who needed to build not just effective parenting support interventions but effective parenting support interventions *within the context of the youth justice system*, has created circumstances that required a more flexible approach to implementation than might have been the case had the projects been developed under other auspices. Time has proved the vital importance of facilitating good multi-agency links in order to get the projects up and running, and as discussed earlier, it was concluded by many evaluators that this was achieved most easily when the project was 'in clear view' of the rest of the YOT. Thus, projects situated within Yots tended to thrive, despite their unorthodox location (in family support terms), whilst projects located externally could sometimes find themselves cut off from the YOT, making communication, referrals, monitoring and support for the project workers harder to achieve.

By contrast, however, some projects claimed they owed their success to a structure and location "*distant from formal agencies*", and some project workers felt that the provision of parenting support associated with a YOT was off-putting to users. At one project, it was reported for example that "*the co-ordinator is reluctant to meet parents or provide any interventions at the YOT premises...they are unsuitable...being located within a police station*". This project instead hired other local venues, but had found this an expensive alternative. **Family centres** seemed to provide a particularly good alternative venue if the YOT itself was not appropriate, and several of the most thriving projects by the end of the evaluation period were located here. Family centres, providing they already well-established and well-networked themselves, and providing YOT staff were able to feel 'connected' with the service, provided not only pleasant and family-friendly venues, but were better placed to provide additional services such as child care, information about other family support services and so forth. In general it seemed that projects working in a more broadly preventive model with 'low-tariff' cases (ie families in need, but where the young people's offending or behaviour problems were not severe or entrenched) found the association of the service with the youth justice system more of a problem than those working with the higher need cases, where by contrast, the interface offered to other resources within the YOT was a positive advantage. It may be therefore, that future good practice would be to locate different models of project in different locations, with 'preventive' projects choosing a non-YOT venue, but the more therapeutic services remaining closer to the youth justice system in order to benefit from the networking available, and in order to meet the needs of the YJS.

### ***Other aspects of location***

**Accessibility** of the venue also emerged as important to a project's success. Some YOT premises were certainly uninviting places to meet with parents, and one project had had to move as its "*main building is not very accessible and has poor facilities*". Many other projects

suffered from low attendance rates by parents due in part to the lack of affordable, straightforward transportation to the venue. Some projects responded by paying fares and even providing transport, or else by abandoning or modifying some aspects of the intervention (such as group work). One project, for example, had abandoned a group programme because sufficient attendance could not be maintained, but had managed instead to run occasional 'themed meetings' in their place. In rural areas, or where the project is located off the main thoroughfare, the clear implication was that projects must be resourced to provide transportation.

Many parents had young children as well as adolescents, and those that provided access to **child care** to enable parents to take part in session found they had higher attendance rates. One project that provided a crèche facility had found that on days when this was not available, "*attendance at the project was reduced*". Again, provision of child care seems a basic element in assisting parents to attend services.

The '**opening times**' at which services were available were also important. Some projects found difficulties in working around parents' other commitments, for example to take and collect younger children from school, or for work. Evening courses, however, which seemed like a potential solution, were not always taken up, for reasons that were not clear.

## Evaluation Issues

We conclude this part of the report with a final comment about the implications for practice and policy in terms of issues of evaluation and assessment of project effectiveness. The UK evidence base desperately needs more rigorous evaluation of community-based interventions, but this study has shown just how difficult that process can be. The process of gathering 'aggregate' data through a devolved national-local design has paid dividends in allowing us to investigate the impact of the Programme on parents quantitatively – a rare opportunity. However, the process has been painful at times and not without substantial pitfalls. One is that insufficient resources at the local level necessitated a reliance on project staff to help engage the participation of parents, and meant that most data had to be collected from parents and young people via self-completion methods. This created extra work for already hard-pressed staff, reduced the response rate dramatically (and unmeasurably), and was often unsatisfactory due to the substantial literacy problems and low motivation to take part amongst the sample of parents and young people. Where local evaluation teams themselves took on the task of data collection some of these problems were lessened, but this in turn required resources that were not always available. In future, we would recommend a **distinction between process and impact evaluation** stages. Whilst it is clearly important to include all projects – struggling and successful – in the study of implementation issues, there may be an argument for restricting the measurement of impact to those projects that were large enough and already 'strong' enough to support the resource demands. This in turn might have enabled a different research design that might have provided better data – a comparison group, for example, and a data set with a calculable response rate (thus telling us how representative our findings were) and less missing data overall.

## Summary of recommendations for practice and policy

As we have indicated throughout this part of the report, a number of key learning points for both policy makers and practitioners emerged during our national analysis of the issues raised by local evaluators. For ease of reference, we summarise these below, in box 4.1.

Box 4.1 Summary of key recommendations for policy and practice

Recommendations for <b>policy and for service planning</b>	Recommendations for <b>practice and implementation</b>
<b>Setting up and managing interagency partnerships</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Inter-agency partnerships take time to mature. Policy and planning timetables should expect and allow for this</li> <li>◆ Differences in ethos between sectors and agencies must be expected, acknowledged and worked through at the highest level if genuine 'shared ownership' is to be fostered</li> <li>◆ Agencies with pre-existing resource difficulties should not be expected to provide critical elements of support – inability to deliver may jeopardise the development of the project overall</li> <li>◆ Large partnerships need strategic oversight, and services work best when not split between sites and managers. Location within the YOT may facilitate easier 'mesh' between YJS needs and other agencies' cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Individuals with key set up, management or frontline responsibilities must be committed to the partnership's overall mission. 'Powerful' individuals at all levels must be comfortable with siting of parenting support within youth justice system</li> <li>◆ The project's goals and concrete (measurable) objectives must be clearly specified and documented at the outset</li> <li>◆ Steering groups need to meet regularly and to be pro-active in addressing problems and pushing forward development of the project</li> </ul>
<b>Human resources and staffing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There is an apparent shortage of staff with skills in supporting parents of challenging adolescents. Strategies to address recruitment and retention of suitable staff are urgently needed</li> <li>◆ The development and continued survival of a service should not be allowed to 'depend' on one key individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff recruited to work directly with parents need skills not only in family support and parenting, but in parenting of challenging adolescents</li> <li>◆ Designated parenting workers need to be allowed sufficient time and freedom from other responsibilities to develop projects, especially in the early stages of project set-up. Staff in front-line positions need active support from managers</li> <li>◆ Project staff may need additional training in IT and data management; also in risk identification and management (e.g. in child protection, domestic violence, substance misuse); and in advocacy</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery – reaching and engaging with parents</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Directors and managers should familiarise themselves with the evidence on how parents can benefit from parenting support services so that they can advocate for the service amongst staff</li> <li>◆ Awareness of services should be promoted at the highest levels, so that all potential referring agencies make use of the service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Projects need to be pro-active about advertising (and re-advertising) their existence in as many local arenas as possible</li> <li>◆ Projects should design and implement clear standardised assessment and referral procedures</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The present arrangements for breaching of non-compliant parents on Orders need clarification and systematisation. They straddle the threshold between civil and criminal proceedings and there is evidence that some cases fall between the cracks. Proceedings need to be speeded up, communication between projects, Yots, police and courts needs to be improved, and penalties need to be reviewed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff should communicate clearly with parents, in particular with respect to expectations related to the services on offer and parents' legal responsibilities. This is especially important for those on Parenting Orders.</li> <li>◆ Parents referred through the courts, by Parenting Order should receive preparatory work (preferably by home visit before contact with the wider service) to diffuse initial anger and anxieties</li> <li>◆ Parents referred voluntarily may require pro-active and persistent follow-up to encourage them to commit to regular attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery – designing and providing parenting support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ At the national level, provision should be made to clarify and consolidate existing knowledge of 'what works' and how to deliver it. Materials should be systematised and documented for future service provision and development of parenting support in the YJS context.</li> <li>◆ The evidence suggests current courses (average 8 weeks) are too short, and should be extended. Ongoing, follow-up support provision may be very important for maintaining and consolidating benefits to parents. Current resource levels need to rise accordingly.</li> <li>◆ Types of service provision involving outreach, drop-in and telephone help-line need adequate, not 'after-thought' resourcing if they are to work – a help-line open a few hours a week may not be used at all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Projects need to be clear about the difference between preventive and therapeutic work, and which type of support they can deliver</li> <li>◆ Parents' individual needs should drive the kind of parenting support delivered; projects should develop a flexible menu of services (e.g. group and one-to-one work) as appropriate to the needs of users.</li> <li>◆ Parents' preferred learning styles include: avoiding formal, classroom-style delivery; avoiding over-reliance on written materials; using interactive methods e.g. video-clips, brainstorming, role playing, and informal discussion and debate. Messages should be as concrete and practical as possible. Parents find 'tips to take home and try' especially helpful</li> <li>◆ Parenting services should be delivered in places that are easy to get to (or else transport is provided), have convenient opening times, and where necessary childcare is provided</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Policy should promote and support the evaluation of parenting services within the youth justice system, as a key step towards the development of a strong, UK-relevant evidence base.</li> <li>◆ However, it may be pragmatic to distinguish between process and outcome aspects of evaluation. It should be recognised that not all 'infant' projects can support the burden of participating in onerous outcome evaluations. Process information, however, should be collected routinely and from the outset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Projects should ensure that systems for monitoring and (once services have bedded down) evaluating parenting services are developed and implemented. These should include consistent and systematic gathering, analysis and feedback of throughput, output and outcome data.</li> </ul>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed.

<sup>2</sup> Note however that 'flexible' interventions are very difficult to evaluate. If evaluation of effectiveness of a given intervention is important, some level of programme standardisation is required.

## Part Five Conclusions

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### The context of the Parenting Programme

The Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme was set up with the overarching aim of preventing and reducing offending by young people through the medium of parenting support and education. As such, it was an innovative and ambitious initiative. It was innovative because it marked the first formal incursion of the youth justice system into family support provision, formerly the preserve of health and social care agencies. It was ambitious because it aimed to make a real, measurable difference in young people's behaviour – a notoriously difficult area in which to show substantial impact. Principally, the Programme was intended to provide services to parents in receipt of a new civil penalty – the Parenting Order – given to parents of persistent or serious offenders, or school refusers. However, the interventions set up under the Programme were also asked to work preventatively, catering to parents of young people who were not yet engaged in serious anti-social behaviour, but who might be at risk of developing in that direction. The new multi-agency Youth Offending Teams (Yots) were charged with the responsibility for developing the services, but individual projects, of which thirty four were studied as part of the national evaluation, were run in partnership with a wide range of other agencies from both the voluntary and statutory sectors.

From the beginning, the Programme was surrounded by controversy. Most agreed that in principle, offering support and assistance to parents struggling with challenging adolescent behaviour was a good idea. Some even believed that 'feckless' parents were reneging on their responsibility to control their children, and needed to be made to change their ways. However, others took issue with the assumption of a 'parenting skills deficit' that underpinned the Programme – that is, the that anti-social behaviour by young people can be remedied by parent training and education – and pointed out that parents of young offenders usually consider themselves to have problems with life circumstances, or problems with their child's behaviour, but do not necessarily accept that they have a 'problem with parenting'.

Even more controversial, however, was the introduction of Parenting Orders themselves, which were widely interpreted by the media, child care professionals and parents themselves as a dangerous widening of the gateway into the criminal justice system. Parenting Orders were portrayed by the media as punishment for 'bad parents', and many parents initially experienced the Orders in these terms, feeling a very real sense of stigma and anger at being called to account for the crimes of their children. Not unnaturally, this controversy fed through into the services set up under the Parenting Programme, who were trying to balance a preventive, proactive, early intervention and voluntary model of family support provision with the more reactive, treatment-focused and compulsory model that arose as a natural by-product of the criminal justice context. The process evaluation of the Parenting Programme revealed that ambivalence about the mission of the Parenting

Programme services reached deep into the structure of the projects, with some Youth Offending Teams actively trying to avoid the imposition of Parenting Orders within their area, and parenting workers feeling anxious about how to operationalise the principle of 'support-by-compulsion' when Court Ordered parents presented themselves at the projects. Moreover, many parents and indeed staff at the projects were unclear about how Orders could be enforced. Breach procedures for non-compliance were complex, lengthy and often ultimately unproductive, and added a further layer of uncertainty to the remit and operation of the projects.

These factors alone added up to a very tough challenge for the Parenting Programme. However, perhaps an even greater challenge at the practice level was the tremendously high level of need of parents and families associated with the Programme. Many of the parents who were sent, or agreed to go, to the new services were amongst the most needy in the community. They were poor, and beset by problems at almost every level of functioning – social, individual and family. By any standards, these were the families that services always regard as hard-to-reach: desperately needy, often distressed and chaotic, with long histories of unsatisfactory contact with helping agencies, and on top of all this, with a child (and sometimes more than one) displaying challenging conduct problems. Though not all of the parents who took part in the services were in this position, those that were tended to set the tone for the Programme as a whole.

## **Process issues**

It became clear during the course of the Programme's development that the inter-agency partnerships on which the services were founded presented some challenges. There were tensions arising out of philosophical differences of ethos and principle between voluntary and statutory agencies, and tensions between statutory agencies in terms of their ability and willingness to commit resources to the projects. In a few cases, this led to a drying up of referrals from the Yots (the major source of throughput of clients to the services), or conversely, a reluctance by projects to accept some referrals. As a result, some projects never really got going at all, and others atrophied and fell by the wayside over time.

In general however, time showed that a slow start was probably normal for all except the projects that had had some kind of 'head start' (for example, having been a Pilot area for Parenting Orders). This should probably be the standard expectation for any future development of an innovative Programme; things take time to set up, time to bed down, and time to start showing an impact. The evaluation of the Parenting Programme suggested that amongst other things, key factors that slowed the development of the projects were staff recruitment and retention difficulties, and a lack of ready made off-the-shelf models for working with the parents of challenging adolescents. The lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff to undertake work in this challenging field continues to present a serious threat to the future development of parenting support, and requires proactive policy attention. The development of suitable, tried and tested models for working with parents has however, been a major outcome of the Programme, and the time

is now ripe to draw these together more systematically, and document them in a more standardised and transferable form for future practitioners to use.

By the end of the evaluation, however, most projects were up and running and many were thriving, offering services to tens if not hundreds of parents in their area. Most had a strong sense of shared ownership between partner agencies, and were drawing on what is now a firm foundation of experience and expertise in working with parents in the youth justice context. It is important that this substantial collective effort be nurtured and not allowed to disappear, by ensuring that parenting work is mainstreamed into YOT and other youth justice system activities by adequate resourcing and through the vital, pro-active support of managers.

## **Impact and effectiveness**

Has the Parenting Programme had the intended impact? We did not follow parents up after they left the services, so we can only comment on short-term impact. However, in this sense the answer is both 'yes', in respect of parents, and 'maybe', in respect of young people.

### **Impact on parents**

The national evaluation data has shown that the Programme has been shown to be associated – in the short term at least, and according to parent and staff reports – with a positive impact upon parents. By measuring change in parenting skills, parent-child relationships, and parents' sense of confidence and coping with parenting, we were able to track improvements between starting and completing a Parenting Programme intervention in various dimensions of parenting. These included communication between parents and young people; parental supervision and monitoring of young people; handling and reducing conflict; parental warmth and hostility; and confidence and sense of being able to cope and resolve problems with their child. Moreover, though caution is warranted in interpretation due to methodological limitations in the available data, it appears that the benefits were not less for Court Ordered parents than they were for parents attending under voluntary agreements. Almost all parents who provided data at the end of their contact with the projects professed to be highly satisfied with the services they had received, and to feel that they had been helped. These are especially promising results given the high need levels of the participating parents, and the short duration of the interventions (usually six to eight weeks for no more than a couple of hours each week). Even though we have no comparison group of parents who did not receive an intervention (the only way to really be sure that the changes we observed were due to the Programme itself and not to other factors), the findings were strong and consistent and most likely do reflect a real impact of the Programme. Thus, we can be fairly confident the Programme had a positive impact. (What we cannot tell, however, due to the wide range of interventions offered, is which elements of the Parenting Programme worked best, and for whom, in what circumstances. Further research on more homogenous programmes will be needed to clarify these questions).

It is undoubtedly the case that anger at being given a Parenting Order and sent to a parenting service must have created a barrier to initial engagement with services for some parents. However, the effect does not seem to have been fatal. It may be that projects overestimated if not the degree of initial hostility by parents, then the seriousness of the barrier it presented. The evidence from the evaluation was that a combination of the genuinely supportive ethos of the services, the skills of the project staff, and the parents' very real need for help and support helped to dissolve these initial reservations. As one parent put it, *"I was annoyed, but I'm glad I came"*.

In the light of these findings, despite the continuing controversy, and despite the fact that the marriage of support with compulsion may strike some as uncomfortable, we conclude that there does seem to be a place, in both policy and practice terms, for Parenting Orders. These may be a powerful way of reaching some parents who are particularly bogged down in problems, and who might otherwise never manage to set foot over the threshold of a parenting support service. Certainly, those who attended under Parenting Orders ended up feeling they had benefited. However, as we noted earlier there was a blurred distinction between the operation of 'voluntary' and 'non-voluntary' referrals to the Programme, because some parents who were recorded as attending voluntarily almost certainly did so under pressure or threat of an Order. Thus, it is not possible at this stage to be absolutely definite that the Programme might not have worked in just the same way had all referrals been through a non-Court route.

Nevertheless, if Parenting Orders are to continue, there is an urgent need to de-couple the parenting support services run through the auspices of the youth justice system from the punitive taint that has followed them since the beginning. The research evidence strongly demonstrates that though a Parenting Order itself may be regarded as punitive, the services offered as a result are generally experienced by parents as entirely supportive, and are mostly very welcome. If the message that a Parenting Order is a mechanism for triggering support and help for parents rather than a punishment is conveyed loudly and strongly by all involved, this might help dispel some of the initial fear and anger expressed by parents and help them to arrive at services in a more productive frame of mind. The media have a role to play here, as well as those working in youth justice and family support.

Last, it may be salutary to remember that most of the parents receiving Orders and attending Parenting Programme interventions at present are women, and according to our data, most of the offences triggering referral are committed by boys and young men. In a sense, the sins of the sons are being visited on their mothers. Future development of parenting support services within the youth justice needs to redress the balance, and make sure that fathers are as engaged as mothers.

## **Impact on young people**

It was less clear from the research evidence that the Programme had a positive impact on young people. There were some indications from the official reconviction study that



reconviction and reoffending by young people both went down after the time their parents attended the Parenting Programme. There were also some mild indications of positive change in young people's perceptions of their relationships with their parents and in their own behaviours at home. These are encouraging signs, especially given the very high levels of behavioural difficulties and offending that was reported for these young people. However, it was unclear to what extent these improvements were associated with the Parenting Programme or to other things that the young people were doing, such as participating in their own 'change programmes' provided by Yots. On balance, it seems unlikely that the Parenting Programme would show up as having an large impact on young people in the short term, given that most projects did not have direct contact with young people themselves, that the interventions were short, and that they were taking place at a comparatively late stage in young people's lives. Parenting Programmes are unlikely to provide a 'quick fix' for entrenched anti-social behaviour by young people, though they may perhaps have the effect of applying the brakes on what are often very fast downward trajectories in terms of outcomes for this vulnerable group.

In summary, this was a bold Programme, with some mixed but also many positive results, especially for parents who took part. Certainly in the short term, parents and project staff reported that the Programme was helpful, and parents reported significant changes in their skills and confidence. Of course, whether the benefits persist in the longer term is a matter for future research; but still, these are encouraging results.

We also need to be patient in our search for signs of positive impact at the level of the child. Though it is perhaps unrealistic to expect interventions of this sort to have an immediate measurable effect on young people, there were indications that both parents and staff thought that the Parenting Programme might have a longer term, preventive effect, especially in terms of impact on the parenting of younger siblings in the family. Again, future research is needed to substantiate this. More work with both parents and young people together probably needs to take place, too.

The future development of parenting interventions within the youth justice context perhaps needs to address the vexed issue of the referral routes by which parents reach the services. At present, the referral route taken by any one parent seems to be a bit of a lottery, dependent on geographical location and the attitude of the local court or youth justice agencies rather than the attributes of the case itself. A system which privileged a genuinely voluntary route, but with Parenting Orders held in reserve where voluntary engagement had failed, might prove more acceptable to family support providers, opinion formers and parents themselves. This in turn would help to reduce the initial barriers to engagement with a service arising out of parents' distress at receiving a Court Order. Moreover, it would help keep parents out of the criminal justice system, an already overcrowded system where, it might be argued, vulnerable and needy parents do not really belong.

Of course, promoting voluntary engagement requires pro-activity, persistence and a system that allows for second chances. Above all, however, the findings from the national

evaluation of the Parenting Programme suggest that what is needed now is to build the supportive ethos demonstrated *in practice* by the projects more firmly into the *principles* and indeed *image* of the youth justice system, so that parents of troubled and troublesome young people know they can rely on help from professionals rather than punishment.

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# **Appendix 1**

**(a) Local evaluation teams providing quantitative data and written reports for the national evaluation**

**(b) National evaluation design, data sources, period of data collection, data type and number of returns**

## Appendix 1 (a)

### Local evaluation teams providing quantitative data and written reports for the national evaluation

YJB ref number	YOT team/ project	Evaluation team	Quantitative data	Number of cases included (parent T1)	Written report/ qualitative data
033	Norfolk		-	-	✓
036	Worcs& Hereford	Policy Research Bureau	✓	16	✓
056	Kingston Upon Hull	Exempt	-	-	-
068	Wirral – ESP	Liverpool University	✓	17	✓
069	Wirral – CFB	Liverpool University			✓
075	Hartlepool	University of Teeside	✓	7	✓
080	H&F – PM	Middlesex University	-	-	✓
081	H&F – EI	Middlesex University	✓	4	✓
094	Sefton	Liverpool University	✓	15	✓
099	Islington	Camden and Islington CAMHS	-	-	✓
105	Haringey	Middlesex University	✓	8	✓
112	Wessex	Policy Research Bureau	✓	95	✓
117	Leeds – Home Start	Leeds University	-	-	✓
161	Leicester	Loughborough	-	-	✓(summary)
166	Gt Manc- B Moss	Dropped out	-	-	-
172	Oldham/ Tameside	Manchester Metropolitan University	-	-	✓

YJB ref number	YOT team/ project	Evaluation team	Quantitative data	Number of cases included (parent T1)	Written report/ qualitative data
177	Gtr Manc– Emp Ps	Liverpool John Moores University	-	-	✓ (summary)
184	Leeds – FSUs	Nationwide Children's Research Centre, Huddersfield University	✓	16	✓
199	Wandsworth	Policy Research Bureau	✓	9	✓
207	B'ham	Birmingham University	-	-	✓
214	Devon	Policy Research Bureau	✓	20	✓
239	Suffolk	Dropped out	-	-	-
248b	Ealing	Independent researcher	-	-	-
254	Barnsley	Nationwide Children's Research Centre, Huddersfield University	-	-	✓
257	Lewisham	Middlesex University	-	-	✓
262	Bradford	Bradford University	✓	23	✓
273	Bristol	Dropped out	-	-	-
292	W Berks	National Children's Bureau	-	-	✓
314	Stockton	Teeside University	✓	52	✓
323	Kirklees	Nationwide Children's Research Centre, Huddersfield University	-	-	✓
332	Blackpool	Barnardo's	✓	82	✓

YJB ref number	YOT team/ project	Evaluation team	Quantitative data	Number of cases included (parent T1)	Written report/ qualitative data
334	Hounslow	Exempt	-	-	-
343	Newham	East London University	✓	10	✓
353	Mid Kent	University of Kent at Canterbury	-	12	✓
356	Somerset	Somerset College of Arts and Technology	-	-	✓
357	Hackney	National Children's Bureau	-	-	✓
363	Liverpool	Dropped out	-	-	-
371	Greenwich	Policy Research Bureau	✓	47	✓
374	Bknl Forest	Independent researcher	-	-	-
400	Oxfordshire	Oxford University	✓	45	✓
407	Gateshead – PI	Newcastle University	✓	163	✓
421	Sun&Gates	Newcastle University	✓	179	✓

## Appendix 1 (b)

### The national evaluation design: data sources, period of data collection, data type and numbers of returns

Table A2 The national evaluation design: data sources, period of data collection, data type and bases					
Data source	Data dimension	Data type	Time One	Time Two	Number returned (valid)
Local evaluators	(Project level) - Process and implementation	Management and staffing, objectives, mode and medium of delivery, content	✓	✓	34 projects
Local evaluators	(Case level) - Aggregate referrals and throughput	Aggregated number of referral, take-up, level of engagement, demographics		✓	4,097 cases
ASSET & YOT core data	Background on young people	Background information on young person's offending		✓	250 cases
Parents	Needs, expectations and satisfaction	Initial expectations	✓		Cases: T1: 820 T2: 253 T1&T2:206
		Types of parenting help required	✓	✓	
		Satisfaction with practical and staffing aspects of project		✓	
		Helpfulness of project		✓	
	Communication	Child emotional & behavioural difficulties (SDQ) <sup>i</sup>	✓		
		Talking, listening, etc	✓	✓	
		Knowing child's movements and activities	✓	✓	
	Supervision and monitoring	Frequency of conflict & conflict tactics (CTS: CTS-PC) <sup>ii</sup>	✓	✓	
	Handling conflict	Warmth/praise & hostility/criticism	✓	✓	
Young people	Warmth and hostility	Parent – child relationship (understanding & empathy)	✓	✓	Cases: T1: 537 T2:100 T1&T2:78
	General parent-child relationship	Influencing child behaviour; coping with parenting	✓	✓	
	Parent self-efficacy	Referral route, attendance, activities undertaken		✓	
Staff	Case referral and engagement	Initial attitudes to project		✓	Cases: T2: 782
	Expectations, satisfaction and benefit	Overall satisfaction and benefit from project		✓	
				✓	
Young people	Communication	Talking, listening, etc	✓	✓	Cases: T1: 537 T2:100 T1&T2:78
	Supervision and monitoring	Knowing child's movements and activities	✓	✓	
	Handling conflict	Frequency of conflict and conflict tactics (CTS: CTS-PC) <sup>iii</sup>	✓	✓	
	Warmth and hostility	Warmth/praise & hostility/criticism	✓	✓	
	General parent-child relationship	Parent – child relationship (understanding & empathy)	✓	✓	
	Offending	Self-report offending checklist <sup>iv</sup>	✓	✓	
Yots & Home Office – Police National Computer	Reconviction study	Independent variables; reconviction data; reoffending data		✓	296 cases



## NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Goodman (1994, 1997).

<sup>ii</sup> Items abstracted from CTS – Conflict Tactics Scales and CTS-PC – Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus 1979; Straus et al 1998)

<sup>iii</sup> Items abstracted from CTS – Conflict Tactics Scales and CTS-PC – Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus 1979; Straus et al 1998)

<sup>iv</sup> Graham and Bowling (1995)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Sample of Questionnaires<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The questionnaires included in this appendix correspond to parents, young people and staff. In the one relating to parents, we included the 'Mother' questionnaire. The substantive part of the 'Father' questionnaires is identical, and therefore it was omitted.

PRB P118/Mother/ T1

FORM TO BE COMPLETED  
AT START OF YJB PARENTING PROGRAMME

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MOTHERS

## CONFIDENTIAL

## What this form is for

We would like you to fill in this form as part of a national survey being carried out to find out more about the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme. We would like to ask you some questions about your experiences of being a parent. There are no right or wrong answers - it is just important to try to be as honest as you can.

The form is **private and confidential** – only the researchers will see your answers. When you have finished, please put your form in the envelope provided. There is no need to put your name on the form or on the envelope.

## EVALUATORS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOX BEFORE DISTRIBUTING QUESTIONNAIRES

YJB Project Number

Individual serial number

Young person's PNC Number if applicable : .....

Date sent out

**Q1a Firstly, some general background questions about yourself.**  
**What was your age last birthday?** Write in age in years

**Q1b Are you male or female?** Tick ONE box

☐

1

Male

☐

2

Female

**Q2 Which of these best describes you?** Tick ONE box

**White**

- British ☐ 1

- Irish ☐ 2

- Any other white background ☐ 3

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean ☐ 4

- African ☐ 5

- Any other Black background ☐ 6

**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian ☐ 7

- Pakistani ☐ 8

- Bangladeshi ☐ 9

- Any other Asian background ☐ 10

**Mixed**

- White and Black Caribbean ☐ 11

- White and Black African ☐ 12

- White and Asian ☐ 13

- Any other mixed background ☐ 14

**Chinese or other ethnic group**

- Chinese ☐ 15

- Other ☐ 16

**Q3 Which of these describes your current situation?** Tick ONE box.

Married or living with a partner ☐ 1

Single/ Not living with a partner ☐ 2

**Q4 Which of these best describes what you are doing at the moment?**

Tick the FIRST box that applies

In full time paid employment (30 hours a week or more)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
In part time paid employment (less than 30 hours a week)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
<hr/>	
Unemployed and looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
In full time education or training	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<hr/>	
Permanently sick/disabled and unable to work	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Looking after home and family	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
<hr/>	
Something else	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

**Q5 How did you come to be involved with the parenting programme?** Tick all the boxes that apply

I was told to attend the programme after receiving a Parenting Order	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I volunteered to come on the programme	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I was referred by someone (e.g. social services, a health worker, my child's school)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

**Q6 Which of these best describes what you are expecting the parenting programme to be like?** Tick ONE box

Very helpful; I expect to get a lot out of it	Fairly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Fairly unhelpful	Very unhelpful; I expect it to be a waste of time	Can't say
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

**The next few questions are about the child whose behaviour led to you taking part in the Parenting Programme.**

**Please turn over** —▶

**Q7a Firstly, some questions about your child's behaviour.** For each item, please say whether it is 'Not True', 'Somewhat True' or 'Certainly True'. The questions cover a wide age range of children, but please answer each one as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain, or the question seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of your child's behaviour over the last six months.

	Not true	Somewhat true	Certainly true
• Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Often complains of headaches, stomach aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Shares readily with others (food, games, pens etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Rather solitary, tends to play alone or keep to ( <i>him/her</i> ) self	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Has many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Often fights with others or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Generally liked by other young people	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Nervous in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Picked on or bullied by other young people	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Often volunteers to help others (parents, other young people, teachers)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Gets on better with adults than with people of own age	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
• Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>

**Q7b Overall, do you think that your child has difficulties in one or more of the following areas: emotions, concentration, behaviour or being able to get on with other people?**

No

☐ <sub>1</sub>

SKIP TO Q8 on page 6

Yes –  
minor  
difficulties

☐ <sub>2</sub>

If you have answered “Yes”, please answer the rest of the questions on this page

Yes –  
definite  
difficulties

☐ <sub>3</sub>

Yes –  
severe  
difficulties

☐ <sub>4</sub>

IF YOUR CHILD HAS DIFFICULTIES:

**Q7c How long have these difficulties been present?**

Less than  
a month

☐ <sub>1</sub>

1 – 5  
months

☐ <sub>2</sub>

6 – 12  
months

☐ <sub>3</sub>

Over  
a year

☐ <sub>4</sub>

**Q7d Do the difficulties upset or distress him/her?**

Not at all

☐ <sub>1</sub>

Only a little

☐ <sub>2</sub>

Quite a lot

☐ <sub>3</sub>

A great deal

☐ <sub>4</sub>

**Q7e Do the difficulties interfere with his/her everyday life in the following areas?**

Not  
at all

Only a  
little

Quite  
a lot

A  
great deal

Home Life

☐ <sub>1</sub>
☐ <sub>2</sub>
☐ <sub>3</sub>
☐ <sub>4</sub>

Friendships

☐ <sub>1</sub>
☐ <sub>2</sub>
☐ <sub>3</sub>
☐ <sub>4</sub>

Learning

☐ <sub>1</sub>
☐ <sub>2</sub>
☐ <sub>3</sub>
☐ <sub>4</sub>

Leisure/ Out Of School Activities

☐ <sub>1</sub>
☐ <sub>2</sub>
☐ <sub>3</sub>
☐ <sub>4</sub>

**Q7f Do the difficulties put a burden on you or the family as a whole?**

Not at all

☐ <sub>1</sub>

Only a little

☐ <sub>2</sub>

Quite a lot

☐ <sub>3</sub>

A great deal

☐ <sub>4</sub>

**Q8 Now we'd like to ask some questions about your relationship with your child.**

Parents and children often have arguments and disagreements. This is a list of some of the things you may have done when you had an argument with your child.

Please tick **ONE** box on each line to tell us how often **YOU** did any of these things in the last week. (If you didn't have an argument in the last week, tick 'Not done in past week')

	Not done in past week	Once	2 or 3 times	4 - 7 times	More than 7 times
Discussed the issue calmly with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Sulked or refused to talk about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Shouted or yelled at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Swore at him/her, or said something nasty to him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Stomped off in huff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Threatened to hit, or threatened to throw something at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Hit him/her or threw something at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q9 Please tick ONE box on each line to say whether the things below are true for you and your child at the moment.**

	Very true	Fairly true	Neither true, nor untrue	Fairly untrue	Not at all true	Can't say
We talk together a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
She/he listens to my point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
We have a lot of arguments	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
She/he understands how I am feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
Whenever I try to talk to him/her, we end up fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>



**Q10 Please tick ONE box on each line to say how often the things below apply to you these days.**

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	Hardly ever or never
I know where my child is when I am not with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
I know what my child is doing when I am not with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When my child goes out, I know who he/she is with	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When my child goes out, I know what time he/she will be back	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q11 How often do you do the following things with your child these days? Please tick ONE box on each line.**

	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Praise him/her, or say he/she has done well at something	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Lose your temper with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Criticise him/her, or say he/she is bad	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Tell him/her you love him/her, or say that you care for him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q12 Thinking about how you get on with your child these days, how often do you feel each of the following things? Please tick ONE box on each line**

	Always	Most of the time	About half of the time	Less than half of the time	Hardly ever or never	Can't say
I understand why he/she behaves like she does	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I am able to set 'ground rules' for him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I can solve problems between us without losing my temper	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she does as he/she is asked	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I feel he/she respects me	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she does whatever he/she likes, no matter what I do or say	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she pushes me to the end of my tether/to breaking point	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I know how he/she is feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I can trust him/her to behave responsibly	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I know where to turn for help with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q13 Taking everything into account, how well do you think you have been coping with your child over the past month? Please tick ONE box.**

Very well	Fairly well	Neither well Nor badly	Fairly badly	Very badly	Can't say
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q14 Finally, while you are on the programme, in your view how important is it for you to get help in the following areas? Please tick ONE box on each line**

	Help urgently required	Some help required	No help required
Communication (talking to your child)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Handling arguments with your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Handling arguments with your partner (leave blank if you do not have a partner)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Setting boundaries/ disciplining your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Improving your child's school attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Dealing with your child's offending	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Managing difficult behaviour by your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>

**Q15 Is there anything else not on this list you would like help with?**

Please write in your answer below

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**Thank you very much for filling out our form. Now please put it in the envelope provided.**



National Evaluation of the  
Youth Justice Board's  
Parenting Programme

PRB P118/Mother/ T2

FORM TO BE COMPLETED  
AT END OF YJB PARENTING PROGRAMME

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MOTHERS

CONFIDENTIAL

What this form is for

You may remember filling in a form like this a while ago as part of a national survey being carried out to find out more about the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme. Now that you have finished the Programme, we would like to ask you a few more questions about your recent experiences and what you thought of the Programme. There are no right or wrong answers - it is just important to try to be as honest as you can.

The form is **private and confidential** – only the researchers will see your answers. When you have finished, please put your form in the envelope provided. There is no need to put your name on the form or on the envelope.

EVALUATORS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOX BEFORE DISTRIBUTING QUESTIONNAIRES

YJB Project Number

Individual serial number

Young person's PNC Number if applicable :.....

Date sent out

**Q1 Altogether, how long were you on the programme?** Please write in the total weeks in the box:

Number of weeks

**Q2 About how many sessions did you take part in?** Please write in the number of sessions in the box:

Number of sessions

**Q3 How did you feel about the number of sessions you had?** Please tick ONE box:

Too many

About right

Not enough

Can't say

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

**Q4 Which of these did you take part in while you were on the programme?** Please tick all the boxes that apply.

Discussion group led by a trainer or other professional ☐ 1

Support group led by other parents ☐ 1

Parent education classes ☐ 1

Someone from the programme visited you at home ☐ 1

Private sessions with a counsellor or adviser (one to one) ☐ 1

Private sessions with your partner and a counsellor or adviser ☐ 1

'Homework' exercises (things to do or try at home) ☐ 1

Meetings with a mentor or befriender ☐ 1

Worked with an interactive computer programme ☐ 1

Sessions or activities with your child ☐ 1

Something else (please say what) ☐ 1

.....

**Q5 How much help did you get with the following things while you were on the programme? Please tick ONE box per line.**

	Got a lot of help	Got some help	Got no help
Communication (talking to your child)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Handling arguments with your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Handling arguments with your partner (leave blank if you do not have a partner)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Setting boundaries / disciplining your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Improving your child's school attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Dealing with your child's offending	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Managing difficult behaviour by your child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>

**Q6 How well do the following statements describe the programme, in your view?**

	Very true	Fairly true	Neither true, nor untrue	Fairly untrue	Not at all true	Can't say
It was interesting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
The sessions took place at a convenient time of day	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
The sessions took place in a convenient location	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
The staff or volunteers knew what they were doing	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
The staff or volunteers understood how I was feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
The staff or volunteers listened to what I had to say	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q7 Overall, how would you rate the programme? Tick ONE box**

Very helpful; I got a lot out of it	Fairly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Fairly unhelpful	Very unhelpful; it was a waste of time	Can't say
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q8 Would you recommend the programme to other parents in your situation?**

Yes	No	Can't say
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>

**Q9 Now we'd like to ask some questions about your relationship with the child whose behaviour led to you being on the parenting programme.**

**Parents and children often have arguments and disagreements. This is a list of some of the things you may have done when you had an argument with your child.**

**Please tick ONE box on each line to tell us how often YOU did any of these things in the last week. (If you didn't have an argument in the last week, tick 'Not done in past week')**

	Not done in past week	Once	2 or 3 times	4 - 7 times	More than 7 times
Discussed the issue calmly with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Sulked or refused to talk about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Shouted or yelled at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Swore at him/her, or said something nasty to him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Stomped off in huff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Threatened to hit, or threatened to throw something at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Hit him/her or threw something at him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q10 Please tick ONE box on each line to say whether the things below are true for you and your child at the moment.**

	Very true	Fairly true	Neither true, nor untrue	Fairly untrue	Not at all true	Can't say
We talk together a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
She/he listens to my point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
We have a lot of arguments	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
She/he understands how I am feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
Whenever I try to talk to him/her, we end up fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q. 11 Please tick ONE box on each line to say how often the things below apply to you these days.**

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	Hardly ever or never
I know where my child is when I am not with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
I know what my child is doing when I am not with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When my child goes out, I know who he/she is with	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When my child goes out, I know what time he/she will be back	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q12 How often do you do the following things with your child these days? Please tick ONE box on each line.**

	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Praise him/her, or say he/she has done well at something	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Lose your temper with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Criticise him/her, or say he/she is bad	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Tell him/her you love him/her, or say that you care for him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>



**Q13 Thinking about how you get on with your child these days, how often do you feel each of the following things? Please tick ONE box on each line**

	Always	Most of the time	About half of the time	Less than half of the time	Hardly ever or never	Can't say
I understand why he/she behaves like she does	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I am able to set 'ground rules' for him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I can solve problems between us without losing my temper	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she does as he/she is asked	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I feel he/she respects me	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she does whatever he/she likes, no matter what I do or say	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
He/she pushes me to the end of my tether/to breaking point	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I know how he/she is feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I can trust him/her to behave responsibly	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I know where to turn for help with him/her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q14 Taking everything into account, how well do you think you have been coping with your child over the past month? Please tick ONE box.**

Very well	Fairly well	Neither well nor badly	Fairly badly	Very badly	Can't say
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

**Thank you very much for filling out our form. Now please put it in the envelope provided.**

PRB P118/Young Person - M / T1

FORM TO BE COMPLETED  
AT START OF YJB PARENTING PROGRAMME**YOUNG PERSON'S QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**for young people whose mothers are taking part in the parenting**  
**programme****CONFIDENTIAL****What this form is for**

We would like you to fill in this form as part of a survey being carried out to find out more about parents and young people who are involved in the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme. We would like to ask you some questions about your life. There are no right or wrong answers - it is just important to try to be as honest as you can.

The form is **private and confidential** – that means your answers will **not** be shown to anyone apart from the researchers. When you have finished, please put your form in the envelope provided. There is no need to put your name on the form or on the envelope.

**EVALUATORS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOX BEFORE DISTRIBUTING QUESTIONNAIRES**

YJB Project Number

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Individual serial number

3					–	1
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Young person's PNC Number if applicable : .....

Date sent out

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**Q1 Firstly, some background questions about yourself.**

**Are you male or female?** Tick ONE box

☐

<sub>1</sub>

Male

☐

<sub>2</sub>

Female

**Q2 What was your age last birthday?** Write in age in years

**Q3 Which of these best describes you?** Tick ONE box

**White**

- British

☐

<sub>1</sub>

- Irish

☐

<sub>2</sub>

- Any other white  
background

☐

<sub>3</sub>

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean

☐

<sub>4</sub>

- African

☐

<sub>5</sub>

- Any other Black  
background

☐

<sub>6</sub>

**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian

☐

<sub>7</sub>

- Pakistani

☐

<sub>8</sub>

- Bangladeshi

☐

<sub>9</sub>

- Any other Asian  
background

☐

<sub>10</sub>

**Mixed**

- White and  
Black Caribbean

☐

<sub>11</sub>

- White and  
Black African

☐

<sub>12</sub>

- White and Asian

☐

<sub>13</sub>

- Any other mixed  
background

☐

<sub>14</sub>

**Chinese or other ethnic group**

- Chinese

☐

<sub>15</sub>

- Other

☐

<sub>16</sub>

**Q4** Now we'd like to ask you some questions about how you get on with your mother. Parents and children often have arguments and disagreements. This is a list of some of the things you may have done when you had an argument with your mother.

Please tick **ONE** box on each line to tell us how often **YOU** did any of these things with your mother in the last week. (If you didn't have an argument in the last week, tick 'not done in past week')

	Not done in past week	Once	2 or 3 times	4-7 times	More than 7 times
Discussed the issue calmly with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Sulked or refused to talk about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Shouted or yelled at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Swore at her, or said something nasty to her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Stomped off in huff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Threatened to hit her, or threatened to throw something at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Hit her or threw something at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q5** The next few questions are about how things are for you at home. Please tick **ONE** box on each line to say whether the things below are true for you at the moment.

	Very true	Fairly true	Neither true, nor untrue	Fairly untrue	Not at all true	Can't say
My mother and I talk together a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother listens to my point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother and I have a lot of arguments	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I tell my mother my problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother understands how I am feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
Whenever I try to talk to my mother, we end up fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q6 Please tick ONE box on each line to say how often the things below apply to you these days.**

	Always	Most of the time	About half of the time	Less than half of the time	Hardly ever or never
My mother knows where I am when I am not with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
My mother knows what I am doing when I am not with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When I go out, my mother knows who I am with	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When I go out, my mother knows what time I will be back	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q7 How often does your mother do the following things these days? Please tick ONE box on each line.**

	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Praises you, or says you have done well at something	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Loses her temper with you	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Criticises you, or says you are bad	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Tells you she loves you or cares for you	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q8 Finally, please say which of these things you have ever done (even if you weren't caught). For each thing you say 'yes' to at question (a), please go on to answer questions (b) , (c) and (d).**

	(a) Have you ever done it? Write 'YES' if you have done this thing; leave blank if never done	(b) How old were you when you first did it? Write in the age you were, in years	(c) How many times have you done this in the last year? Write in the number of times	(d) How many times in the last month (the last four weeks)? Write in the number of times
Taken a car, motorbike etc. without the owner's permission	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Driven a car or bike when you were drunk or over the limit	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Damaged or destroyed anything, like a phone box, windows etc. or written graffiti ('tagging')	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen money from a gas or electricity meter, public phone, vending machine or any other type of machine	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from any kind of shop	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from your family or a friend's house	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Gone into any other house or building intending to steal anything	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from a car	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Snatched anything from a person, like a purse or bag	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Used or sold a stolen credit card, chequebook, cash card etc.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bought, sold or kept anything else you thought was stolen	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from anywhere else (e.g. school, youth club, workplace, building site)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Please turn over** →

**Continued from previous page**

	(a) Have you ever done it? Write 'YES' if you have done this thing; leave blank if never done	(b) How old were you when you first did it? Write in the age you were, in years	(c) How many times have you done this in the last year? Write in the number of times	(d) How many times in the last month (the last four weeks)? Write in the number of times
Threatened someone with a weapon, or a beating (e.g. to get money or make them do something)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Carried a weapon (knife, gun etc.)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Got into a fight in public somewhere (e.g. on the street, football ground, in a pub etc)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bought drugs for your own use	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sold drugs to someone else	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Set fire to anything on purpose (e.g. building, car, furniture)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Beat up or hurt someone in your family, causing them to need medical treatment	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Beat up or hurt someone <b>not</b> in your family, causing them to need medical treatment	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Have you done anything else that could have got you into trouble? Please write in below:	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

-----  
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**Thank you very much for filling out our form. Now please put it in the envelope provided.**



PRB P118/Young Person - M / T2

FORM TO BE COMPLETED  
AT END OF YJB PARENTING PROGRAMME

## YOUNG PERSON'S QUESTIONNAIRE

### for young people whose mothers have taken part in the parenting programme

## CONFIDENTIAL

### What this form is for

You may remember filling in a form like this a little while ago, as part of a national survey being carried out to find out more about the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme. Now that your mother has finished the Programme, we would like to ask you to fill the form in again, to see if things have changed at all. There are no right or wrong answers - it is just important to try to be as honest as you can.

The form is **private and confidential** – that means your answers will **not** be shown to anyone apart from the researchers. When you have finished, please put your form in the envelope provided. There is no need to put your name on the form or on the envelope.

### EVALUATORS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOX BEFORE DISTRIBUTING QUESTIONNAIRES

YJB Project Number

Individual serial number

 3     –  1

Young person's PNC Number if applicable : .....

Date sent out

**Q1** Parents and children often have arguments and disagreements. This is a list of some of the things you may have done when you had an argument with your mother.

Please tick **ONE** box on each line to tell us how often **YOU** did any of these things with your mother in the last week. (If you didn't have an argument in the last week, tick 'not done in past week')

	Not done in past week	Once	2 or 3 times	4-7 times	More than 7 times
Discussed the issue calmly with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Sulked or refused to talk about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Shouted or yelled at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Swore at her, or said something nasty to her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Stomped off in huff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Threatened to hit her, or threatened to throw something at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Hit her or threw something at her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q2** The next few questions are about how things are for you at home. Please tick **ONE** box on each line to say whether the things below are true for you at the moment.

	Very True	Fairly true	Neither true, nor untrue	Fairly untrue	Not at all true	Can't say
My mother and I talk together a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother listens to my point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother and I have a lot of arguments	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
I tell my mother my problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
My mother understands how I am feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
Whenever I try to talk to my mother, we end up fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

**Q3 Please tick ONE box on each line to say how often the things below apply to you these days.**

	Always	Most of the time	About half of the time	Less than half of the time	Hardly ever or never
My mother knows where I am when I am not with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
My mother knows what I am doing when I am not with her	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When I go out, my mother knows who I am with	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
When I go out, my mother knows what time I will be back	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q4 How often does your mother do the following things these days? Please tick ONE box on each line.**

	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Praises you, or says you have done well at something	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Loses her temper with you	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Criticises you, or says you are bad	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Tells you she loves you or cares for you	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**Q5 Finally, please say which of these things you have done in the last month (the last four weeks), even if you weren't caught. For each thing you say 'yes' to at question (a), answer question (b).**

	(a) Have you done this thing in the last month (last four weeks)? Write in 'YES' if you have done it; leave blank if not	(b) How many times have you done this thing in the last month (last four weeks)? Write the number of times
Taken a car, motorbike etc. without the owner's permission	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Driven a car or bike when you were drunk or over the limit	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Damaged or destroyed anything, like a phone box, windows etc. or written graffiti ('tagging')	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen money from a gas or electricity meter, public phone, vending machine or any other type of machine	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from any kind of shop	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from your family or a friend's house	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Gone into any other house or building intending to steal anything	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from a car	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Snatched anything from a person, like a purse or bag	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Used or sold a stolen credit card, chequebook, cash card etc.	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Bought, sold or kept anything else you thought was stolen	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Stolen anything from anywhere else (e.g. school, youth club, workplace, building site)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>
Threatened someone with a weapon, or a beating (e.g. to get money or make them do something)	<input type="text"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="text"/>

**Please turn over** →

**Continued from previous page**

**(a) Have you done this thing in the last month (last four weeks)?**

Write in 'YES' if you have done it; leave blank if not

**(b) How many times have you done this thing in the last month (last four weeks)?**

Write the number of times

Threatened someone with a weapon, or a beating (e.g. to get money or make them do something)



Carried a weapon (knife, gun etc.)



Got into a fight in public somewhere (e.g. on the street, football ground, in a pub etc)



Bought drugs for your own use



Sold drugs to someone else



Set fire to anything on purpose (e.g. building, car, furniture)



Beat up or hurt someone in your family, causing them to need medical treatment



Beat up or hurt someone **not** in your family, causing them to need medical treatment



Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment



Have you done anything else that could have got you into trouble? Please write in below:



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**Q6 Finally, is there anything you would like to say about the parenting programme?** Please write in your answer below

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**Thank you for filling in this form. Now please put it in the envelope provided.**

P118/Staff / T2

FORM TO BE COMPLETED  
AT END OF YJB PARENTING PROGRAMME

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

## CONFIDENTIAL

## What this form is for

This form asks for a small amount of background data, from staff, on parents who have taken part in the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme. The form is **private and confidential** – only the researchers will see your answers. When you have finished, please put your form in the envelope provided.

## EVALUATORS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOX BEFORE DISTRIBUTING QUESTIONNAIRES

YJB Project Number

Individual serial number of parent

Young person's PNC Number if applicable :.....

Date sent out

**Q1 What is the sex of this parent? Tick ONE box** ☐<sub>1</sub> Male ☐<sub>2</sub> Female

**Q2 Is the parent's partner also attending the programme? Tick ONE box**

Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable (no partner)
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

**Q3 What date did this parent first start on the programme/course?**

Enter date

D	D	M	M	Y	Y
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Q4 What date did this parent finish on the programme/course?**

Enter date (i.e. last date of attending)

D	D	M	M	Y	Y
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Q5 For how many weeks (from start to finish) did the parent attend the programme? Enter weeks**

**Q6 How many sessions in total should this parent have attended or taken part in? Enter maximum number of sessions**

**Q7 How many sessions in total did this parent *actually* attend or take part in? Enter number of sessions actually completed**

**Q8 In total, how many hours of contact did this parent have with the programme? Enter number of hours actually completed**

**Q9 How did this parent come to be referred to the programme?**

Please tick all the boxes that apply

Sent by court after receiving a Parenting Order ☐<sub>1</sub>

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Voluntary attendance via YOT ☐<sub>1</sub>

Referred by other agency:

Education ☐<sub>1</sub>

Health ☐<sub>1</sub>

Social services ☐<sub>1</sub>

Other ☐<sub>1</sub>

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Self referral, no agency involved ☐<sub>1</sub>

**Q10 Which of these things did this parent take part in, or receive, whilst on the programme?** Please tick all the boxes that apply.

Discussion group led by a trainer/other professional	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Support group led by other parents	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Parent education classes	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Home visits	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Private sessions with a counsellor or adviser (one to one)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Private sessions with his/her partner and a counsellor or adviser	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
'Homework' exercises (things to do or try at home)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Meetings with a mentor or befriender	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Worked with an interactive computer programme	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Sessions or activities with the child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Something else (please say what .....)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>

**Q11 When first referred, how would you describe this parent's attitude to being on the programme or course?** Please tick ONE box

Very happy about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Fairly happy	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
Neither happy nor unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Fairly unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Not at all happy about it	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Can't say	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>



**Q12 Now that the parent has stopped attending the programme or course, how would you describe his or her attitude? Please tick ONE box**

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Very satisfied                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Fairly satisfied                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (i.e. neutral) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Fairly dissatisfied                               | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Very dissatisfied                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Can't say   | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

**Q13 In your view, how much did this parent benefit from being on the programme or course? Give your answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = parent benefited a great deal and 5 = no benefit at all**

Enter a number from 1 to 5

**Q14 Is there anything else you would like to say about this parent, or about his/her involvement in the course or programme, that might help the evaluators?**

Please write in your answer below

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**Thank you very much for filling in this form. Now please return it to the evaluator.**

## **Appendix 3**

### **Parenting Programme Reconviction Study – Technical Note and References**

## Appendix 3

### Parenting Programme Reconviction Study – Technical Note and References

Marcelo Ramella, Sharon Jowitt and Ann Hagell

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**1 Background: Undertaking reconviction studies**

*Typical outcome variables*

*Typical explanatory variables*

*Comparisons*

*Some general problems facing reconviction/reoffending studies*

**2 Methods**

*Sample*

*Data collection*

*Information collected*

**3 Data preparation and analysis**

*Data cleaning and merging*

*Analysis procedures*

*References*

## **1 Background: Undertaking reconviction studies**

This project complements the National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme, and the main results of both are integrated into the body of this report. This Appendix presents additional information on how the reconviction data were collected, collated and analysed.

The reconviction study focused on collating and analysing data on reconvictions for a sample of young people whose parents were referred to the Parenting Programme during a key qualifying period (1 July 2000 - 30 Sept 2000). While the main study addresses important issues of implementation, processes and outcomes regarding parenting itself, this reconviction study allows us to concentrate on the possible impact of schemes on the recidivism rates of young people whose families were referred to the Programme - a key aim of all the YJB's intervention programmes.

This report represents preliminary analyses, as a fuller report on the reconviction study is due to the YJB in December 2002, drawing on data from a larger group of referrals. However, preliminary data were thought to be informative at this early stage and are a critical part of the main report.

### ***Previous research on reconvictions: data sources & analytic techniques***

Research on reconvictions following different disposals now has a relatively long history. Most of the research in the UK originates in the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, where a considerable volume of effort has been invested, over the years, in developing data bases and modelling reconviction. Work began in earnest in the early 1980s and a number of key reports were published in the 1990s. Information on reconvictions is published regularly in the Home Office Probation Statistics and Prison Statistics, and in a series of Home Office Statistical Bulletins.

Generally speaking, data sources are restricted to the Offenders Index (OI) and the Police National Computer (PNC). The data source used for reconviction statistics in this instance was the PNC, which is usually used for evaluations of particular programmes (Allnutt, 2001). It is considered better suited for these purposes than the OI because it contains date of offence data as well as date of conviction (allowing the analyst to exclude pseudo-convictions<sup>1</sup>). PNC data also

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudo-convictions are convictions that occur within the defined follow-up period, but which actually relate to offences committed earlier. They occur because of the common time delay between being caught and being brought to court. However, it is interesting to note that recent

includes wider range of offences than OI, and cautions as well as convictions. An investigation of robustness of the data is ongoing (Lancaster and Cambridge Universities). OI was computerised in the 1990s and is used solely for statistics and research purposes, containing information on more than six million offenders.

Analysis of reconviction usually relies on (a) reports of absolute levels of reconviction, and (b) logistic regression with reconviction in a certain period as the outcomes variable (did they/didn't they), and a set of factors known to influence later offending entered as predictors. Lloyd (1994) represented one of the first major exercises to compare reconviction across a range of different disposals, and the methods used in studies since this date are usually fairly similar.

***Typical outcome variables:***

Due to the timetable set for the project by outside constraints (needs of policy makers etc), the choice of reconviction period was set for us at one year following intervention. It is important to note, however, particularly when tempted to compare reconviction data across studies, that different studies have used different periods and there are arguments for a longer period. Some of those used have included:

- 12 months reconviction (Farrington, Hancock et al 2000; Raynor and Vanston, 1996)
- Two year reconviction (eg Jennings and Howard 2002, Kershaw 1999)
- Six years reconviction (Philpotts and Lancucki, 1979)
- Cumulative risk at monthly periods up to 2 years (Copas et al 1996)

It is also important to note the difference between results based on **conviction** and those based on **offending**. As we have indicated, one of the advantages of the PNC is that it offers date of offending as well as conviction. However, tradition remains that reconviction is the most common outcome variable. Reconviction is interesting in its own right for a variety of reasons, but it is influenced in a major way by a whole separate set of variables that do not impact on offending (at least not to the same extent) - that is, influences from within the criminal justice system itself. These include local variations in sentencing patterns, shifts in magistrates attitudes and benchmarks, systematic bias against certain groups (eg, those from ethnic minorities), etc. There are strong theoretical arguments for using offending as a closer proxy of behaviour.

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HO analyses suggest that initiatives to speed up youth justice are reducing the rate of pseudo-convictions in reconviction studies (Jennings and Howard, unpublished report 2002).

Different aspects of offending might be the target. These have included, for example:

- Offended again within a key period (again, these vary)
- Volume of offending within a key period (whether reduced)
- Types of offending committed within a key period (whether more or less serious than before)

Allnutt suggests that models should be routinely refitted and reported for different time periods - 6 months, one year, two years, three years etc., to alleviate the "time horizon problem" inherent in reconviction studies (Allnutt p19). We also believe that both offending and conviction should be explored, and have taken this route in our analyses for this project.

### ***Typical explanatory variables***

The best predictors of future reoffending typical tend to include age, sex, age first conviction, number of previous convictions, ever in custody previously, offence types (ever convicted of violence, for eg, or burglary), and whether breached earlier sentences.

Meta-analysis of prediction of criminal recidivism in juveniles tested eight main groups of predictors. The domain of offence history was the strongest predictor, followed by family problems, ineffective use of leisure time, delinquent peers, conduct problems and nonsevere pathology (Cottle, Lee and Heilbrun, 2001). Obviously it is not possible to operationalise most of these in a study of this type.

### ***Comparisons***

Reconviction or reoffending statistics are relatively meaningless unless they can be compared either to those of other people with similar background characteristics, or to earlier behaviour of the offender him/herself. The main comparisons tend to be:

- (a) with baseline levels, set by the 'general population' of offenders
- (b) with other groups: experimental versus control or comparison groups
- (c) with selves: reconviction rate compared with how they were predicted to behave following release, based on predicted reconviction rate for others with similar constellation of explanatory variables.

### ***Some general problems facing reconviction/reoffending studies***

- Did they/didn't they analyses are very simplistic, and a considerable amount of useful data is lost in a binary outcome measure. However, these models are intuitively appealing and easy to understand.

- Reconviction is only a proxy measure of reoffending (3% of offences end up as a conviction) and any attempt to extrapolate from reconviction to underlying behaviour is risky.
- If researchers are making comparisons among groups, they need to take account of fact that results are heavily influenced by characteristics of groups (Kershaw, 1999)
- Correlations between background factors and disposals (eg, magistrates are liable to give some disposals more commonly to younger children) sometimes leads to underestimate of disposal effects (Allnutt 2001)
- There is a need to make adjustment for pseudo-convictions when comparing predicted & actual re-convictions rates (people on community disposals more likely to be taken back to court during disposal than those in custody). If they can't be ruled out, various adjustments in the region 2-4% are suggested (Kershaw 1999; Farrington et al, 2000)
- There is a need to understand the nature of the disposal as actually experienced in order to interpret reconviction data that compares outcomes from different disposals or interventions. Custody, for example, can be a very different experience depending on where the offender serves the sentence.
- There is a debate over whether to include cautions or not (they are a guilty finding and are thus strictly speaking a conviction. However, they are left off the OI and are thus not in a number of key publications, reducing comparability among studies. They are included in our current study.
- Because of the large number of programmes on offer within the youth justice system currently, and frequent changes in programmes & introduction of new elements, and the involvement of offenders in more than one programme at a time, unpicking the effects of any one component is a real challenge and may be impossible without random allocation designs.
- Sentence is usually a worse predictor of reconviction than other factors such as age of first conviction (Philpotts and Lancucki, 1979). Relatedly, differences in outcomes for different disposals once other factors held constant are likely to be small (Kershaw 1999).
- Predicted rates of reconviction are subject to time trends. Rates of reconviction from community service were, for eg, lower in 1983 to 1987, and this is accountable for by changes in population of offenders (Kershaw, 1999).
- Differences between actual and predicted rates of reoffending should not be treated as an absolute measure of effectiveness (or not) of disposal. There is a great deal of 'error' in the system including local factors such as clear-up rates (Kershaw 1999). Where possible, local comparison groups should be used

As a background figure, reconviction rates for young people generally range from around 20 per cent for first time offenders receiving cautions, to around 80

per cent for frequent offenders who have been sentenced to custody. Jennings and Howard (2002) presented one year reconviction figures for a range of community disposals for a large representative sample of young offenders in 1999 (n11,562) taken from the PNC database. In their sample (from which the more serious offenders sentenced to custody were excluded) the average reconviction rate was 33.7 per cent, with rates for young people sentenced to community based orders ranging from 54.6 per cent to 60.8 per cent (community service, attendance centre order, supervision order and probation). These provide a benchmark for the population young offenders sentenced to non-custodial disposals.



## 2 Methods

### *Sample*

The reconviction study includes analysis of offending data on young people, whose parents were referred to a Development Fund Parenting Programme between 1 July 2000 and 30 September 2000 (n296). The majority of the young people involved were known offenders, although a small minority (less than 5 per cent, excluded from most analyses) were simply at risk of offending. We focused on parents who were referred to a parenting programme via the Courts (i.e. 'Criminal' and Educational Parenting Orders) or via the Youth offending team, on a voluntary basis. Other types of referrals, eg via education and social services or self-referrals, were not included. The study included parents who attended a parenting programme voluntarily (64.5 per cent), as well as parents subject to a 'criminal' Parenting Order (31.1 per cent). We also included 13 young people (4.4 per cent) whose parents were subject to an 'educational' Parenting Order.

From the original proposals submitted to the Youth Justice Board, a total number of 42 parenting projects from 39 Youth Offending Teams received a Development Fund grant from the Youth Justice Board. The Yots in Hammersmith and Fulham, Leeds and Wirral received funds for two interventions each. From the 39 Yots, a total of six failed to develop from the outset and were therefore, excluded from the National Evaluation of Parenting Programmes and by default from the reconviction study. The remaining 33 Yots were contacted by PRB research team and all agreed to take part in the study

One intervention (West Berkshire) was excluded from the reconviction study on the grounds that referrals were made by services other than the youth offending team, and that the programme provided an early intervention for families with children under 11 years. The exclusion of West Berkshire brought the pool of Yots down from 33 to 32.

During the data collection process a further 6 Yots were excluded on the grounds that there were no parent referrals to a parenting intervention during the period of study. The reconviction study therefore includes data from a total of 26 Youth Offending Teams engaged in the delivery of YJB Development Fund Parenting Interventions. From the 26 Yots a total of 383 cases were recorded, 296 of which were included in the study, at an average of 11.38 cases each (see Part 3, for details on case exclusion and inclusion criteria). Table 1.1 below provides details of all Yots considered for this research and a breakdown of cases recorded and included in this study.

Table 1.1 Number of cases recorded in each YOT and number of valid matches

N.	Youth Offending Team	YJB ID	Cases	
			Recorded	Included
1	Barnsley (4)	254	0	0
2	Birmingham	207	31	22
3	Blackpool	332	15	11
4	Bracknell Forest/Slough/Windsor and Maidenhead (4)	374	0	0
5	Bradford and District	262	27	23
6	Bristol (2)	273	---	---
7	Devon	214	8	8
8	Ealing (4)	248B	0	0
9	Gateshead	407	24	21
10	Greater Manchester – Barton Moss (2)	166	---	---
11	Greater Manchester – Empowering Parents	177	9	9
12	Greenwich	371	18	14
13	Hackney/Newham/Tower Hamlets (4)	357	0	0
14	Hammersmith and Fulham – Early Intervention (1)	81		
15	Hammersmith and Fulham – Parent Mentor (1)	80	6	5
16	Haringey	105	7	5
17	Hartlepool	75	1	1
18	Hounslow (2)	334	---	---
19	Islington	99	2	1
20	Kingston Upon Hull (2)	56	---	---
21	Kirklees	323	22	3
22	Leeds – Family Service Units (1)	184		
23	Leeds – Home Start (1)	117	4	4
24	Leicester	161	4	3
25	Lewisham	257	7	6
26	Liverpool (2)	363	---	---
27	Mid Kent Area (4)	353	0	0
28	Newham	343	8	5
29	Norfolk	33	32	25
30	Oldham/Tameside	172	3	3
31	Oxfordshire	400	22	18
32	Sefton	94	2	0
33	Somerset	356	12	11
34	Stockton	314	9	6
35	Suffolk (2)	239	---	---
36	Sunderland/Gateshead	421	10	7
37	Wandsworth (4)	199	0	0
38	Wessex	112	81	67
39	West Berkshire – Reading With Wokingham (3)	292	---	---
40	Wirral – Children Family Breakdown (1)	69		
41	Wirral – Extending Support Parents (1)	68	8	8
42	Worcestershire and Herefordshire	36	11	10
<b>Total</b>			<b>383</b>	<b>296</b>

- (1) Yots with more than one project but which data was treated YOT-wise (and not project-wise)
- (2) Projects excluded from the National Evaluation by the YJB
- (3) Project excluded from Reconviction Study (inclusion criteria not met)
- (4) Projects that yielded no cases

## ***Data Collection***

- 1 Letters were sent to all Youth Offending Team Managers outlining the aims and objectives of the Reconviction study, and requesting access to parents and related young people's files/records.
- 2 A series of follow-up telephone calls were made to the YOT Managers in to order to make the necessary arrangements for the collection of data.
- 3 The research team visited each of the 32 youth offending teams, spending usually one full day at each one. Some Yots, for example, in Devon or Hampshire, have various semi-autonomous units, which keep their own data. In these cases, full visits were made to each independent unit. At each participating youth offending team the research team accessed the relevant parents and young people's files. In some areas the data for parents and young people was held in separate offices, although in the majority of cases the information concerning parents and their children was accessed at one site (usually with the YOT). Some of the visits did involve more than one YOT within one area.
- 4 The data collected from parents and young people's files was transferred onto data entry sheets.

## ***Information collected***

The design of the data entry sheet ensured that only essential variables relevant to the study were collected. These included for parents, a small number of variables relating to parental engagement with the parenting programme (see copy appended below). For the young people, basic demographic variables were collected alongside information concerning age at first conviction, and the stage of the young person within the criminal justice system at the time of the parental referral to the parenting programme.

1. Youth Offending Team Name
2. Parent(s)/carer(s) referred to a parenting intervention
  - 2.1. Number of parents/carers referred (from a minimum of one to a maximum of six)
  - 2.2. Parent(s)/carer(s) relationship to young person (recorded as 'Mother', 'Father', 'Grandmother', 'Grandfather', 'Other female' and 'Other male')
  - 2.3. Source of Referral (recorded as either 'YOT' or 'Other')
  - 2.4. Type of referral (recorded as 'Voluntary referral', 'Criminal Parenting Order', 'Educational Parenting Order' or 'Other Parenting Order')
  - 2.5. Date of parent(s)/carer(s) referral to a parenting intervention

- 2.6. Date of first engagement of parent(s)/carer(s) with parenting intervention
  - 2.7. Level of parent(s)/carer(s)' engagement with parenting intervention
  - 2.8. Existence of any Breach Procedures against parent(s)/carer(s)
3. Young Person
- 3.1. Name and surname
  - 3.2. PNC Identifier
  - 3.3. CRO Identifier
  - 3.4. Date of Birth
  - 3.5. Sex
  - 3.6. Ethnicity (recorded as either 'White' or 'Other')
  - 3.7. Age at first conviction
  - 3.8. Type of disposal issued on Young Person
  - 3.9. Type of 'change programme(s)' attended by young person
  - 3.10. Young person's level of engagement with change programme(s)

The collection of data posed some conceptual and methodological challenges. These are listed below, together with the decisions taken by the research team in order to address these problems.

*Correspondence between young person's disposal (variable 3.8) and parent/carer's referral*

In some cases it was clear what disposal received by a young person triggered the referral of the parent/carer to a parenting intervention (e.g., the young person is issued an Action Plan Order and, at the same time, the magistrates issue a Criminal Parenting Order on the mother). However, in other instances this was the case. There were cases in which the decision to refer a parent was taken by the youth Offending Team as a result of an accumulation of disposals on the young person, or parents who were referred when a young person – already on an order - committed another offence. In order to address this problem, it was decided to record under variable 3.8 (Type of disposal issued on Young Person) the one immediately prior the parent(s)/carer(s) date of referral to a parenting intervention (variable 2.5).

*Correspondence between young person's disposal (variable 3.8) and change programme (variable 3.9)*

In many cases, the young person was attending a variety of change programmes, not all necessarily corresponding to the disposal recorded in variable 3.8. This was often the case with persistent offenders. For example a young person was issued a Reparation Order and requested to carry out a restorative justice change intervention. This order triggered the referral of the young person's parent(s)/care(s). Immediately after the parents' referral, the young person re-

offends and is issued with a Supervision Order which involves CBT plus Education and Training Interventions. In these cases, and provided that information was available (both on 'new' change programmes and on level of engagement on these) all change programmes were recorded. This decision was made considering that YOT caseworkers to take into consideration the number and kind of change programmes the young person who has re-offender is in at the time of drafting a new report (PSR or other).

*Determination of young person's engagement level (variable 3.10) when multiple change programmes (variable 3.9)*

In many cases, the young person attended more than one change programme, all of which (up to a maximum of seven) were recorded in the Data Entry Sheet (variable 3.9). On the other hand, the variable Engagement Level (3.10) allowed for a general recording, not discriminating programme-wise (i.e. 'Never attended', 'Attendance erratic/irregular' or 'Full engagement/complied with most or all aspects of programme'). This problem was tackling by consulting the caseworker or caseworkers in charge of the young person in question and requesting an overall assessment of the level of engagement.

*Determination of parent(s)/carer(s) engagement level (variable 2.7) when more than one parent/carers was referred (variable 2.2)*

This problem is of a similar nature to the one addressed above. In practice, in many occasions more than one parent or carer was referred to an intervention and the engagement level shown by them was different (e.g. mother and father referred, mother completed while father drops out). In these cases, we opted for recording the level shown by the parent/carers who demonstrated the better engagement.

*Determination of the notion of YOT referral (variable 2.3)*

The notion of 'YOT Referral' was not clear-cut. For example, there were cases in which the referral originates in a location outside the YOT –e.g. education social work, it is then passed to YOT, where a further assessment is made and as a decision is taken. This further assessment may take many forms, at times it is just a check to ascertain that the parent referred has a child known to YOT. Some Yots considered this a YOT referral while others didn't. The decision taken in this respect was to consider a YOT referral all those cases in which, independently from the referral origin, the YOT took a substantive referral and/or assessment step.

*Education Parenting Orders (variable 2.4)*

Some Yots do not record as YOT referral, parents on Education Parenting Orders. Some Yots kept hardly any information on Education Parenting Orders. It proved difficult to access and clearly record Education Parenting Orders

altogether. A mechanism that at times yielded positive results was to contact the Education Social Worker in the YOT.

#### *Parent(s)/carer(s) level of engagement (variable 2.7)*

Some Yots limited their record keeping to the parent(s)/carer(s) attendance level and not their engagement levels. In these cases, and wherever possible, the parenting co-ordinator was contacted in order to clarify level of engagement.

#### *Existence of any Breach Procedures against parent(s)/carer(s) (variable 2.8)*

Breach procedures proved problematic. In brief, a breach process demands that YOT gathers written information and documentation evidencing parent/carer failure to comply with Parenting Order Conditions (e.g. log of phone calls, letters sent, records of visits, meetings etc.). This information is compiled in a file and forwarded by YOT to the police. The police cross check YOT claims with the parent/carer in question. They later add their findings to the file and forward everything to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS analyses the file and decides whether or not to proceed. Breach procedures take place in a court different from the one that issued the Parenting Order. Yots may 'lose track' of the breach procedure after they forward the file to the police; they may however 're-gain' contact with the case later on, at times, months after having sent the file to the police. Often, what the YOT 'knows' is that a breach procedure has been started but they do not know if the parents will be formally breached or not. However, in our data these cases were recorded as actual breaches irrespective of the outcome.

#### *Discrepancies between YOIS Data and paper records*

In many cases discrepancies were noted between data recorded in YOT's computerised systems (YOIS) and in the documentation kept in the paper case files (e.g. date of birth of the young person). This problem was aggravated by the fact that the data capture period of the study, i.e. 1.7.2000 to 30.9.2000, coincided with the introduction of YOIS in many Yots. 'YOIS vs paper file' discrepancies were solved by opting for the paper documentation version, which was deemed to be the more reliable record.

#### *Missing data*

The problem raised above regarding the coincidence of the study with the movement from manual to electronic data systems in many Yots, created a variety of inconveniences. One such problem was the partial recording of some fields relevant to this reconviction study, for example, level of engagement of young person in change programmes. While the change programme was very often recorded, the engagement level was not. This problem was addressed by consulting the paper files or by conferencing with caseworkers or parenting co-ordinators.

### *Issues of confidentiality and data protection*

There were some particular concerns expressed by a number of youth offending teams with regards to issues of confidentiality and the protection of data. In some cases extracting PNC numbers provoked a conversation with the YOT about the use of these data for research purposes. Intervention by the YJB was useful at this time but it is our impression that some YOT practitioners remain muddled over the purposes to which data can and cannot be applied without breaching undertakings to the clients.

### **3 Data preparation and analysis**

#### ***Data cleaning and merging***

Our submission of names, dates of birth and PNC numbers to the PNC databases resulted in an initial return of 3,326 lines of offences relating to 383 individuals. There were, in total, 87 non-matches and mis-matches, where members of the sample drew a blank in the PNC database or where sample members were wrongly identified in PNC, or where the wrong lines of data from others in the sample were attached to individuals names. The total number of cases included in this study was 296, that is, the 383 cases recorded in PRB's researchers field visits to the YOT minus the 87 cases in which a PRB/PNC valid match could not be identified (see table 1.1, in Part 1 above for details).

Others have also reported problems with the PNC database where, for example, offenders can end up with more than one PNC number and submission of just one number might underestimate their offending (Allnutt, 2001). The challenges we faced were fairly routine, we suspect. In general the errors err on the side of caution, in that it is likely the extent of offending by any sample in the PNC is an underestimate. A major cleaning exercise was undertaken, including resubmission of names and return of a second dataset.

When we were confident that the dataset included all possible information in the best possible condition, at least to our ability within the timescale available, the dataset was aggregated up to the level of the individual and a series of new summary variables were derived, and names were deleted. The new variables related, for example, to the total number of convictions ever, in the year preceding the intervention, in the year after the intervention, and ever after the intervention. They also included the total number of offences ever, in the year preceding the intervention, in the year after the intervention, and ever after the intervention. For each individual we counted the number of offences committed within each of 10 offence types, and then derived further variables indicating whether offenders had ever (yes/no) been convicted of each of these types of offences. We also calculated the date of, type of and disposal for the trigger events leading to the parenting programme referral.

Finally, data from the PNC were merged with those from PRB's own data collection exercise.

#### ***Analysis procedures***

Analysis was undertaken in SPSS (version 9 for Windows) and, generally speaking, at this point was limited to relatively straightforward and easily interpreted results, serving the need to produce swift results on a preliminary



sample. Fuller analyses will be undertaken on a larger cohort later in 2002. This cohort will extend the observation period by three months, i.e. October, November and December 2000. Data were subject to a series of descriptive analyses, to chi-square testing, to t-testing and a to a short, exploratory series of logistic regressions which confirmed the patterns of the simpler analyses. The logistic regressions were not reported in the body of the text as they add little to the story, but it is anticipated that we will re-run these on the larger sample group later in the year.

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