



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

Youth offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences

**Fortieth Report of
Session 2003–04**

*Report, together with formal minutes,
oral and written evidence*

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 21 July 2004*

HC 307

Published on 12 October 2004
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£11.00

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine “the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit” (Standing Order No 148).

Current membership

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Mr Richard Allan MP (*Liberal Democrat, Sheffield Hallam*)
Mr Richard Bacon MP (*Conservative, South Norfolk*)
Mrs Angela Browning MP (*Conservative, Tiverton and Honiton*)
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Ms Ruth Kelly MP (*Labour, Bolton West*)
Jim Sheridan MP (*Labour, West Renfrewshire*)
Mr Siôn Simon MP (*Labour, Birmingham Erdington*)
Mr Gerry Steinberg MP (*Labour, City of Durham*)
Jon Trickett MP (*Labour, Hemsworth*)
Rt Hon Alan Williams MP (*Labour, Swansea West*)

The following were also members of the Committee during the period of this inquiry.

Mrs Cheryl Gillan MP (*Conservative, Chesham and Amersham*)
Mr George Osborne MP (*Conservative, Tatton*)

Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 148. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/pac>. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Session is at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee is Nick Wright (Clerk), Christine Randall (Committee Assistant), Leslie Young (Committee Assistant), and Ronnie Jefferson (Secretary).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk, Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5708; the Committee’s email address is pubacom@parliament.uk.

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Summary

Introduction

In England and Wales, crime committed by young offenders accounted for around 6.5% of all crimes in 2002, and offending by young people is of concern to many communities. A small number of persistent offenders are responsible for a significant proportion of youth crime, equivalent to 28% of juvenile cases dealt with by the courts in 2002–03. The most common offences include motoring offences, theft and violence against the person. Typical characteristics of young offenders include family problems, such as lack of parental supervision and a lack of commitment to school leading to poor educational attainment and poor job prospects. The majority of young people, however, lead crime free lives.

Dealing with young offenders is a key priority of the Home Office. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a number of reforms to the youth justice system, including the introduction of a network of Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales to work with young offenders. These teams receive part of their funding from the Youth Justice Board, with the majority of their funding coming from a variety of other sources including local authorities, the police and the National Probation Service. The reforms also included a more structured approach to pre-court intervention with a two step reprimand and final warnings procedure replacing the previous practice of repeat police cautioning.

The Youth Justice Board (the Board), established in September 1998 as a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Home Office, has been responsible for leading and supporting the implementation of the reforms in England and Wales. The Board's main aims include identifying and dealing with young offenders and reducing reoffending.

On the basis of a Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General,¹ we examined the Home Office on the delivery of custodial and higher tariff community sentences; the efforts made to address the main causes of offending behaviour; and the Youth Justice Board's role in overseeing the performance of custodial establishments and Youth Offending Teams. The Committee also visited Haringey Youth Offending Team and met staff working with young offenders, senior council officials, the local police commander and young offenders attending the various programmes.

1 C&AG's Report, *Youth offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences* (HC 190, Session 2003–04)

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. Of the 7% of young offenders sentenced to custody, eight out of ten re-offend, despite planned expenditure of £283 million on providing custodial sentences.** Short periods of custody are unlikely to make an impact on offending behaviour, nor help offenders gain the educational qualifications often necessary for a change in lifestyle. If re-offending rates are to be reduced, custodial and non-custodial elements of sentences, and rehabilitation during and on completion of sentence, need to be better integrated by the Youth Justice Board. The Youth Justice Board should review the ability of custodial establishments to tailor education programmes to meet the needs of those offenders serving short sentences.
- 2. If community sentences are to be a credible alternative to custody, they need to be administered effectively, and consistently across the country.** The Youth Justice Board has introduced an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme which requires offenders to attend for 25 hours per week compared to the 2 hours normally required for Supervision Orders. Over half the offenders on the new Programme, however, fail to meet the Programme's requirements, and around a quarter are re-sentenced to custody. The Board should identify why some offenders fail to complete the Programme, and review differences in the way Youth Offending Teams manage offenders on the Programme.
- 3. Effective rehabilitation is critical to reducing re-offending rates but Youth Offending Teams face difficulties in placing young offenders back into education, employment or suitable housing.** A more joined up approach is needed between the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Skills, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and local authorities. Incentives should be put in place, for example, by offering continuing Youth Offending Team caseworker support to educational establishments, and through establishing shared targets and goals.
- 4. The average annual cost of custodial places varies significantly between providers, but no research has been undertaken as to their relative effectiveness.** A secure Training Centre place (run by private contractors) costs £164,750, and a local Authority Secure Children's Home place costs £185,780, reflecting staffing ratios of 4 staff to 8 youngsters. A place at a Young Offender Institution run by the Prison Service costs £50,800, with a ratio of around 4 staff to 60 youngsters. The Youth Justice Board should commission research into each option's cost effectiveness in terms of re-offending rates and the welfare of the young person; establish a strategy for the nature of custodial place provision and its geographical spread; and carry out an opportunity cost analysis of steadily moving part of the custodial places into effective community surveillance and supervision.
- 5. Variability in the range and content of programmes delivered across the custodial estate impairs the ability of Youth Offending Teams to address the needs of young offenders.** The Youth Justice Board should aim to deliver core programmes across all establishments, with some establishments addressing specialist needs. Youth Offending Teams and Prison Service staff should enhance mutual

understanding of these programmes through, for example, staff exchanges and joint performance discussions and assessment of achievements.

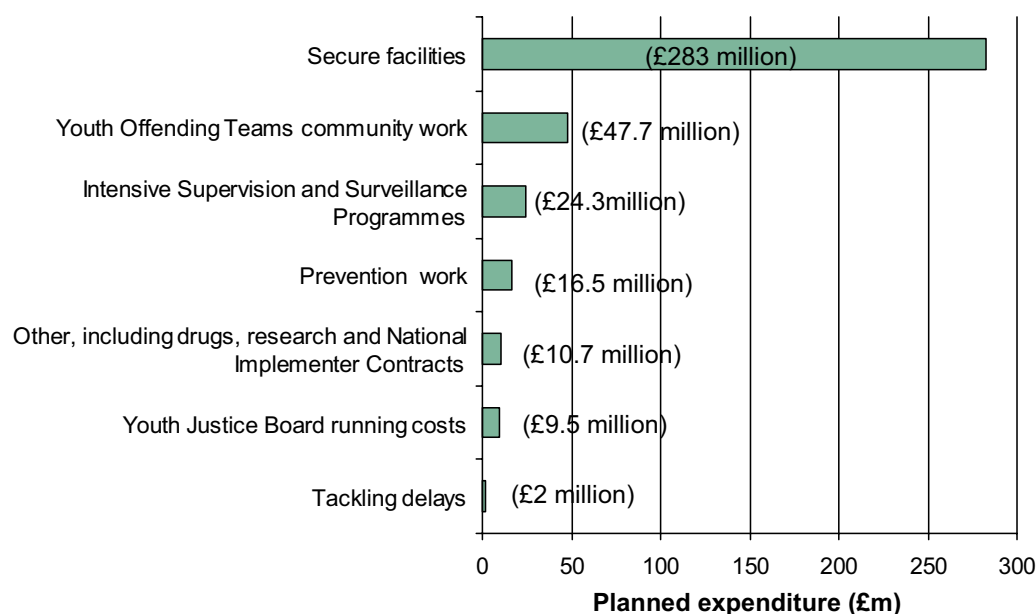
- 6. The Youth Justice Board should work more closely with courts to plan the number of custodial places likely to be needed, and to enhance the Court's confidence in community sentences.** The proportion of young offenders sentenced to custody varies significantly across the country. These variations may reflect a lack of suitable custodial places in some areas or a lack of confidence in, or knowledge of, community sentences delivered locally.
- 7. The Youth Justice Board needs to have a better grasp of the activities of Youth Offending Teams, so that national policies on youth justice are applied more consistently at the local level.** Some Youth Offending Teams are reluctant to recommend custody in any circumstances. The Board should take action where teams fail to comply with grant conditions, including withholding grant payments where merited.
- 8. The Home Office and the Youth Justice Board need to take action to help Youth Offending Teams fill front line vacancies.** Vacancy rates amongst front line staff, which were 6.5% in September 2003, must impact adversely on the effectiveness of Youth Offending Teams, and hence on the success of their work with young offenders.

1 Improving the delivery of custodial and community sentences

1. In 2002–03, the police and courts dealt with almost 268,500 offences committed by young people under the age of 18. Most young people caught committing an offence will receive a warning or a non-custodial sentence. In the same year, the police issued 73,700 warnings and reprimands to young offenders and the courts imposed 93,200 sentences. Of the latter, 64% received a sentence to be served in the community, 7% were sent to custody and the remainder received a fine or discharge.²

2. The Youth Justice Board has responsibility for obtaining value for money from the resources it provides to the custodial sector and Youth Offending Teams, as well as from its own activities. The Board has a service level agreement with the Prison Service to provide places at young offender institutions; agreements with 22 local authorities to provide places in local authority secure children’s homes; and contracts with the private sector—Rebound ECD and Premier Training Services—to provide secure accommodation in three secure training centres. **Figure 1** provides a breakdown of the Board’s planned expenditure for 2003–04.³ In 2003–04, the Youth Justice Board expected to spend around £283 million, 72% of its £394 million budget, on providing custodial places for the 7% of young offenders sentenced to custody. Yet despite this expenditure, a high proportion of young offenders placed in custody re-offend.⁴

Figure 1: Youth Justice Board planned expenditure on activities in 2003–04



Source: NAO analysis of Youth Justice Board data

² C&AG’s Report, Para 1.1

³ *ibid*, paras 1.10–1.11

⁴ Qq 1–2, 41; C&AG’s Report, 1.11

3. Around eight out of ten young offenders serving short-term custodial sentences are reconvicted within two years. The Home Office suggested that short custodial sentences were often not productive as custody could not make an impact in a short space of time. Longer sentences provided an opportunity to address offending behaviour and attain educational qualifications, and community penalties could also be effective. The Youth Justice Board had set itself a target to reduce by March 2005 the number of young people remanded and sentenced to custody by 10% from the October 2002 total. It expected this strategy to release significant resources for community-based programmes, although the majority of the Board's expenditure was likely to continue to be spent on the custodial estate.⁵

4. The Board has difficulty purchasing custodial places where they are most needed. At the beginning of February 2004, the Board had 3,580 custodial places available and just over 3,000 young people in custody. A shortage of places existed in South East and South West England. Some offenders may be placed in institutions far from their families and pressure on places can lead to frequent transfers as offenders are moved around the country to free up space in local establishments. These transfers disrupt work to rehabilitate offenders.⁶

5. The Board also lacks reliable information on the effectiveness of the different approaches to custody, for example, on reconviction rates compared to the cost. The average annual cost of a custodial place varies significantly between establishments, from £50,800 at young offender institutions to £164,000 at secure training centres and £185,780 at local authority secure children's homes (**Figure 2**). The difference in cost per place is, in part, attributable to different staffing levels. The local authority secure homes provide for example, places to vulnerable 10 to 14 year olds, some of whom may be at risk of self-harm. The current arrangements offer a choice between very high levels of supervision and much less intensive supervision, with few options in the middle. The Home Office acknowledged that some offenders who might have needed more supervision had been placed, for example, in young offender institutions. The Board and Prison Service were exploring the possibility of the Prison Service providing some form of intermediate care, costing less than £185,000 but more than £50,000 per place per year.⁷

5 Qq 2, 26

6 Qq 26, 34–35, 38–39

7 Qq 8, 15, 107

Figure 2: Secure placement provision for young offenders in 2003–04

| Institution | Educational and behaviour programme provision specified by the Youth Justice Board | Cost per place ¹ (£) | Age of offender | Number of places | Average number of staff to young offenders per unit |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|------------------|---|
| Young Offender Institution (Run by the Prison Service) | 30 hours purposeful activity for young offenders each week. This should include a minimum of 15 hours education, and may also include domestic work, eating with staff, organised and supervised games and watching some television programmes. | £50,800 | 15–17 year olds ² | 2,965 | 4 staff to 60 youngsters ⁴ |
| Secure Training Centre (Run by private contractors) | 25 hours of education and 7 hours of crime avoidance programmes each week for youngsters. | £164,750 ³ | Up to 17 years old | 194 | 4 staff to 8 youngsters ⁴ |
| Local Authority Secure Children's Home | 25 hours of education and 7 hours of offending behaviour programmes each week for each youngster. | £185,780 | 10–14 year olds and some vulnerable 15 year olds | 320 | 4 staff to 8 youngsters ⁴ |

Notes

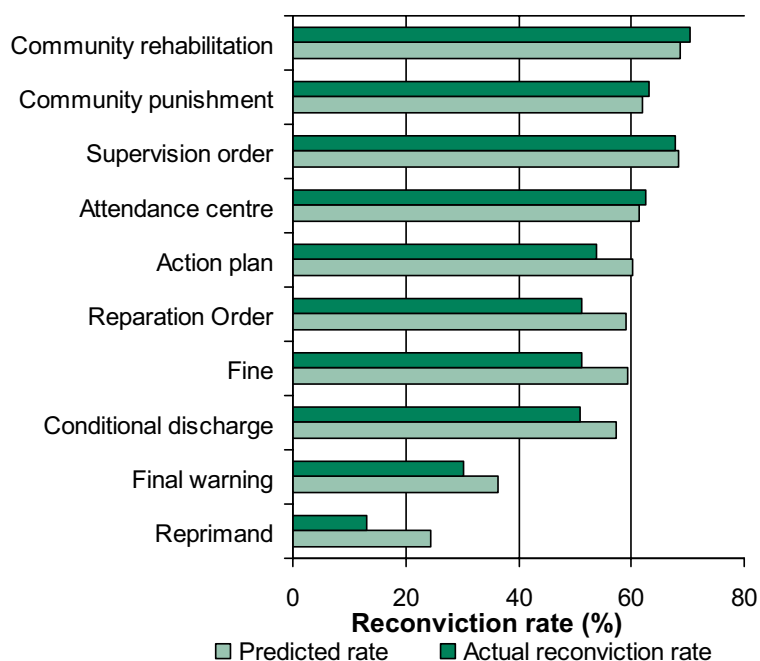
1. Based on Youth Justice Board estimates of likely spend.
2. Some young offender institutions take offenders between the ages of 15 and 21.
3. Including VAT.
4. The ratio of 4 to 60 for YOIs and 4 to 8 for Local Authority Secure Children's Homes comes from paragraph 2.33 of the C&AG's Report. The middle figure of 4 to 8 for Secure Training Centres comes from Martin Narey's answer to Question 107 (Ev 13).

Source: Youth Justice Board data

6. Research by the Board has highlighted variations in the proportion of young offenders sentenced to custody across the country, not necessarily linked to socio-economic factors or the nature of the offences. The variations could have significant implications for the Board's strategy to reduce reliance on custodial places. A lack of custodial places locally might, for example, influence a court's decision as to whether a young offender is placed in custody and in some areas the courts might want more custodial places. The Board, however, attributed variations to other factors. For example, where community interventions were weak and confidence in them low, due say, to a lack of suitable education, accommodation or effective parenting, greater use of custody was likely to be made by the courts. In some areas, local sentencing cultures had built up which might need to be reconsidered.⁸

7. The Board has focused much of its efforts on seeking to improve the effectiveness of pre-court action and community sentences, including reparation. In the mid-1990s 37% of young people found guilty at court received a conditional discharge, but by 2003 this number had fallen to 12%. Overall reconviction rates for young offenders on reprimands, final warnings and non-custodial sentences declined between 1997 and 2001. Most of the reduction had come from the replacement of police cautions in June 2000 by the more structured reprimands and final warnings. The Board also reported improvements amongst lower tariff community sentences, but reoffending rates for community sentences aimed at the more serious end of the crime scale remained comparable with 1997 levels (**Figure 3**). The latter, however, excluded the impact on re-conviction rates of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme as this programme had only recently been rolled out across the country.⁹

Figure 3: Comparison of actual against predicted reconviction rates for young offenders



Source: NAO analysis of Home Office data

8. The Board piloted the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme in 2001 as a potential alternative to custody, particularly for those offenders at risk of receiving a short term custodial sentence (**see Box**). The Programme requires young people to attend rehabilitation and other activities for a minimum of 25 hours per week, a more intensive programme than previous community sentences. Some probation areas, however, have reported that over half the young offenders placed on the programme had breached its conditions, and around half of these offenders had still ended up in custody. The Board reported that many of the young people on these programmes led chaotic lives and that some had found it difficult to cope with the requirements of an intensive programme. The

Programme's cost effectiveness in the longer term will depend on whether it reduces offending behaviour of the young people passing through it.¹⁰

The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme

The Programme includes a requirement of 25 hours of supervision per week during the first 3 months and a minimum of 5 hours in the second 3 months. The Programme includes curfews and uses a range of surveillance methods that can include electronic monitoring, voice verification technology and police monitoring.

Offenders will often be assigned a paid advocate who is expected to provide support and help tailor the activities provided on the programme to help reduce the risk of the young person reoffending. Young offenders we met in Haringey had been placed, for example, on programmes learning painting and decorating skills.

9. The credibility of community sentences depends on their terms and conditions being rigorously upheld. The National Audit Office found, however, that some Youth Offending Teams had not maintained adequate records of offenders' compliance with community sentences, for example whether the required number of attendance hours were being met. The Board reported that it had issued a practice note to Youth Offending Teams to address this issue. Local managers had been required to implement the requirements, including those on planning, supervision and enforcement. The Board intended to check next year how well the action plan had been implemented.¹¹

10 Qq 11, 60–61, 153

11 Q 154

2 Addressing the causes of offending behaviour

10. Young offenders typically exhibit a variety of problems, including family difficulties, such as lack of parental supervision and a lack of commitment to school. Research by the Youth Justice Board had indicated that just under half of the custodial population had literacy and numeracy levels six years below their actual age. In December 2002, Wetherby Young Offender Institution estimated that 90% of the 1,041 boys sent to the establishment in 2002 lacked sufficient reading and writing skills for everyday life and 79% lacked the necessary numeracy skills.¹²

11. The Home Office suggested that education in both custody and the community was the key to reducing reoffending amongst young offenders. The Board had set a target for each Youth Offending Team to ensure that 90% of young offenders are in full-time education, training or employment in the community by the end of 2004. At the time of the National Audit Office examination, 36 of the 155 youth offending teams had exceeded 80% by March 2003, and 14 teams had yet to reach 50%. Typical challenges included finding the right education and training courses, a reluctance by some young offenders to attend, and the exclusion of many young offenders from educational establishments. Progress in getting younger offenders back into mainstream education depended on Youth Offending Teams building effective relations with head teachers in their local schools.¹³

12. Wide variations exist in the range and content of education and training programmes provided across young offender institutions. Less than 20% of Youth Offending Teams responding to a National Audit Office Survey thought that education in young offender institutions was meeting the needs of young people well. The Home Office noted that around 5,000 young people were expected to gain educational qualifications whilst in young offender institutions in 2003–04. The Prison Service had invested additional resources to provide new classrooms and appoint additional assistants. The Prison Service intended to use the re-tendering of its contracts with education providers to lift the quality of education provision.¹⁴

13. The service level agreement with the Prison Service specifies a range of standards and Youth Justice Board staff visit establishments to monitor performance. Several of the performance measures specified by the Youth Justice Board have, however, not been consistent with those required by Prison Service headquarters. As a result, there have been inconsistencies in the accuracy of the data collected by establishments. And difficulties in collecting information on the number of hours of education and training provided have meant young offender institutions were unable to provide the data required for this performance measure in 2002–03. The Prison Service reported that it was working to resolve these issues.¹⁵

12 Q 4; C&AG's Report, para 2.13, Appendix 1

13 Qq 4, 115; C&AG's paras 3.13–3.14, 3.18

14 Qq 3, 94, 111; C&AG's Report, para 2.19, Figure 9

15 Qq 40, 125

14. The systems for monitoring the performance of secure training centres and local authority secure places operate differently, making it difficult to compare performance with young offender institutions. The Board monitors the performance of secure training centres using data which the firms are contractually obliged to provide. The data is examined by Youth Justice Board staff located on site. For local authority establishments, the Board had relied up until recently on its own monthly monitoring visits to examine performance. However, the Board reported that it was undertaking a re-tendering exercise with its local authority partners in 2004. It expected to put new performance monitoring arrangements in place as part of this process.¹⁶

15. Young offenders often have drug and alcohol problems, but the Home Office noted that these problems were not as serious as those of older offenders. The Board is introducing a target from 2004 for Youth Offending Teams to ensure all young people are screened for substance misuse and receive appropriate support promptly thereafter. For those placed in custody, the Board expects all young offenders to be screened for substance misuse and the risk of self harm on entry. Youth Offending Teams have reported difficulty in accessing timely and appropriate services to treat substance misuse by young offenders. The National Treatment Agency had, however, set itself the target of putting services for young people in place across 95% of the country by 2005. The Board reported that its target for the delivery of substance misuse services in custodial establishments had been exceeded in 2002–03.¹⁷

16. The Board acknowledged that the various agencies in contact with young offenders needed to work more closely together. The 2002 Homelessness Act had made accommodation for 16 to 17 year old offenders a priority. The Board is now working to improve young people's access to housing and social services. Improvements were also being made to address the mental health needs of young offenders whilst in custody. The Government's planned national framework for children and young people, which would include mental health services, was expected to address the needs of young offenders.¹⁸

17. Our visit to Haringey Youth Offending Team highlighted the part to be played by offenders' families and the community. Some of the programmes developed by this Team had, for example, sought to help offenders' families address the problems exhibited by their children. As in other areas, members of the community had also been recruited onto the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme to act as advocates for individual young offenders, providing support and direction and helping them abide by the terms of the Programme. Youth workers stressed the importance of building upon such efforts, particularly after the end of intensive rehabilitation, when some form of support was likely to continue to be needed.

18. Effective communication between Youth Offending Teams and custodial establishments is important in addressing the risk of reoffending amongst those young offenders sentenced to custody. The Youth Justice Board acknowledged that Youth Offending Teams needed better understanding of what happens in custody. Joint training

16 Qq 92, 129–139

17 Q 97; C&AG's Report, paras 2.23, 3.26–3.27

18 Qq 115–117

events and development of a joint approach to assessing young offenders' needs was helping to improve communication.¹⁹

19. The Prison Service did not hold data on the number of offending behaviour programmes run by young offender institutions until an audit was completed in October 2003. The Prison Service was aware that it was not meeting every need identified. To meet some specialised needs its aim was to group offenders together in particular establishments.²⁰

20. Forty eight of the 146 teams responding to a National Audit Office survey had reported that they had policy of not recommending custody in any circumstances. The Youth Justice Board explained that, in practice, this meant that the Youth Offending Team would not make an explicit recommendation although a custodial sentence might well be expected. The Board suggested that some people working in Youth Offending Teams believed that custody made people worse but the Board was working to change this culture.²¹

21. Funding for Youth Offending Teams is conditional on satisfactory progress being made by the teams against national standards and performance targets set by the Board, as well as the provision of data and a satisfactory plan. Youth Offending Teams are locally-based organisations subject to locally driven priorities and are not directly managed by the Board, although the conditions of grant enable the Board to influence performance and working practices. In 2002–03, funding from the Board accounted for 23% of overall Youth Offending Team funding. Other funding sources included local authorities, the National Probation Service, local education authorities and the National Health Service each with their own application and monitoring requirements. The Board considered that it had adequate influence over Youth Offending Teams as they were mostly dependent on its funding. If a team's performance deteriorated against the ten targets set by the Board then its funding could be withdrawn. This power had already been exercised on two occasions for failure to produce a youth justice plan.²²

22. The Youth Justice Board estimated that there were 472 vacancies (3.1% of the workforce) amongst Youth Offending Teams' staff in September 2003, of which 325 vacancies were amongst front line practitioners (6.5% of all front line staff). We estimated that vacancies might equate to around £14 million unspent on employee salaries. The Youth Justice Board said that unspent monies would remain with those providing the funding, particularly local authorities, or be used, for example, on temporary staff or to train people to work with young offenders. The Home Office said it was aware of vacancy rates, but that overall there were significantly more front line practitioners working in this area than in 2001.²³

19 Q 147

20 Qq 98–99

21 Qq 52–53, 94, 141

22 Qq 66–67, 143

23 Qq 71–79

Formal minutes

Wednesday 21 July 2004

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Mr Richard Allan | Mr Frank Field |
| Mr Richard Bacon | Mr Brian Jenkins |
| Mrs Angela Browning | Jim Sheridan |
| Jon Cruddas | Jon Trickett |
| Mr Ian Davidson | Mr Alan Williams |

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (Youth offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 22 read and agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fortieth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select Committees (Reports)) be applied to the Report.

[Adjourned until Wednesday 8 September at 3.30pm

Witnesses

Monday 2 February 2004

Page

Mr Martin Narey, National Offenders Management Service, **Mr Simon Hickson**, Home Office, **Mr Phil Wheatley**, **Ms Nicola Lowit**, HM Prison Service, **Mr Mark Perfect**, and **Mr Paul Bowers**, Youth Justice Board

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Ev 20

National Audit Office

Ev 25

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| Second Report | The new electricity trading arrangements in England and Wales | HC 63 (<i>Cm 6130</i>) |
| Third Report | The Sheep Annual Premium Scheme | HC 64 (<i>Cm 6136</i>) |
| Fourth Report | Improving service delivery: the Forensic Science Service | HC 137 (<i>Cm 6155</i>) |
| Fifth Report | Warm Front: helping to combat fuel poverty | HC 206 (<i>Cm 6175</i>) |
| Sixth Report | Department of Trade and Industry: Regional Grants in England | HC 207 (<i>Cm 6155</i>) |
| Seventh Report | Progress on 15 major capital projects funded by Arts Council England | HC 253 (<i>Cm 6155</i>) |
| Eighth Report | The English national stadium project at Wembley | HC 254 (<i>Cm 6155</i>) |
| Ninth Report | Review of grants made to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns | HC 305 (<i>Cm 6175</i>) |
| Tenth Report | Purchasing and managing software licences | HC 306 (<i>Cm 6175</i>) |
| Eleventh Report | Helping consumers benefit from competition in telecommunications | HC 405 (<i>Cm 6191</i>) |
| Twelfth Report | Getting it right, putting it right: Improving decision-making and appeals in social security benefits | HC 406 (<i>Cm 6191</i>) |
| Thirteenth Report | Excess Votes 2002–03 | HC 407 (<i>N/A</i>) |
| Fourteenth Report | Inland Revenue: Tax Credits | HC 89 (<i>Cm 6244</i>) |
| Fifteenth Report | Procurement of vaccines by the Department of Health | HC 429 (<i>Cm 6244</i>) |
| Sixteenth Report | Progress in improving the medical assessment of incapacity and disability benefits | HC 120 (<i>Cm 6191</i>) |
| Seventeenth Report | Hip replacements: an update | HC 40 (<i>Cm 6271</i>) |
| Eighteenth Report | PFI: The new headquarters for the Home Office | HC 501 (<i>Cm 6244</i>) |
| Nineteenth Report | Making a difference: Performance of maintained secondary schools in England | HC 104 (<i>Cm 6244</i>) |
| Twentieth Report | Improving service delivery: the Veterans Agency | HC 551 (<i>Cm 6271</i>) |
| Twenty-first Report | Housing the homeless | HC 559 (<i>Cm 6283</i>) |
| Twenty-second Report | Excess Votes (Northern Ireland) 2002–03 | HC 560 (<i>N/A</i>) |
| Twenty-third Report | Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ): New Accommodation Programme | HC 65 (<i>Cm 6302</i>) |
| Twenty-fourth Report | Transforming the performance of HM Customs and Excise through electronic service delivery | HC 138 (<i>Cm 6302</i>) |
| Twenty-fifth Report | Managing resources to deliver better public services | HC 181 |
| Twenty-sixth Report | Difficult forms: how government departments interact with citizens | HC 255 (<i>Cm 6302</i>) |
| Twenty-seventh Report | Identifying and tracking livestock in England | HC 326 |
| Twenty-eighth Report | Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Trust Statement Report 2002–03 | HC 336 (<i>Cm 6302</i>) |
| Twenty-ninth Report | Improving public services for older people | HC 626 |

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| Thirtieth Report | Out of sight—not out of mind: Ofwat and the public sewer network in England and Wales | HC 463 |
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| Thirty-second Report | HM Customs and Excise Standard Report | HC 284 (<i>Cm 6304</i>) |
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| Thirty-fourth Report | Strategic Rail Authority: improving passenger rail services through new trains | HC 408 (<i>Cm 6304</i>) |
| Thirty-fifth Report | Early years: progress in developing high quality childcare and early education accessible to all | HC 444 |
| Thirty-sixth Report | Tackling VAT fraud | HC 512 (<i>Cm 6304</i>) |
| Thirty-seventh Report | Risk management: the nuclear liabilities of British Energy plc | HC 354 |
| Thirty-eighth Report | An early progress report on the New Deal for Communities programme | HC 492 |
| Thirty-ninth Report | Ministry of Defence: Operation TELIC — United Kingdom military operations in Iraq | HC 273 |
| Fortieth Report | Youth Offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences | HC 307 |

The reference number of the Treasury Minute to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number

Oral evidence

Taken before the Committee of Public Accounts

on Monday 2 February 2004

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Richard Allan
Mr Richard Bacon
Jon Cruddas
Mr Ian Davidson

Mr Frank Field
Mr Brian Jenkins
Mr Gerry Steinberg
Jon Trickett

Sir John Bourn KCB, Comptroller and Auditor General, further examined

Mr Brian Glicksman, Treasury Officer of Accounts, HM Treasury, further examined

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL:

Youth Offending: The Delivery of Community and Custodial Sentences (HC 190)

Witnesses: **Mr Martin Narey**, Chief Executive, National Offenders Management Service, **Mr Simon Hickson**, Head of Juvenile Offenders Unit, Home Office, **Mr Phil Wheatley**, Director General, **Ms Nicola Lowit**, Head of Juvenile Group, HM Prison Service, **Mr Mark Perfect**, Chief Executive and **Mr Paul Bowers**, Director of Service Delivery, Youth Justice Board, examined.

Q1 Chairman: Good afternoon, welcome to the Committee of Public Accounts where today we are considering Youth Offending and the Delivery of Community and Custodial Sentences. We are joined once again by Mr Martin Narey, the Chief Executive of the National Offenders Management Service, by Mr Phil Wheatley, the Director General of the Prison Service and Mr Perfect, who is the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board. Perhaps I can start with you, Mr Narey, we have, if we look at paragraph 3.2 on page 29 a reconviction rate from those released from prison of 84%, why such an absurdly high re-conviction rate?

Mr Narey: It has to be said firstly that that is an old figure.

Q2 Chairman: I know it is an old figure, is there any evidence to suggest that the new figure will be much better?

Mr Narey: I do not expect that figure to improve possibly at all for those serving very short sentences in custody, in this case very short DTOs. I do not think that custody can make an impact in a very short space of time, in some circumstances I believe a short custodial sentence can be more damaging and community penalties are always likely to be more effective. For longer Detention Training Order sentences I do believe it makes an impact. There is certainly no doubt that young people are leaving prison much better equipped to avoid re-offending, many more with educational qualifications than was the case a few years ago.

Q3 Chairman: 84% is completely unsatisfactory. You are trying to strip shorter sentences out of the system and you are having success on the longer sentences, are you?

Mr Narey: The figures I have are in terms of what happens to people in custody. For example young people in the Prison Service this year will get more than 5,000 educational qualifications and for many of them it will be the first qualification they have ever got and it will introduce them to the possibility of employment for the first time. I think there are things being done in custody now which were not happening a few years ago and that has been as a result of these reforms and the investment we have had from the YJB.

Q4 Chairman: A very high proportion, Mr Narey, it may be something like nine out of ten have basic reading and writing difficulties, is this what you are concentrating on now?

Mr Narey: Education is the real priority both in community and in custody. For all offenders, not just young offenders, when we started this a few years ago we were told that it could not be done, actually I think we have had remarkable success with people getting qualifications for the first time. From countless personal experiences I can tell you it does change their outcome and they do begin to believe they have a role to play in society and they might get a job, whereas for many of them the world of work is not one which concerns them.

Q5 Chairman: Mr Perfect, can I ask you to please look at page 34 and look at paragraph 3.16, it says there, "The Youth Justice Board ordered an investigation . . . and established the transition from custody to the community was a fundamental weakness in the operation of the Detention and Training Order". Does that not throw a rather poor light on this kind of order?

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Mr Perfect: It shows that we have more work to do, and we recognise that. This Report makes recommendations about how we can take it forward, which is very helpful.

Q6 Chairman: Is it working, is it not working?

Mr Perfect: We will have figures on recidivism, which is the true measure, later this year, the end of March is when I am expecting them. I do not have that data yet.

Q7 Chairman: You cannot yet tell us. We will move on from there then. Can you turn back to page 27, you will see there the cost of various places: a young offenders institution £50,000 a year, a secure training centre £164,000 a year, a local authority secure children's home £185,000 a year. How can we justify spending £185,000 a year in a local authority secure children's home compared to £50,000 at a young offenders institution?

Mr Perfect: They are very expensive. This does reflect the position which—

Q8 Chairman: That is an understatement.

Mr Perfect: They are providing services to different groups of children. The local authority secure homes are providing a service to 10 to 14 year olds and some vulnerable 15 year olds. The people in YOI are aged 15 to 17 and the people in the YOIs are being held on wings by and large with an average of 60 people. People in local authority secure homes are being held by and large in units of eight. This difference in price reflects the difference in the staff ratio between the two units. As we go forward I would expect the unit cost to be brought closer together.

Q9 Chairman: I was astonished, Mr Wheatley, if you look at previous page, having discussed the enormous costs, which in many circumstances appear to be doing no good at all, you see in paragraph 2.31 that some of the staff are getting just two weeks training, the middle of that paragraph, who deal with these young people, they only get two weeks induction, how can that be sufficient?

Mr Wheatley: This is on top of the training to be a prison officer, which includes dealing with difficult people who require careful work. This is just additional work in order to look at the difficulties of working with this younger age group of 15 to 17 year olds, it is additional on top of other training, that is the bare minimum additional training we are giving new staff moving into the centre.

Q10 Chairman: Okay. Still the special training for young people is only just two weeks yet we are spending up to £185,000 a year per young person?

Mr Narey: Mr Wheatley's figure refers to those who work in the Prison Service, where we are not spending £185,000 a year.

Mr Wheatley: Those under my charge.

Q11 Chairman: Mr Perfect, if you look at paragraph nine at the beginning of the Report you will see it says there that some areas have reported that over half of the young offenders have breached the

conditions of the programme with some re-sentenced to custody. In the earlier questions I have been dealing with the shortcomings of custodial sentences, we are now looking at what is supposed to be an Intensive Supervision Surveillance Programme but yet half the young people breach the terms of it.

Mr Perfect: The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme is intended as an alternative to custody, so these are the people who would otherwise be getting a custodial sentence straightaway. These people come by and large from very chaotic backgrounds. The fact that half of them manage to succeed in completing the programme is frankly what we expected when we planned the programme. Of the other half, half have been referred back to court and allowed to continue on the ISSP and the remaining quarter end up in custody.

Q12 Chairman: Okay. Mr Narey, can I come back to you, if you look at page 18, paragraph 2.6, you will see there it seems to imply that a young person on remand can reflect a lack of suitable accommodation, what is happening is that some people have been kept on remand not because they are a danger to the public but because there is a lack of suitable accommodation, is this a satisfactory state of affairs?

Mr Narey: No, it is not. An unnecessary custodial remand can be extremely damaging to an individual, particularly when for up to 70% a custodial sentence was not considered necessary. Mr Perfect, used the term "chaotic", I cannot stress too much the extent of that, frequently we have young people who have been made to leave their home and have no one to care for them, no one to sustain them, no one who can guarantee they will turn up and comply with an order of the court and in some circumstances the court has no option but to put somebody into custody.

Q13 Chairman: I find this an intensely depressing Report. It has been said in the past that you are running a university of crime, Mr Narey, now you appear to be running a distance learning programme!

Mr Narey: I think to be fair we are in difficult circumstances with a very difficult population of very disturbed young men, many of them with grave issues in terms of their mental health. I think we are making some very significant progress in equipping them not to go back to crime, we have had some very encouraging evidence from those on community penalties. I have seen at lot of ISSPs and I think for a very difficult population we are making some real progress in terms of turning people away from criminality. The task is very nearly overwhelming, and I acknowledge that.

Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Narey.

Q14 Mr Field: Mr Narey, I do not disassociate myself from those comments, the issue that you are dealing with is the single most important issue facing my constituents. I now spend more time on it and I

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am not competent about what I think or what other public bodies are doing. When you said earlier that the short sentences did not work, that the short sharp shock was a very short sharp unshock is there not a case for not sending people away for short periods of time?

Mr Narey: I think there is. I have said on a number of occasions, and repeated quite recently, that in terms of effectiveness in reducing re-offending courts should not think that a short custodial sentence will be effective. I do understand that there are some circumstances where a court thinks there is no other alternative, but a few weeks in custody will not turn somebody away from the crime. The proposition sometimes put to me by magistrates is that a taste of custody will turn somebody away from crime I am afraid there is no evidence for that at all.

Q15 Mr Field: There are other alternatives, are there not? When the Chairman went through the cost of places with you, some of which serve no purpose whatsoever, it would be possible for the equivalent, most expensive place to employ 10 members of staff outside to look after one of those individuals, has that been thought of?

Mr Narey: I think for those most expensive places, as Mr Perfect referred to, sometimes with an STC for example you are dealing with somebody who cannot survive on the outside, somebody as young as 12 or 13 years old who needs the most intensive care and very, very high staffing ratios, those people are generally there a little longer. I think you can see discernible progress with that age group, certainly in the STCs that I witnessed, but they are people with very, very chaotic lives.

Q16 Mr Field: I am putting it the other way, at £185,000 a year you could give us 10 individuals to look after one individual. When you say they need intensive care and supervision that could be provided with a lot of change for the electorate, could it not?

Mr Narey: That is why we have been pioneering the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme which rather than typically two hours contact with a social worker it provides 25 hours of intensive and very demanding contact, sometimes accompanied by curfewing.

Q17 Mr Field: Are you putting to the Government that you would like to move some of that £185,000 a year back into the community and give something far better than 25 hours of intensive contact?

Mr Narey: Yes. As you will know the Home Secretary has made it plain that he believes that community penalties, particularly of that nature, the ISSP and the Intensive Control Change Programme for those aged 18 to 21, is much more likely to be effective than a short custodial sentence and he has encouraged the courts to use those for that reason.

Q18 Mr Field: Many of these young people who are sent away do not have a parent in the recognisable sense of the word, they have grown up in a world where they have never known an adult to put their needs before that adult.

Mr Narey: That is absolutely right.

Q19 Mr Field: If you were able to drawdown that £185,000 a year we could provide some very, very sensible and effective substitute for adults, could we not?

Mr Narey: I agree with that. If we could effect a significant reduction in the custodial population generally I would have those resources to transfer for use in the community in the way that you suggest.

Q20 Mr Field: Can I refer you to page 39 which gives us case studies, here it gives a description of the sort of family from which young offenders come, children born to young mothers. That is not true, it is children born to young mothers where there is no father present.

Mr Narey: I am sure that is the case. There is almost inevitably the absence of a permanent male role model in most young offenders' lives.

Q21 Mr Field: Is that a point you make to the Government?

Mr Narey: Yes, it is.

Q22 Mr Field: Therefore a benefit system which discriminates against two parents is a one which is really a recruiting sergeant for your industry?

Mr Narey: I do not give advice on the benefit system, as you will know, Mr Field, but I do make the point and ministers have accepted the point, that there is a grave problem of broken homes and children have to go into local authority care behind which there is re-offending we have to deal with.

Q23 Mr Field: There are two other points, you talk about the intensive supervision from your service, if we had a system which we recommended for prison, where to some extent you related the length of sentence to the person's need to acquire certain skills before they went back into the community might that not be some suggestion? Should there not be a Job Centre Plus which also has the resources to give people that intensive attention that they need to find work rather than perhaps visiting their contact in job centre once every month?

Mr Narey: Two things, if I may, the first is that young offenders in this age group can earn early release from prison as a result of exceptional progress inside, for example getting educational qualifications. The other thing is that Job Centre Plus for these offenders and for young adults have been putting considerable resources and effort into help getting offenders into jobs. There are job centres in a number of local prisons, on-line access to job centres in others and that is one reason why the proportion of offenders of all ages leaving prison and going into jobs has very nearly tripled over the last two years.

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Q24 Mr Field: Are you saying the personal adviser service in Job Centre Plus is adequate?

Mr Narey: I am saying I have seen very significant improvements in terms of the presence of dedicated job centres in a large number of custodial establishments and providing on-line access to local job centres is making a significant difference, first of all we are educating prisoners and secondly we are linking them into work through Job Centre Plus.

Q25 Mr Field: Can I turn to paragraph 2.2, I am not sure whether it is for you, Mr Narey, or Mr Perfect—who I think does have the right name we need for somebody leading the service which we require here—it says that all contracts are based on forecasts of the number of sentences of remand by the courts. I meet a team who try to make effective anti-social behaviour legislation and therefore an improvement of people's behaviour in Birkenhead once every month and the assumption that all of us have is there is simply not enough places to send people away, even if they need to be sent away both for their own safety so they do not commit more heinous crimes but also for the community's safety. How is that taken into account when you seem to be presenting here in this Report somehow that you have the balance right? We could fill up all your places from Birkenhead in one go.

Mr Perfect: Certainly the aim is to strengthen the community interventions in order to reduce the demand for secure institutions. That is the approach. You talk about accommodation not being available for some people in the community. On other occasions you find the courts have sentenced people to custody because they are not happy with the education provision or the parenting is out of control. So we need to strengthen the community intervention in order to reduce the number of people sentenced to custody.

Q26 Mr Field: We all agree with that. In the mean time, how do we arrest this rising tide of youth disorder, and how do we do that if we do not have the right places in the short run? I am not trying to advocate locking up everybody and saying that is a long-term solution, but there clearly is a need for more places than you provide, from the experience that I have in my constituency, and you will gain other people's views in a moment.

Mr Perfect: Today we are using 84% of the places for juveniles that are available. We have 3,580 places and 3,019 young people who have been sentenced or remanded to custody by the courts today. Of course, we have to make sure that we have enough places for all young people sentenced by the courts, but it is expensive to hold places empty. Turning to your question about what we can do about anti-social behaviour, I recognise that the youth justice system needs to do more. Anti-social behaviour is persistent, low-level offending, sometimes just bad manners, and at the moment the anti-social behaviour initiatives are about putting boundaries in place. We have to knit together the lessons of 100

years of youth justice, which means both putting boundaries in place and providing help and support to succeed.

Q27 Mr Field: If you have boundaries, people have to know there are sanctions if those boundaries are crossed. If all of us are acting on the assumption that the we cannot use the biggest sanction because the places are full anyway, and there is a queue waiting to go, if that affects us as a group meeting in Birkenhead, it must affect the justices who make decisions on the bench.

Mr Perfect: There are places available, and if the courts wanted to use them, they could use them. Nobody would be turned away. However, it is true that we are encouraging YOTs to strengthen the community interventions and we believe that people can be dealt with more efficiently and more effectively in the community. As well as putting down clear boundaries, we have to support children, and some of it is teaching them why bad behaviour is unacceptable, providing them with positive things to do, and encouraging them and providing them with an education that relates to their interests.

Mr Field: I will take home your message on Thursday night that there are places available.

Q28 Jon Cruddas: Just carrying on from what Mr Field was saying, I see on page 14 at paragraph 1.11 Mr Perfect says “. . . the Board has set itself a target to reduce the number of under-18s remanded and sentenced to secure facilities by 10% from the October 2002 total by March 2005.” So it is not just a question of unfilled places; there is a strategic objective to reduce by 10% the numbers on remand and in custodial sentences. Just taking each of them individually, on page 17, in terms of those sentenced to custody, box 6 demonstrates really that from 1997 there has been a minor but significant reduction in the numbers sentenced to custody. Are you going to be able to meet your target?

Mr Perfect: Yes. The current target which the Board recommended and Ministers endorsed was to reduce the number of people in custody by 10% from the level in October 2002, and that has been delivered.

Q29 Jon Cruddas: On the question of those on remand, on page 19, if you look at the graph, say from January 2002, there has been quite a significant rise to September 2003 in terms of the numbers on remand. Again, are you going to be able to meet your objectives regarding 2005?

Mr Perfect: Yes. In the first half of 2002, of course, we had the street crime initiative, which meant that trend was reversed. Overall, it has gone down from about 700 people on remand in custody to 600 people on remand in custody, and that is because the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 put a duty on local authorities to provide bail supervision for the first time. So it is by strengthening bail supervision, sometimes with the use of tagging, that we have been able to show the courts that the presumption in favour of bail can be applied to young people.

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Q30 Jon Cruddas: So you are quite confident that by the 2005 period those objectives will continue to be met?

Mr Perfect: We have got to work to strengthen the community interventions with the youth offending teams. There is work in hand, with more work to do, but there is a strategy for doing it, yes.

Q31 Jon Cruddas: Returning to the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes, as I understand it, there are 1,300 people on them, but there has been no drop in the numbers in custody. Why would that not be the case if there is that amount on them?

Mr Perfect: Yes. I think it relates to slightly different periods of time. The chart we have here of numbers in custody goes up to 2001, and the ISSP has been rolled out since September 2001.

Q32 Jon Cruddas: On page 11, paragraph 1.4, there are very significant differences in terms of the regional breakdown of those sentenced to custody in 2002, and it does not seem to me to be very easy to compartmentalise these areas into socio-economic factors and the like. What would you say accounts for this quite wide variation, given your overall objectives in terms of reductions?

Mr Perfect: We have had some research done, and what we have found is that local sentencing cultures build up, which all the services tend to connive in. The action that we can take in order to get sentencers to reconsider their approach is to do joint sentencing exercises between areas which have very different custodial sentencing patterns. We have tried that. We can also look at the characteristics of the areas which are sending a lot of people to custody, and we often find that those are areas which do not have confidence in the community interventions, sometimes with good reason, where community intervention needs to be strengthened. Sometimes the relationship between the courts and youth offending teams is not as strong as it might be, so that trust is an issue.

Q33 Jon Cruddas: So it is a wide variety of factors, not just strict economic profiles?

Mr Narey: The Government have established a Sentencing Guidelines Council, which will be chaired by the Lord Chief Justice and which will meet for the first time in March. I will be an observer on that Council. One of the first things the Council will be asked to address are these regional disparities, some of which are entirely explicable but many which are not. For adult offenders, the variation in the use of custody in magistrates' courts is greater than for those identified for young offenders. It ranges from 7% in Thames Valley to 28% in Bedfordshire. There is no explanation for that in terms of demographics of crime.

Q34 Jon Cruddas: Can I ask about moving young offenders around the estate, referring to page 18, paragraph 2.4. Despite the fact that you have excess capacity, I think, as Mr Perfect mentioned earlier, are you making any progress in the movement of

young offenders around the system? Presumably that could have quite a significant psychological effect on them.

Mr Perfect: I believe we are. As well as having enough national capacity, we have to make sure the supply of beds is in the region where the demand for beds is.

Q35 Jon Cruddas: This is a South East problem?

Mr Perfect: It is the South East in particular and the South West, where last year we had to reduce the number of beds we were using at Ashfield in order to ensure the safety of the young people there. So there was a pattern of people being placed into Ashfield and then moved on, and we had the same thing in Feltham.

Q36 Jon Cruddas: Do you have a target to reduce the amount of traffic?

Mr Perfect: Yes. I do not think any moves are acceptable. We ought to be able to get the system such that when one young offender institution or secure facility begins to fill up, we adjust the catchment area so the van takes the next young offender on to the neighbouring YOI, rather than taking him to the nearest YOI and asking somebody else to move on.

Q37 Jon Cruddas: The Board aims to place 90% of children within 50 miles of home.

Mr Perfect: That was an objective which we articulated at the start, because the Board attached importance to placing youths close to home so that the youth offending team could carry out its function of supervising the training order. It is a target we plucked out before we had data and whether we will achieve it or not I am not sure.

Q38 Jon Cruddas: The Report says on page 25 at paragraph 2.28 "... the Board has made little progress against this target—records indicate that 70% of offenders were within 50 miles of home in August 2003, the same proportion as in April 2000." Given the excess capacity in the system, it seems to me that that target should be coming into range, everything else being equal.

Mr Narey: As for the places not being in the right part of the country, we have a penal estate which owes more to the availability of redundant establishments and benevolent planning authorities than to where we really need places, and the same applies for adults, so we have to make compromises. Three years ago we would have probably had better figures for closeness, but it was at the risk of over-crowding young people in Feltham. A decision was made at the time, which very much had my support when I did Mr Wheatley's job, that if the choice was of moving someone quite a distance away from home but out of over-crowded conditions, that was the lesser of the two evils.

Q39 Jon Cruddas: I am sure some of my colleagues will confirm this. A lot of our case work in this area is around families coming to see us concerned, firstly, about the proximity of their son or daughter, and

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then how they are moved around the system, possibly very quickly, at short notice, upsetting what was difficult to negotiate, the visiting regimes and the like, and so the whole mix becomes a very difficult one, not just for the individuals concerned, but for their wider families.

Mr Narey: I understand that.

Q40 Jon Cruddas: Can I ask one final question, and it is about page 19. What I did not quite understand were the different interpretations of what “purposeful activity” is in institutions, which seemed to have an effect on how difficult it was to sort out different definitions that operate within the Prison Service and then the Board itself, and how that made it difficult to quantify your real success in terms of the programmes available to young offenders in jail. What steps are being taken to reconcile the different interpretations of this so that we can have standardised criteria to judge in reports like this the relative effectiveness of the agencies involved?

Mr Bowers: We work very closely with the Prison Service in terms of refining definitions for data collection and the way that managers operate. What I would say is that, in the case of purposeful activity, the definition we have is specifically geared to the needs of young people, as opposed to the general Prison Service definition, which is for the adult population. Effectively, the Prison Service have developed their definition and we have tried to refine that to reflect the needs of young people. What we then try to do is to work with the governors in the individual establishments, particularly those with 18 to 20 year olds and juveniles, to help them collect the data and run the regimes, which meets our needs and those of the Prison Service.

Mr Wheatley: We are working closely and managing to resolve this issue, which is potentially a problem. We report to the YJB now on what the YJB want us to report on. We have an obligation, particularly in the big site establishments, because they are part of the overall Prison Service, to report against the targets that have been set overall for us. It is work that is particularly important for the older young offenders we deal with. But because we are now able to disaggregate the information so we can tell the YJB exactly what is being done against their target, it is not causing any practical difficulties now.

Jon Cruddas: It is flagged up in the Report. Thank you.

Q41 Mr Steinberg: Like Frank and the Chairman, I found this Report absolutely depressing and frustrating, because clearly, as far as I can see, the situation is getting a darn sight worse rather than better. It seems to me, whatever you are doing, and you may well be very sincere in what you are doing, is completely failing. The statistics show that, I am afraid, regardless of what you say. We can only take it from the reports that we get. What amazes me sometimes is how people sit there and argue the exact opposite of what is written down in the Report. Could you tell me before we start what is the record

of re-offending of youngsters in, say, the European Union countries or America? Is it as bad as ours? Do you have statistics on it?

Mr Perfect: I am not sure about the record in the European Union, but it is worth noting that in this country the re-offending for people on community interventions was 34% and it is now 26%, and I think that is quite clearly an achievement.

Q42 Mr Steinberg: I do not think that is an answer to my question. Do you have statistics that show how many offences are committed in the European Union by youngsters between the age of 10 and 17? For example, could you tell us the number of offences in France, the number of offences in Germany, the number of offences in Italy and how it has risen or declined, say, since 1991? I am very interested in the statistics.

Mr Narey: We could produce statistics for you, Mr Steinberg.¹ We will gladly do so. Inevitably, comparisons between different jurisdictions are sometimes very difficult because they have different court systems, and the same behaviour does not necessarily result in a court appearance.

Q43 Mr Steinberg: Beating up an old lady or breaking into a shop and stealing is the same, I would have thought, in France as it is in this country.

Mr Narey: Certainly, for things like that, we will produce comparative information for you. I would like to say—and this is not me arguing with the Report—I thought this was an encouraging Report. I thought it was recognising that some progress was being made in difficult circumstances, and I really and truly believe it is. I think that what we are now doing with young people, both in and out of custody, is much more likely to result in their turning away from re-offending than anything that was happening four or five years ago.

Q44 Mr Steinberg: Turn to page 10 and look at figure 2. I looked at this and I thought to myself, “Oh, my God.” There we were in 1991 with 19,000 offences. In 2001 there were 34,000 offences. The Government came in in 1997 with the promise that this was one of their priorities, and what happened was that we saw offences increase from 26,000 to 34,000 in four years: 8,000 more offences. That is what it says here.

Mr Narey: I think this graph refers to those given a community or custodial sentence. The amount of offending by young people has not been increasing since 1992.

Mr Perfect: If I can explain, in the mid 1990s three out of five young offenders were dealt with by pre-court disposal, repeat caution, an oral warning where there was no intervention. More of those people are now going to court. And in the mid 1990s, 37% of people found guilty at court were given a conditional discharge, and those people are now getting an action plan or a referral order. What this

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shows is the youth justice system is doing more about the offending of young offenders even though no more young people are known to offend.

Q45 Mr Steinberg: What you are saying is that in 1991 there were exactly the same number of crimes being committed but they were not being punished in those days.

Mr Perfect: There were more young offenders known to offend in the mid 1990s than today, but they were not getting an intervention. There was an Audit Commission report produced in the mid 1990s saying we were spending £1 billion processing people through the youth justice system and nobody was talking to them, let alone doing anything about their offending behaviour. That has been changed substantially.

Mr Narey: In that period, Mr Steinberg, it was not at all uncommon for young offenders to be given five or six successive cautions. Now young offenders get a reprimand, possibly followed by a final warning, and that is it; they are then taken to court.

Q46 Mr Steinberg: What we are seeing is that the true figure of offences over the last 10 years is not double but almost: 34,000 compared to 19,000 in 1991.

Mr Narey: These are individuals, boys and girls, aged 10 to 17, given a community or custodial sentence at court. We believe that the amount of offending by this age group has not increased over that period. What has happened is they are being dealt with; much more is being done with young people. As the Report recognises, the chance of someone—

Q47 Mr Steinberg: How do you mean much more is being done?

Mr Narey: Because someone is much more likely now to go to court.

Q48 Mr Steinberg: What you are saying to me is all you have done is to record the number of crimes that are being committed and the punishments that have taken place, whereas pre 1997 they actually got off four times before anything happened. Is that what you are saying?

Mr Perfect: No. The people who were dealt with before court in the mid 1990s got a repeat caution, and only 4% of them had any interventions whatsoever. Today we expect about 80% of final warnings to be supported by an intervention, so those who are being dealt with before court are getting some form of intervention, which is not shown on this chart, because this chart excludes cautions, reprimands, warnings, discharges and fines, as it says at the bottom. In the mid 1990s 37% of young people found guilty at court were getting a conditional discharge. Today, as this Report shows, that is down to 12%.

Q49 Mr Steinberg: So what you are saying now is that at least we are getting some sort of punishment.

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q50 Mr Steinberg: Fair enough, but if there are 34,000 offences taking place, it is not much of a deterrent, is it?

Mr Narey: Of a given number of offences, which we are saying is reasonable stable, the chance of something happening to a young person found guilty of an offence is now much greater than 10 years ago. They are much more likely to be either given a community punishment or a custodial punishment.

Q51 Mr Steinberg: They are actually being punished now you mean, whereas previously they were not punished?

Mr Narey: Certainly that is the case.

Q52 Mr Steinberg: Fair enough. That is an improvement at least. If we turn to paragraph 2.12 on page 20, it says that some youth offending teams have a policy never to recommend custodial sentences to the courts. I worked it out at about 30%. So 30% of your offending teams have a policy never to recommend a custodial sentence. That is outrageous! Unless I am reading it wrong.

Mr Perfect: There is a cultural problem to address.

Q53 Mr Steinberg: A cultural problem!

Mr Perfect: There are also things that we can do to help it. The Crime and Disorder Act puts the duty on the local authorities, police, health and the probation service to form the youth offending teams. The culture that we had in the Seventies and Eighties was to divert young people from the courts to not very much, and from custody to not very much, and that is what we are busy trying to change. When it gets to a child or young person who needs a custodial sentence to protect themselves or to protect the community, we do expect the youth offending team to take charge of the detention and training order, recommend it, plan it and do the supervision from the start. Some of them are not doing that, and we need to help them do that. One of the things that we can do and have done with the Prison Service is to develop a case management tool, which starts from the risk factors—

Q54 Mr Steinberg: I do apologise. I only have two minutes left. When was Community Service first introduced, as a matter of interest?

Mr Narey: It has been in existence in one form or another for as long as I remember, certainly more than 20 years.²

Q55 Mr Steinberg: I have watched and been and seen youngsters on Community Service, and if that is a deterrent—we have an expression in the North East of England—I will eat hay with a cuddy, in other words I will eat hay with a horse if that is a deterrent. It is no more a deterrent than sending them to see Sunderland Football Club on a Saturday afternoon.

² *Note by witness:* The Criminal Justice Act 1972 (Sections 15–19) allowed Courts to impose a Community Service Order, with consent, on offenders aged 17 and over).

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It is not a deterrent at all. They laugh at you. I have watched them putting two fingers up to the supervisors. They think it is a huge joke. No wonder they keep coming backwards and forwards, offending and re-offending; they know that at the end of the day nothing is going to happen to them.

Mr Narey: I think that may have been the case once. I am from the North East as well and I was speaking to magistrates in your constituency last Saturday. I could take you to community punishments for young offenders and older people in the North East, and I guarantee you would think there had been a transformation.

Q56 Mr Steinberg: So why are they still re-offending?

Mr Narey: Because some of the problems we have with people are very great. We do not have any magic wands, but I can promise you—and I will do this if you wish. I could show you community punishments which have radically changed from some of the things you will have seen some years ago.

Q57 Mr Steinberg: I have been told my time is up. Can I ask one final question? The Report talks about reducing the number of custodial sentences over X% over the next number of years, but in effect, only 7% of sentences handed out are actually custodial in the first place. Could I suggest that you make custodial sentences to 50% of those who commit crimes and cause my constituents the most horrendous time sometimes, and let us see if that is a deterrent rather than letting them dig a cabbage patch and doing *that* to the bloke who is supervising them when they walk past?

Mr Narey: If that were the alternative, I would have some sympathy with that. I can promise you—and I am very willing to demonstrate it—that that is not the alternative.

Q58 Chairman: What do you mean, that is not the alternative?

Mr Narey: The sort of picture of community punishment which Mr Steinberg has, which I think was the case some years ago, where a frequent caricature is painting a bedroom for an old lady. That has moved on. A lot of the work now involves real reparation to the community. For example, I saw community punishment in the city of Chester quite recently, where young offenders had painted a multi-storey car park brilliant white, a huge breezeblock car park.

Q59 Mr Steinberg: Allowing the next bloke down the street to come along with his spray can.

Mr Narey: I promise you CCTV is now operating and working because of the additional light. It was a very significant contribution back to the safety of that community.

Q60 Chairman: I want to go back to the original question, which is vital to what Mr Steinberg asking. I put it to Mr Perfect earlier that these Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes are supposed to be a really hands-on, new broom that

you are bringing in, but half of these people are breaching its terms. I do not want to replicate Mr Steinberg's dramatic gesture, but that is what these young people are saying to you.

Mr Narey: The difference, Mr Chairman, is that if that happens, they are being dealt with. Breaching by young offenders, both under and over the age of 18, is now dealt with much more robustly; they are much more likely to be returned to court. You do get the sanction.

Q61 Chairman: Then what happens?

Mr Narey: Sometimes a quarter of them go back to custody because of a failure to comply. Two weeks ago I witnessed an ISSP scheme in Maidstone where seven or eight extremely disturbed young people were being intensively worked with through the day, and then they went home wearing an electronic tag and did not go out in the evening at all. This was very intensive, and completely different to anything which might have been seen a few years ago, when a typical offender might have been seen for an hour or two a week.

Q62 Jon Trickett: The truth is there is no management of the service, is there? Youth offending teams are not managed. They are left to themselves. They are a law unto themselves. They do what they like, do they not? They have their own cultures.

Mr Perfect: Some local authorities cite youth offending teams as an example of a truly joined-up service. They are there to provide a holistic service to the young people who offend.

Q63 Jon Trickett: But you are not managing them.

Mr Perfect: The chief executive of the local authority is the person responsible for making sure the YOT is well-managed and acting together with the police, the health authority and the probation service. This is a holistic service which by and large is working well.

Q64 Jon Trickett: Yes, but you are not managing them.

Mr Perfect: The Crime and Disorder Act does not require the YJB to manage YOTs. They are for the local services to establish and manage.

Q65 Jon Trickett: We spend £9.5 million on you, do we not?

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q66 Jon Trickett: What are you doing with it if you are not managing them?

Mr Perfect: We are required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to identify and promote good practice, to monitor the youth justice system, to commission research, and we can issue grants in support of those objectives, and we can give advice to the Home Secretary.

Mr Narey: There are a number of sanctions which the Board can make against youth offending teams. Most youth offending teams depend on YJB funding to a great extent, and that funding can be withdrawn

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if performance deteriorates. Actually, across a whole range of measures—victim satisfaction; final warnings, which now have reparation attached; the proportion of young offenders in education—the performance of youth offending teams has been improving steadily.

Q67 Jon Trickett: How many times has a sanction been applied?

Mr Perfect: We have withdrawn a grant from two authorities who failed to produce a youth justice plan which they are required to by the Act.

Q68 Jon Trickett: Which were they?

Mr Perfect: Wolverhampton, and the other one is mentioned in the Report—Luton.

Q69 Jon Trickett: You do not really have any management information, do you, to judge whether or not they are performing?

Mr Perfect: We do. We set 10 targets for youth offending teams, and we monitor performance against those 10 targets and we feed that information back to the steering groups.

Q70 Jon Trickett: Let me try to understand the budget. On page 15, table 5, altogether there is about £400 million, £283 million for secure facilities and £120 million for the rest and the £10 million for yourselves is shown there. The money goes to the local authorities, but it is funded by you, is it?

Mr Perfect: YJB money for youth offending teams goes to the local authorities, yes, but most of the resource for youth offending teams comes straight from social services, education and health.

Q71 Jon Trickett: Paragraph 3.30 seems to indicate that there are 472 staff short shortages. I reckon that must be about £14 million of money unspent. Do you require them to operate a vacancy practice so they do not fill all the vacancies? Are you requiring them to fulfil budgets?

Mr Perfect: No.

Q72 Jon Trickett: So what happens to the money that is unspent?

Mr Perfect: The way they budget is for them, and they do it in different ways, as indeed do the local authorities.

Q73 Jon Trickett: What happens to the money which is unspent through the vacancies? There is at least £14 million unspent.

Mr Perfect: In running a multi-agency thing, staff are always moving and there are always going to be gaps between staff.

Q74 Jon Trickett: What happens to the money then?

Mr Perfect: They probably allow for it in their budget, but if they do not, it remains with the services who provided it in the first place, the local authority in particular.

Q75 Jon Trickett: Are you allowing a vacancy factor of 3% to go unchecked? The money is not recovered by yourselves if it is not spent?

Mr Perfect: No, we are not allowing it to go unchecked. In particular, we have introduced national occupational standards, training schemes. There are lots of volunteers in the youth justice system.

Q76 Jon Trickett: What is happening? The money is being stolen from staffing and spent on training? Is that right?

Mr Perfect: Some of it is being used to train unqualified people so they have the skills to deal with the juvenile offenders.

Q77 Jon Trickett: Do you approve of that?

Mr Perfect: Yes, very much so.

Q78 Jon Trickett: Do you approve of borrowing from staffing budgets which are dealing with offenders into training?

Mr Perfect: I would to train unqualified staff.

Q79 Jon Trickett: Mr Narey, are you providing money to them so that they can pretend that they are employing numbers of staff which they are not and then using the money for other things?

Mr Narey: I do not think they are doing it. I am aware of the vacancy rates. It is something which I look at in my monthly performance meetings with the chief executive and I hold him to account for YJB performance. I understand your uncertainty. I have to say, when I came to this I was looking for some of the more traditional managerial levers that we have for example in managing the Prison and Probation Services, but I have been won over. I think the performance of YOTs, which I think is documented in the Report, demonstrates that giving some local autonomy to YOTs has promoted a lot of effective work and some quite innovative work in dealing with offenders.

Q80 Jon Trickett: Most people would feel that it would be better to have the practitioners on the streets with the young people rather than in somewhere being trained, frankly. I want to try to understand better the vacancy factor, because 6% of the front line staff is the vacancy factor, is it not, and 3% for the overall staff? Are we keeping administrators and educators in post while squeezing away at the front line practitioners? This seems to be the case, does it not?

Mr Perfect: I do not think so. At the end of the Report, paragraph 3.30, it does refer to the fact that the number of youth offending team practitioners has increased from 4,000 in 2001 to 10,000 in September 2003, so there are enormous numbers more staff going in there.

Q81 Jon Trickett: The same paragraph shows that you have a 6% vacancy rate amongst front line staff but 3% overall. The vast bulk of vacancies are amongst the front line practitioners. That is a fact is it not?

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Mr Perfect: On the basis of these figures, yes, but there has been an enormous increase in the number of practitioners to do the extra work.

Q82 Jon Trickett: Can you reconcile the figures on this page? It shows 10,000 staff in total in September 2003, and then it says that the vacancy factor, the 472 people, is 3%. Three per cent of 10,000 would be 300 vacancies, not 472. There is something inconsistent about the figures, is there not? How do you explain the difference in the figures?

Mr Perfect: I think you are on to a good point there.

Q83 Jon Trickett: C&AG, what is going on? You have produced a document which shows there are 10,000 people, a vacancy factor of 3%, but that is 472 vacancies. How do you explain that? It is amazing nobody knows. If nobody knows, perhaps a note can be given. I am amazed that nobody knows, Chairman.

Mr Bowers: If you look at the figures, 10,000 are youth offending team practitioners. The 472 are vacancies in the whole work force.

Q84 Jon Trickett: These are administrators then, are they?

Mr Bowers: It would be a combination. That 472 will be a combination of front line practitioners and support staff.

Q85 Jon Trickett: I knew that was the answer you were going to give me, but it does not reconcile with the figures further down, which talks about 325 front line staff. The difference does not add up. The figures do not add up.

Sir John Bourn: Chairman, I will give a note to explain this apparent contradiction.³

Q86 Jon Trickett: Why are you allowing the service to cut front line practitioners? It seems to be the case. They have cut the budget by failing to fulfil the vacancies. Front line practitioners, a 6% vacancy factor, but 3% vacancies overall. The fact is the coal miners are being cut whilst the staff upstairs are increasing in numbers—that is how it seems to me—in order to spend money on other things. You are not even claiming the unspent money back, are you? You are allowing them to go on buying into all kinds of projects.

Mr Narey: By the same process, the money which I give to Mr Wheatley to run the Prison Service takes account of a certain amount of vacancies. You do not ever have jobs filled all the time. A vacancy rate of about 3% is not particularly high. The important thing is that whereas there were 4,000 practitioners in this area of work dealing with this age group in 2001 there are now 10,000.

Q87 Jon Trickett: I accept that it must be a difficult process to manage but you have not demonstrated to me that you are managing the system in an appropriate way. I think the fact that we are unable

to get clear answers, and the figures are here, and they just do not add up, illustrates a lack of management, does it not?

Mr Narey: I think the performance information which is recorded in here shows significant improvements in a wide range of activity by YOTs, and we could give further details of that to the Committee if that would be helpful. It shows that these things are by no means perfect, but the performance of YOTs in a number of areas is very impressive, in my view.

Jon Trickett: I totally accept that we should measure an organisation by its outputs but also by the strength of its management. Surely it comes back to capacity to manage its budget and staff, and I am not sure we have had that demonstrated yet, Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Trickett. We can come back to that in our report.

Q88 Mr Jenkins: Mr Narey, you stated that crimes are no higher now than in the Nineties. How can you make a statement of that nature?

Mr Narey: Through independent research produced for us in the Home Office and by surveys of young people, self-reported surveys, to try to ascertain the amount of offending which is done by this age group.

Q89 Mr Jenkins: I have seen these surveys by the Home Office. I know it is empirical and it is only my observation, but I can assure you that in my part of the world, there are more problems now, more offending now by youngsters than there was 10 years ago. I can tell you that people no longer report crimes because unless they have an insurance claim and want a police number, they just sort it out themselves and get on with their life.

Mr Narey: But some of the research, particularly which the Home Office use, for example the British Crime Survey, does not just take account of reported crime; it takes account of interviewing and self-reported crime. But I do accept entirely that the general view is that this is an area in which there has been a deterioration in young people's behaviour. Part of that may be because there is much greater likelihood now of something being done about them. Young people are brought to justice now twice as quickly as they were four years ago.

Q90 Mr Jenkins: No, it is exactly the reverse. If there was something being done about it, the offending behaviour would decrease, not increase. It is because there is nothing done about it, as they perceive it, that it is increasing. I can show you sheet after sheet of my local newspaper about increasing offensive and offending behaviour in my part of the world. It is getting worse. The perception is that it is getting worse because the reality is it is getting worse. Even when we get them into the system, the number that are re-offending is far too high, surely.

Mr Narey: I think the numbers for re-offending are far too high and it want to drastically cut them, particularly for those leaving custody. But I think we are entitled to be somewhat encouraged by the data we have on those finishing community sentences in this age group, particularly for those given

³ Ev 25

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reprimands and final warnings, where the reconviction rate is significantly lower than expected.

Q91 Mr Jenkins: I believe that actually, as youngsters grow up, they grow out of offending behaviour anyway.

Mr Narey: I agree.

The Committee suspended from 5.30 pm to 5.38 pm for a division in the House.

Q92 Mr Jenkins: Mr Narey, I am looking at how we achieve a reduction in re-offending rates and how we can improve re-offending behaviour. It says there that in local authority secure children's homes they have 25 hours education and seven hours of offending behaviour programmes, but you were not able to provide management data on performance. If we are not actually collecting the information on these re-offending behaviour programmes are working, how can we measure how effective they are? Box 7 gives examples of two young offenders who were treated in this manner. It might be all very well for John, who came in with poor literacy and now has passed three GSCEs, but what about his offending behaviour?

Mr Narey: We are trying to do both, but the emphasis has been on education. If we cannot equip young people to enter the world of work, it is very unlikely that any changes in their motivation and behaviour would frankly make very much difference. So the emphasis has been on trying to equip people with what they need in life, which is qualifications, to get some employment. My experience is that, as young people get some education and start to get qualifications, their motivation and their approach to offending changes as well.

Q93 Mr Jenkins: So you are not saying we want a well educated thug. We just do not want a thug.

Mr Narey: Absolutely, yes.

Q94 Mr Jenkins: If you look at figure 9, it shows that offending behaviour programmes in local authority secure children's homes are doing very well, with "well" being about 37%. In secure training centres "well" is about 30%. In young offenders' institutions "well" is about 7%. Does that cause you any concern?

Mr Narey: It does. That is youth offending teams' view of performance, and I think, as we have already explored, youth offending teams sometimes have a negative view about custody, particularly prison custody. I think there is some evidence that prisons are doing rather better than that, particularly in meeting educational needs, where, as I have already indicated, I think prisons have made huge improvements: 5,000 people in this age group will get educational qualifications in prison this year. I do not think that is reflected in youth offending teams' assessment of about 7%.

Q95 Mr Jenkins: So you have two different standards, one by the youth offending team and one by the young offenders' institutions as they assess each of these groups.

Mr Narey: As I understand this graph, this is what youth offending teams told the NAO was their assessment of how well the secure estate was meeting the needs of offenders. They had a much more critical view of what was happening in young offender institutions. I would expect performance in those places to be poorer. Staffing ratios will typically be one to six rather than one to two, but I do think, particularly on education, it is considerably better than the opinion of the youth offending teams would suggest.

Q96 Mr Jenkins: Why do they seem to have limited impact on the risk of re-offending arising from substance misuse?

Mr Narey: Can you give me a reference?

Q97 Mr Jenkins: Paragraph 3.9, figure 14, which shows the percentage of young offenders whose assessed risk of re-offending increased or decreased as a result of their community sentence. Substance misuse seems to be a problem for you. Is there any reason why we do not have the facilities in place to stop youngsters, especially when they are in secure accommodation? Can we not treat them for substance misuse?

Mr Narey: Although the young offenders we are talking about have a huge number of problems, I do not think their substance abuse problems are as serious as those of older offenders, and greater investment is being put into dealing with substance misuse of offenders older than this age group, where addiction is typically not likely to be the same problem compared to somebody in their early 20s.

Q98 Mr Jenkins: Mr Wheatley, paragraph 2.21, the fourth line down: "The Prison Service did not hold data, however, on the number of offending behaviour programmes run by young offender institutions in 2002-03, although it has since undertaken an audit." Why did you not bother collecting the information?

Mr Wheatley: It seems to me appropriate that we should hold information on what courses are available and have been used by offenders in our custody. There is a problem in split-site establishments. It has already been highlighted. There are some problems in split-site establishments, where we are running two regimes alongside each other, with one data collection system. We are splitting out that data collection system so we can supply better data to the YJB about their particular group, which are the juvenile group, rather than the over 18 young offender group.

Q99 Mr Jenkins: It says further on "Our examination of case files in 2003 found six out of 31 cases where the course did not meet the needs originally identified by the youth offending team case worker." Further on, towards the end of that paragraph "A pilot sex offenders treatment

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programme had, for example, been established Pending the outcome of the pilot, there were no similar programmes elsewhere for the 71 young sex offenders held in custody in May 2003.”

Mr Wheatley: At the stage that this Report is looking at, there is no doubt that within our custody we were not meeting every need that young offenders came in with. They come in with a multitude of needs. We have already identified what they are. They are people who are often very damaged and have had very difficult backgrounds. We are working without the sort of high levels of staff supervision and support which we have already identified that some of the other institutions do have. I would not claim that we were in a position to meet every need that young offenders came in with, and that is what this represents. As for the sex offender treatment programme, we are working on developing a sex offender treatment programme to work with this very young age group. It tends to be a rather specialised group. We have young offender sex offender treatment programmes at work for the 18 plus group, which we run at Aylesbury as an example, but we are working, with YJB support, to develop better interventions for this very small group of young sex offenders, which are now being piloted in two of the smaller units that we run, Carlford and Oswald.

Q100 Mr Jenkins: Is it not true that, depending on which institution you are sent to, the treatment you get, or the educational or vocational and offending behaviour treatment, will vary from institution to institution? It is pot luck what you get as an offender.

Mr Wheatley: There is some variation between institutions, and the Report brings that out. The provision of education in some places is constrained by lack of educational resources. Additional money is being put in to try to even that up. As for some of the specialist treatment, there are a relatively small number of offenders in this age group who need sex offender treatment. It makes sense to group them in a place rather than provide it everywhere as it is very specialised treatment.

Mr Jenkins: I must admit, I did work with young offenders on the education side in institutions. I often wondered when talking to some of these why they were being held in there, because they seemed to be no threat to anyone. They seemed to be very reasonable young people until you found out what a chaotic lifestyle they had led before they got there. It was the security of the place that allowed them to develop as individuals. It just amazes me when I see in the Report that when they are put back out in the world, and they enter the chaotic arrangements in the outside world, they start to offend again. It is that societal element we have got to look at and try to get right. But you cannot expect society to pick up the bill for every young offender who lacks discipline.

Chairman: Is that a question or a statement?

Mr Jenkins: It is more of a statement.

Q101 Mr Allan: Perhaps I could start where the Government started, way back in 1997, with a little scratch card that said they would reduce the time

taken to deal with persistent young offenders. Mr Narey referred to this as well and said it is a success because we have got it down to half the time. Box 1 on page 13 refers to that. It looks as if we have plateau'd once we hit the target. Is that it? Is that fine? We have met an election target so we forget about that one now. Everything is OK in terms of the time it takes to get people to court?

Mr Perfect: Ministers have developed the target by making it clear they want every local criminal justice area to deliver the target. So as well as meeting the national average target, we are trying to ensure that in every part of the country the 71 days is being delivered.

Q102 Mr Allan: That is still based on what essentially was an arbitrary figure: half of what it was at a certain point in time. Seventy-one days is not any more scientific than that.

Mr Perfect: No, that is right. Tackling delays was and remains important and not only for persistent young offenders but for youth cases in general.

Q103 Mr Allan: Would you like to get better than 71 days? Do you have a view on the benefits of going beyond the 71 days?

Mr Perfect: There are other things to do as well. These things take time and they take resources, so yes. But the priority of Ministers is trying to make sure the 71 days is delivered in every part of the country.

Q104 Mr Allan: We are spending £2 million a year now on tackling delays out of the total budget, so it looks like a fairly low priority now. It has been sorted and put on the back burner.

Mr Perfect: The maximum spend was £4 million a year.

Q105 Mr Allan: What about the non-persistent young offenders? You want to get every young offender through quickly, obviously, but how are they doing?

Mr Perfect: Those delays have fallen by about a third.

Q106 Mr Allan: So we are still looking at 100 plus days for the non-persistent young offenders.

Mr Perfect: No, because the non-persistent ones were going through more quickly anyway. I do not have an exact figure, I am afraid, but it is between 50 and 60 days.

Q107 Mr Allan: Can I move on to the costs of the different establishments on page 27, where we look at the three different types of establishments that are available within the secure estate and this very marked difference between £185,000 for the local authority and the £164,000 for secure training centres and £50,000 for young offender institutions. This is probably a question for Mr Narey. Are you comfortable that we have a very marked difference between those places? You would not want to be placing people wrongly with that kind of cost differential. Are you confident that we do now have

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a sophisticated placement strategy in place which means the right youngsters are going to the right places?

Mr Narey: I would not like to pretend I was confident at all, not least because occasionally there is a need to place a vulnerable young person into a young offender institution, where they are subject to much lower levels of staff supervision. Typically, for a unit of 60 boys there might be four staff on duty in a YOI, and in STCs for eight young people there will be four staff. The discrepancy is very great. One of the things which the YJB are discussing with the Prison Service at the moment, which I very much welcome, is the possibility of the Prison Service providing some sort of intermediate care, which will cost significantly less than £185,000 but more than £50,000. At the moment we go from very high levels of supervision of young people to very sparse levels of supervision.

Q108 Mr Allan: So what we are actually doing is placing some youngsters into the cheaper places who could benefit from the more expensive ones rather than the other way round, which would worry an audit committee, that we were placing them in even more expensive ones.

Mr Narey: The worry is that occasionally a vulnerable young person who deserves a place in an STC sometimes has to be put into a young offender institution instead.

Q109 Mr Allan: Are you comfortable that the cost differential is justified in terms of the quality of care that is provided?

Mr Narey: I think they are hugely different. It is mainly staffing costs. The intensity of supervision for younger, more vulnerable and frequently much more disturbed young people explains the very significant difference.

Q110 Mr Allan: If you look at page 25, figure 9, the perception in the youth offending teams' assessments of how well the secure estate meets the needs of young offenders seems to bear out the more expensive options as clearly much more beneficial. Do you have a comment on that, Mr Wheatley? Would you welcome more cash for your places?

Mr Wheatley: Obviously. Like anybody providing in this area, if there is more money, more can be done. No doubt those running the expensive places would say the same thing. There would be more that could be done if there were more money. My job is to make sure that, with the money we have been given by the YJB, we provide the places that they ask us to provide and hit the standards that they have asked to have. There is a purchaser/provider split here, and we are working hard to do that.

Q111 Mr Allan: Can I ask about the education provision. Figure 10 on the same page shows you are providing education provision at around £4,000 per place, and it is four times as much in the other institutions. How confident are you that you now have sufficient resources to provide the education provision that is being asked of you?

Mr Wheatley: We have additional investment coming in, which is building us new classrooms amongst other things, because that has been one of the physical constraints. As we go through a process of re-tendering education, we are trying to lift the quality of our education. I am confident we are making good use of the money. We have plans to make better use of it. We are mainly teaching in large groups. The STCs will be offering one to one teaching with some very young, difficult and disturbed offenders. We are in the main working with small class size groups. I am satisfied we are making good use of the cash we have got.

Q112 Mr Allan: But you could do more with more.

Mr Wheatley: Like anybody else, yes.

Q113 Mr Allan: This is all about re-offending, that people come out and do not re-offend. I remember there was a report some while ago, *What Works*, and there was a debate at the time saying that nothing much works except to wait until they get older. Is that a reasonable view? We are working at the margins. They will stop offending when they reach 23 to 24.

Mr Narey: There is something in that, but I think there is the view that nothing works, which certainly dominated the Eighties, and has now been reversed by the knowledge that some things work. There is a lot of evidence, both internationally in particular, that education works, for example, and that giving someone qualifications may cut re-offending. Basic skills education may cut re-offending by 10%. Certain offending behaviour programmes if properly targeted may cut re-offending by between 10% to 14%. So what we have been doing in using our investment in this age group, and we have had a significant additional investment since the establishment of the YJB, as their budget has grown, we have spent that on things which we believe will have a significant and measurable impact on re-offending.

Q114 Mr Allan: Look at paragraph 3.2 on page 29. I am still trying to understand whether or not we are cutting re-offending. It says that re-conviction rates fell, but most of the reduction came from the replacement of police cautions by the more structured reprimands and final warnings. Are young people going through the system less likely to re-offend now? Are you meeting this target, or is it that we have changed the way we do things?

Mr Narey: No, I think the big success has been the very early intervention with offenders, and the caution system, which a few years ago generally involved a policeman giving a ticking off to a young offender and that is all, has now, for example, been replaced with a final warning system where it is explained to the offender that they will be in court the next time they offend, and accompanying the final warning in 90%⁴ of cases now the offender has to do some sort of reparation to the community in

⁴ Note by witness: The actual figure is around 80% of cases.

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response to his crime. Those two early interventions have been very encouraging in terms of much lower than expected reconviction rates.

Q115 Mr Allan: Finally, turning to the issue of what works, there are some worrying signs in this section. In 3.15 we hear that there are problems with providing educational services; in 3.25 there are problems with providing housing; in 3.27 there are problems with providing substance misuse treatment. This is the joined-up government that is supposed to be happening. My experience locally bears this out. You cannot afford housing for young offenders when they return, you cannot get them into educational services, and you cannot get substance misuse services for them if they require them. Should we be worried? Should we be worried by the warning signals that are in there? I guess it is one for Mr Perfect in a sense. Are the youth offending teams stopping if they have finished the criminal justice bit or are they following through?

Mr Perfect: No, they are not stopping. There is more work to be done but certainly the youth offending team target is getting 90% of young people into full time education and training during and at end of sentence, and we have worked hard to make sure that the new Connexions service shares that target.

Q116 Mr Allan: Their budget has been cut though, has it not?

Mr Perfect: The performance is that currently we are getting 74% of young people into education during and at end of sentence. On substance abuse there is a new national treatment agency for substance abuse which has got a programme of training a lot of staff to do drug treatment programmes, and making sure that young people's services are in place in 95% of the country by 2005 is something that they are taking as a target, so again there is work in progress there. On accommodation, the recent Housing Act has made accommodation for 16 to 17-year old young offenders a priority. We now have got to work at getting people into housing and social services for young adults to make sure that that is turned into a reality.

Q117 Mr Allan: And mental health services?

Mr Perfect: There is a man called Al Aynsley-Green who has drawn up a national service framework for children and young people which includes mental health services. Ministers are considering that. That does articulate the necessity to address the needs of young offenders. The Green Paper on children and young people has committed to spending 10% a year more on child and adolescent mental health services so we have got to turn that resource into services on the ground. They are patchy today but we are working to do something to improve them.

Mr Narey: There has been a significant improvement, Mr Allan, in the care of young offenders in custody who have mental health needs. For example, there are something like 300 psychiatric nurses from the NHS now who work full

time in Prison Service establishments, mainly those dealing with young offenders, for those with mental health needs.

Q118 Mr Davidson: I wonder if I could look at page 20, paragraph 2.10 and start off looking at the secure training centres? I am seeking clarification from the NAO. Mention is made here of the breaches of contract at the Medway Secure Training Centre with 46 breaches. Is that the only one where there were breaches of the private sector establishments or is that just for example?

Mr Gray: I believe this was the only case that came to our attention.

Q119 Mr Davidson: Can I just clarify something, and I am not quite sure which of you would deal with this? For these breaches, 46 in number, they were fined £5,400, £120-odd each, but that does not really seem very much; it does not seem a meaningful sanction. Can somebody clarify that for me?

Mr Bowers: Within the contracts there is a performance standard for management. Within that performance standard what happens is that, depending on the type of breach, there is a point scoring system and you build up points—

Q120 Mr Davidson: I do understand all that. The point I am making is that there were 46 breaches and only £5,400 fine. That presumably is just loose change for the company. Is 46 a misleadingly large figure because people are being over-pernickety?

Mr Bowers: I think it is on the nature of the breach, including the more serious the breach the more points you have.

Q121 Mr Davidson: So what was the largest fine?

Mr Bowers: I could not give you that figure off hand.⁵

Q122 Mr Davidson: Does anyone know?

Mr Gray: No.

Q123 Mr Davidson: Clearly there is some sort of monitoring system. Turn over the page back to the young offender institutions. I am not clear from this whether or not there is a similar number of breaches in the service being provided by the Prison Service. Can anybody clarify that?

Mr Perfect: It is worth recollecting that we started this off from scratch, so we made clear what the targets were. The IT systems to monitor those precisely are still being developed and are still being put in place. We have made clear what it is we want. We have got some sort of reporting as to what is being delivered, but I do not have accurate figures.

Q124 Mr Davidson: So that is a “don't know” then?

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q125 Mr Davidson: I notice in the paragraph here it says, “Several of the performance measures specified by the Youth Justice Board were not consistent,

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however, with those required by Prison Service headquarters". What I am not clear about here is what the reporting mechanism is. If these young offender institutions are reporting to the Prison Service but they are reporting on different criteria from those that you are actually wanting, then who is the customer?

Mr Narey: I think, as Mr Wheatley has already explained, Mr Davidson, the Prison Service now reports to the YJB expressly on all the criteria on which the YJB want information, but Mr Wheatley is also tasked by ministers, for example, to maintain order and control, and he has other measures which go beyond the immediate interests of the YJB to report on.

Q126 Mr Davidson: I of course think you should have other criteria as well, but if the YJB have got criteria then the implication here is that they are not consistent. There is a slight difference between saying they are additional as distinct from inconsistent. Can you clarify how this is being resolved?

Mr Perfect: As Paul Bowers explained, a lot of the targets which the Prison Service have are articulated within the needs of offenders and particularly adult offenders. The perspective of the Youth Justice Board is dealing with young people.

Q127 Mr Davidson: So are you applying the same standards to youth offender institutions that you are applying to the secure training centres?

Mr Perfect: Yes. We have set the targets which go across the whole thing, but the local authorities' secure units deal with younger children.

Q128 Mr Davidson: I am not looking at local authorities at the moment. The same principle is being applied on all contractual breaches, is it, within your relationship with the Prison Service and these are being recorded, are they?

Mr Bowers: If I could explain the process of monitoring, we have a service level agreement for the Prison Service. All our performance standards are set out in there. We have monitors who will go and review the performance every month. That is backed up by the information we get from the Prison Service. We have a process of escalation of any breaches through the system. Our first priority is that breaches be dealt with by monitors and we manage them appropriately. Where they are not dealt with there is a process right the way up to the chief executive and the Director of Operations of the Prison Service to resolve serious breaches. Where there are significant breaches of safety, for example, we are able to instigate compliance failure notices which immediately enable us to withdraw places for children from units where we have real concerns.

Q129 Mr Davidson: Do you have anything comparable to the identification of 46 contractual breaches with the Medway secure training place for all or any of the young offender institutions?

Mr Bowers: The performance regime within the Prison Service SLA that we have is different from the commercial contracts that we have with the PFI. It is not the same.

Q130 Mr Davidson: Do you have a system of identifying breaches, even though these breaches might be different?

Mr Bowers: We do have a system of monitoring.

Q131 Mr Davidson: How many breaches have you had in the Prison Service?

Mr Bowers: I cannot tell you the figures off-hand. We do collect them every month and if you want them I can give you them.⁶

Q132 Mr Davidson: Do you have a system comparable to the fines which you fine the private sector contractors?

Mr Bowers: We have had a system up to this year, which is what we call a service credit scheme, which is penalties for breaches. What we have tried for the current financial year is turning that round where—

Q133 Mr Davidson: Sorry—is this a yes or a no?

Mr Bowers: They are incentives within the contract with the Prison Service to do with those targets.

Q134 Mr Davidson: Are there penalties if they do not achieve the targets?

Mr Bowers: There are if there are significant breaches.

Q135 Mr Davidson: So, coming back to the question I asked you in the first place: is there a comparable system of charging for breaches, the answer is yes?

Mr Bowers: They are not directly comparable.

Q136 Mr Davidson: No, but it is an equivalent system?

Mr Bowers: Yes.

Q137 Mr Davidson: Can I come now to the local authority secure children's homes? This, as far as I can see, is self-policing with the occasional spot check performance checks. Is that right?

Mr Bowers: No, that is not correct.

Q138 Mr Davidson: So the Report is wrong, is it?

Mr Bowers: No, it is not. The position is that up to the end of the financial year 2002–03 the information we received was through our monthly monitoring inspections. What we have done for our service level agreements and contracts with the individual homes for the current financial year is that there is an interim performance mechanism in place so that we have started to get more structured information through. We are going through a significant contracting process at the moment for new contracts coming into place from April 2004 which will have a comprehensive performance management regime.

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Q139 Mr Davidson: So a year from now you will be able to register breaches? If we came back to this in a year's time you would be able to tell us how many breaches there were?

Mr Bowers: Yes.

Q140 Mr Davidson: Can I turn now to page 20, Mr Perfect? I am slightly perplexed about this point about sending youngsters into custody. I take it that it is acceptable and indeed it is the right thing to do in some circumstances to put youngsters into custody and that is a professionally acceptable position?

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q141 Mr Davidson: What I do not then understand about this paragraph 2.12 is why 48 youth offending teams have a principal policy of never recommending that that is what happens.

Mr Perfect: the Youth Justice Board was established to challenge the attitude that if nothing works you have got to wait for young people to grow out of it, which the previous questioner has already referred to. A lot of people who have joined the youth offending teams still believe that and they believe that custody makes people worse. Our job is to challenge that and make sure that where custody is inevitable—

Q142 Mr Davidson: Can I just clarify then—are these youth offending teams self-employed?

Mr Perfect: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 puts a duty on the chief executive of the local authority for social service and education to be responsible for the youth offending team. There is a duty on the chief constable, the health authority and—

Q143 Mr Davidson: Who decides the policy as to whether or not custody never works? A group of these teams take the view that custody never works, so who decides that? Are they left to decide that themselves or do they take their line from you?

Mr Perfect: The Youth Justice Board identifies what is good practice and if any YOT failed to engage with that then I will engage with the chief executives and they have always been responsive.

Q144 Mr Davidson: How can the chief executives always be responsive when you engage with them when we are being told here that 48 out of 146 have a policy which is directly opposite to the policy that you advocate?

Mr Perfect: This is information which youth offending teams have reported to the NAO which is produced in this Report. This is something that the Board will want to engage with and we will certainly want to do something about.

Q145 Mr Davidson: Is this news to you?

Mr Perfect: That 48 out of 146 YOTs were asserting this. Yes, that is news, but I am not surprised.

Q146 Mr Davidson: You are running this and you did not know this. If the NAO had not come along you would not have known this?

Mr Perfect: The Youth Justice Board was established to change and challenge this culture. We have made tremendous progress but we know that there is more to be done.

Q147 Mr Davidson: Coming back to the point about youth offending teams not being self-employed, presumably, if they are under the direction of the appropriate chief executive of a local authority, there is no difficulty about instructions being given, so that actually will no longer prevail. These are employees, are they not? It is not as if you have to persuade them what has to be done. They can be instructed.

Mr Perfect: They can be instructed but we also have to help. I think that one of the obstacles we want to help the youth offending teams to overcome is to understand what happens within young offender institutions because historically communications have not been very good. We have begun to improve the communications by organising joint training events, by organising joint management meetings, and together with the Prison Service, we have developed a sentence management tool to help these offending teams plan the service that there ought to be within the YOIs.

Q148 Mr Davidson: So really what you are telling us is that before we can help these difficult-to-help youngsters we have to help the helpers?

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q149 Mr Davidson: That is what I thought. Can I just clarify one final point about where we are being told that 60% of those on higher tariff community sentences were reconvicted within 12 months? I am presuming that the figure of 60% would be much higher if you had a figure for those who offended within 12 months because presumably the legal process takes some time, and presumably that is only those who offended within a much shorter period than 12 months?

Mr Narey: That is correct, Mr Davidson. It is a rather blunt measure and it can sometimes underestimate the amount of re-offending which takes place.

Q150 Chairman: You are merging the Prison and Probation Services, are you not?

Mr Narey: That is correct.

Q151 Chairman: Do you want to tell us anything about the implications it might have on the way you see young offenders are dealt with?

Mr Narey: This is going to affect those offenders who are aged 18 and over. The YJB will carry on as at present although I have some oversight of the YJB on behalf of the Home Secretary. What we are trying to do with older offenders is address many of the weaknesses that are highlighted in this Report and try to harness efforts in custody and in the community to make sure that we are making the maximum possible impact on re-offending. The issue which has disturbed Mr Davidson is one on which we are trying to make sure that probation officers,

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who will over time become known as offender managers, will have a significant influence on what happens to their offenders when they are in custody and will work from the moment they go into custody in preparing a release pack to make sure that the gains made in custody, which are now sometimes considerable, are built upon after release. I think it will lead to much greater effectiveness in terms of reducing re-offending.

Q152 Mr Davidson: Can I ask you to go back to my very first question, which was the reconviction rates for young people who had been in custody, which I put to you was 84%, and you accepted that although this was an historic figure there was not much movement? That is correct, is it not?

Mr Narey: For those serving a very short prison sentence I am afraid I do not expect much movement. For those serving longer periods in a detention and training order we will see some movement.

Q153 Chairman: As you are trying to strip away short sentences we should in time see a significant improvement in that 84% figure. Are we going to get that improvement?

Mr Narey: I believe we will. If we can persuade the courts of the strength of the alternative, the intensive supervision surveillance order, particularly as we develop tagging and the possible use of tracking for young offenders where we know where they have been at any time of the day or night, I think we will make a much greater impact on re-offending than we are able to at the moment.

Chairman: We look forward to some progress on that.

Q154 Mr Davidson: Turning to page 37, paragraphs 3.28 and 3.29, this relates to the youth offending teams and firstly the lack of records. To what extent is it the case that staff there again are taking the view that they are accountable to very few other people and that because they care they should not actually be efficient, and therefore it is a cultural issue? Can I clarify what is being done to address this? At the end of paragraph 3.28 it says that a third of magistrates and district judges are expressing concern that the youth offending teams are not returning offenders to court more often, again it is this almost bifurcation between the youth offending teams and everybody else and what is the modern thought in these matters on progress. Again, can I clarify what steps are being taken to resolve these difficulties between the youth offending teams and the magistrates?

Mr Perfect: On that point we produced an effective note on assessment supervision and planning which every youth offending team manager has used in their area. There are quality assurance indicators in that effective practice note. Every youth offending team manager has used it on their team. Our regional managers have been round to check that work. They have all produced an action plan for improving the planning and supervision which

includes enforcement, and we will go back next year and see how well that action plan has been implemented.

Q155 Mr Davidson: Am I right in thinking that the magistrates and the district judges are correct in their anxiety or are they out of step?

Mr Perfect: On that point, magistrates and district judges were generally content with how breaches were dealt with but there is a third of them that would like the YOTs to return people to court more often, and I think that is probably right. That will be the third where we expect to see improvements next year.

Mr Narey: May I just add to the issue about YOTs not recommending custody, which is a real concern. I can promise you that the Home Secretary will be wanting me to work with the YJB to make sure that changes. It is fair to say that when the terminology is used by probation officers that no recommendation is made to the court, that is in fact accepted as code for custody being recommended. I do not want you to believe that YOT workers on all occasions are simply objecting to custody. If they do not make a recommendation that is known to the court as being code for no alternative other than custody being seen as realistic.

Q156 Mr Davidson: Why in that case is it being specifically drawn to our attention in the Report as if it was something exceptional? If it is code why did you not just clarify that point before the Report became to us?

Mr Narey: Because only in discussions has the point occurred. That is not to suggest that that should not change. I think we should get to the position where the proper recommendation is made because we want YOTs to engage in what happens in custody. I would not want you to think that it is case that in every one of those very worrying 46 YOTs who do not recommend custody that they do not have a serious expectation that certain offenders will be sent to custody. They do.

Q157 Mr Steinberg: On the front cover of the Report it shows a young job smashing a car window. If that was his first offence what would you expect him to get and if it was his fourth offence what would you expect him to get?

Mr Perfect: It depends what is happening. As his eyes are shut, it is probably an actor.

Q158 Mr Steinberg: I do realise that.

Mr Perfect: The first offence is the police officer explaining to him about the effect on the victim. For the second offence an intervention is ordered with a final warning, which is actually looking at what is happening in that child's life and, if he is out of school, getting him back into school, that sort of thing. For the third offence he would go to court and if found guilty he would get a referral order these days.

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Q159 Mr Steinberg: What does that mean?

Mr Perfect: He would be overseen by three volunteers from the community on the Youth Offender Panel.

Q160 Mr Steinberg: Are you surprised that they do that to you?

Mr Perfect: The Youth Offender Panels have been really effective.

Q161 Mr Bacon: Where does the birching come in?

Mr Perfect: Birching is off.

Q162 Mr Steinberg: And the fourth time?

Mr Perfect: On the fourth occasion they would probably get an action plan order.

Q163 Mr Steinberg: The fifth?

Mr Perfect: They would be getting up for a supervision order. If he was doing this each time he would be getting an intensive supervision and surveillance order.

Q164 Mr Steinberg: What does that mean?

Mr Perfect: Tagging, and tagging can mean being incarcerated in your home from eight o'clock in the evening till eight o'clock in the morning. There would be full time education—

Q165 Mr Steinberg: So he is free to do it other than eight o'clock to eight o'clock?

Mr Perfect: An ISSP recommendation is usually accompanied by a timetable which shows the magistrate what is happening for 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Q166 Mr Steinberg: Sixth?

Mr Perfect: On the sixth offence, if he has done it while he is on the ISSP, he could well go into custody.

Chairman: So he has to break into this poor person's car six times before he is locked up?

Q167 Mr Field: The person has to be caught six times before anything happens.

Mr Narey: Chairman, if the current behaviour became more serious than that he could move into custody much more quickly.

Q168 Mr Field: I should hope so.

Mr Narey: If we look at European comparisons I can tell you, Mr Field, that we lock up far more young people in England and Wales than in any other European jurisdiction.

Chairman: Anyway, we know that after he has been locked up after the sixth time there is an 84% chance after he has been let out that he will do it again anyway.

Q169 Mr Field: When you gave the figures about the number of teams which were not recommending to the court that a person should be locked up how do you square that with your figure that you have got an adequate supply of institutions to send young people to?

Mr Perfect: It is for the court to decide whether to remand or sentence a young person to custody. If a YOT never recommends custody a court will often make a sentence to custody in the absence of any other recommendation.

Q170 Mr Field: But if, following Ian Davidson's point, you are more effective in getting these bodies to reflect national policy and all the discounts, then presumably there is going to be a much greater increase in demand which you have got currently at 10%.

Mr Perfect: There may be, certainly. Ministers want more people brought to justice and that is fully supported. I should make clear in answering the question that three-quarters of the people who are caught, once they come into youth justice, do not come back in. At each stage, by putting in help and support, as well as making clear to young people what the acceptable boundaries of behaviour are, for the first two or three times the majority do not come back. It is when the behaviour becomes entrenched that it becomes more difficult to challenge. What we have been doing in the Youth Justice Board, with some success, is putting intervention in for those coming into the system for the second, third and fourth time, and that is where the re-offending has been reduced.

Q171 Mr Field: Again, following Ian Davidson's point, I described earlier how, at the monthly meetings I have had, it is like pushing a boulder uphill to try to get some action. Then I find out that one of the YOT team has minuted that they do not actually believe in anti-social behaviour orders. That perhaps has moved on but what steps are you taking to see that these teams vaguely agree with what Parliament is paying them for?

Mr Perfect: On the back of that sort of incident we are drawing up joint guidance with the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to show what role the youth offending teams have got to have in order to prevent anti-social behaviour as well as preventing youth offending. There is a heavy overlap between the two things.

Q172 Mr Field: How do you prevent these teams behaving in an anti-social behaviour way? That is what we are about.

Mr Perfect: The positive thing the youth offending teams can do is to make clear to the children what the acceptable boundaries of behaviour are.

Q173 Mr Field: I know that. We are asking whether you do and, when Mr Narey earlier on was talking about the strength of regional differences in the numbers of people sent to institutions, might that not have suggested to you that there is a whole phalanx of groups who do not believe that they should go to institutions anyway? Should that not have got you into a proactive mode?

Mr Perfect: We have done research and, as I believe I mentioned earlier, we did find that there were local differences in sentencing culture. There were some areas which made low use of custody and other areas

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that made high use of custody. By and large it is where the community interventions are weak that high use of custody has been made and where youth offending teams are being proactive that low use of custody is being made. Custody is not the only answer.

Q174 Mr Field: No. Anti-social behaviour orders are not custody. They are actually trying to change behaviour. Could you give us a note for our report on what you think are the most effective forms of non-custodial sentences? I would be interested in going to visit, in the area near where I represent, the best projects where we can see that being addressed.
Mr Perfect: Yes, of course.⁷

Q175 Mr Allan: A lot of the questions have been about accountability and responsibility of youth offending teams and, having sat through the Crime and Disorder Act when we created it, you are working with what we have given you. Can we clarify, if any of us local people or local Members of Parliament want to get to the person who sets the policy for their local youth offending team, who that person is? Is it the chief executive of the local authority or is it somebody else? Who is the responsible person?

Mr Perfect: For setting the national policy it is the Youth Justice Board and we have explained that. The youth offending team is the person appointed locally to implement the policy, and their name and address is available from our website. If there is any problem with the youth offending team manager you can chat to the Board, you can chat to the chief executive. There is an excellent project in Lancashire called GRIP (Group Intervention Panel) which is actually helping young people who have got anti-social behaviour orders.

⁷ Ev 21–22

Q176 Mr Allan: Who do the youth offending team managers report to? Who is the boss locally?

Mr Perfect: The chief executive of the local authority with social service and education responsibilities.

Q177 Mr Allan: So if we have a problem and we really want to be able to do something about it, we go to the chief executive of the local authority?

Mr Perfect: Yes.

Q178 Chairman: I hope that does you more good than it does me. Thank you very much, gentlemen. It is easy to criticise your efforts but we do appreciate that you are dealing with some of the most difficult young people and it is not your fault that they are so badly let down by the education system and so badly let down in their own family lives. We appreciate the enormous difficulties that you are labouring under and we understand from what you have told us that you are trying to move away from the absurd system which operated previously where people just got a conditional discharge and you are trying to have a more hands-on approach, and with regard to custodial sentences you are trying to strip away short sentences which just do no good at all. We are grateful for your efforts but we are somewhat alarmed, some of us, by the apparent independence of the youth offending teams who seem to be able to ignore central public policy.

Mr Narey: You can be sure, Chairman, that that will be addressed as a matter of urgency following this meeting.

Q179 Mr Field: And when it is could we have a note on what you have done?

Mr Narey: Yes indeed.⁸

Chairman: Thank you, gentlemen.

⁸ Ev 23

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Home Office

Question 42 (Mr Steinberg): Comparative offending rates by member state across the European Union.

We were asked if we had information on juvenile offending rates in countries in the European Union. Attached a table is giving the best comparative information we have. This is derived from the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics—2003, produced by an expert group under the Council of Europe and funded by the Home Office, the Netherlands and Swiss authorities.

The table attached⁹ shows for convictions generally and for individual offence categories, the proportions of offences committed by juveniles. As explained in the detailed notes at the back, true international comparisons are difficult because of different criminal justice processes, definitions and (in the case of juveniles) varying ages of criminal responsibility.

The table summarises the most up to date conviction statistics for young people in EU member states, and provide the most valid comparison with table 1 of the NAO Report. However, there are a few points to note when making this comparison:

- The table refers to the percentage of young people who have been convicted (ie found guilty according to law) of having committed a criminal offence proportionate to the overall number of offenders. There is no comparable data available for numbers of offences, or a breakdown of the age ranges of the young offenders, as provided in the Youth Justice Annual Statistics, from which the NAO's figures are derived.
- The data was compiled by questionnaire, and an obvious problem in compiling data of this type across the EU is related to major differences in criminal procedures between countries, and although attempts were made to compare data, this proved impossible for some countries—hence the high number of incidences where data was not available. Of the EU states, Luxembourg did not supply any data on convictions.
- Offence definitions are variable from state to state, as they are based on each state's offence definition provided in national penal statutes. So, for example, "burglary" and "car theft" were not identified separately for many countries but were merely reported in the general categories "theft" or "drugs offences".
- It was acknowledged in the questionnaire that the definition of "convictions" had to be made compatible with the range of subsequent disposals available in most criminal justice systems. The definition had to take into account that (a) offenders are not always convicted by courts and (b) sanctions/measures may be imposed by another authority (police or prosecutor). Therefore the suggested definition of a conviction included sanctions/measures imposed based on an admission of guilt by the defendant. However, the definition did not include cases where (a) a prosecutor imposed sanctions/measures not based on an admission of guilt; (b) sanctions imposed by the police (such as cautions in England and Wales); and (c) were other state authorities imposed a sanction/measure. Some countries found that they were unable to supply data on sanctions from the prosecutor.
- The information collected will be affected by the minimum age at which a conviction is imposed. There are substantial differences here between the EU states, and the minimum age ranges are highlighted in the second column of the table. All of the offenders were under 18 at the time of their conviction.
- Although data checks were made to ensure that the number of convictions was equal to the number of sanctions/measures were imposed. Each offender should have been counted once for each offence—even if several sanctions/measures had been imposed for that offence. However, data for some countries showed significant discrepancies which were not fully explained, but which it is thought derive from differing counting rules for convictions and sanctions/measures.
- All participating states have some form of "principal offence rule" so that an offender convicted of more than one offence will only be counted once in the statistics, it is not always clear how the seriousness of the offence was determined.

Question 121 (Mr Davidson): What was the largest fine at Medway?

The performance system is based on an accumulation of points for performance failures each quarter. Each quarter has a baseline below which points do not translate into cash penalties. In only one quarter of 2002–03 did the points awarded at Medway STC exceed the baseline (by 170 penalty points, resulting in the fine of £5,400). The highest single award to Medway in 2002–03 occurred in this quarter, being 380 points for failure to deliver the required hours of taught education during the month of September 2002.

(Source—Youth Justice Board)

Question 131 (Mr Davidson): How many breaches have you had in the Prison Service?

Breaches are not directly comparable between YOI's and STC's because the standards against which the YJB monitor and the reasons for incurring penalties are both somewhat different.

STCs have a baseline threshold of performance failure points before fines are levied. There is no such baseline in YOIs but these had capped levels in the system employed during 2002–03, under the Service Credit scheme. In addition, YOI's could earn bonus points (equating to money offset against fines incurred) for over performing against certain standards.

The total number of performance failures at Medway in 2002–03 was 46, resulting in a total fine of £5,400. The total amount of fines against YOIs from April 2002 to March 2003 was £32,650. This figure related to 44 monthly fines, each based on the net points total of accumulated performance failures and offsetting credits, across 13 establishments.

(Source—Youth Justice Board)

Question 174 (Mr Field): Request for a note on the most effective forms of non-custodial sentences.

The reforms to the youth justice system since 1998 have led to significant changes to the pre-court and sentencing framework for juveniles. In the mid 1990s, three out of five young offenders received a caution from the police with no further intervention. Now the caution has been replaced by reprimands and final warnings 80% of final warnings are followed by some intervention designed to reduce reoffending. In the mid 1990s, 37% of young offenders found guilty at court received a conditional discharge. That has now been reduced to 12% with referral orders introduced for young offenders appearing in court for the first time and pleading guilty. Action plan orders, reparation orders, and parenting orders have been introduced to encourage interventions that will reduce reoffending. The aim is ensure that is a range of responses available to the courts to respond to different levels and circumstances of offending and that those sentences are designed to lead to constructive intervention with young people to address offending behaviour. It is intended that intervention is provided at the earliest point in order to prevent offending behaviour from escalating.

RECONVICTION DATA FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS ON PRE-COURT AND NON-CUSTODIAL SENTENCES

Home Office research into the effect of the new community disposals has shown a reduction in reconviction rates. An analysis of a cohort of juvenile offenders convicted in the first quarter of 2001 (just under a year after the national rollout of the reforms) indicates that 26% of juvenile offenders dealt with by the police or courts through community disposals were reconvicted of a further offence within one year compared to 34% in 1997. The research indicates that the greatest inroads have been made through the pre-court interventions but there has been progress made with the new community orders. Less progress was made with the older orders, including those at the higher end of the tariff. The reduction in the reconviction rate is largely due to reprimands and final warnings supported by interventions replacing cautions. Action Plan Orders and Reparation Orders have contributed also to the reduction.

Since 2001 work to reduce reoffending further includes the introduction of the Referral Order, the development, piloting and national rollout of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme, the publication of 15 notes on effective practice and quality assurance of work on assessment, planning and supervision; final warnings and education and training.

REFERRAL ORDERS AND YOUTH OFFENDER PANELS

The majority of young offenders appearing in court for the first time and pleading guilty now receive a referral order. The court refers a young person to a Youth Offender Panel which is made up of a YOT officer and two trained volunteers from the local community. The Panel with the young person, their parents/carers and the victim (where appropriate) agree a contract lasting between three and 12 months. The contract can include attending programmes to address offending behaviour, repairing the harm done by their offence or a variety of other actions. Guidance issued by the Home Office and Youth Justice Board states that the Youth Offender Panel reviews progress against the contract at least every three months. Non-compliance can lead to re-sentencing by the courts.

REPARATION ORDERS

A reparation order involves up to 24 hours reparation over a period of up to three months. Young offenders are required to make reparation either directly to their victim/s or indirectly through community reparation. It is designed to make young offender to face up to their crimes and the consequences of their actions. It can involve writing a letter of apology, apologising in person, cleaning graffiti and repairing criminal damage.

ACTION PLAN ORDERS

An Action Plan Order is a community-based programme combining punishment, rehabilitation and reparation. The order lasts three months and is designed to address the specific causes of offending. It can involve compliance with a series of requirements including education, reparation and offending behaviour work.

THE INTENSIVE SUPERVISION AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME (ISSP)

ISSP is a six month programme targeted at the most serious and persistent offenders with a requirement of 25 hours of supervision per week during the first three months and a minimum of five hours in the second three months. The programme includes curfews and uses a range of surveillance methods that can include electronic monitoring, voice verification technology and police monitoring.

There are three main aims of ISSP:

- to reduce the frequency and seriousness of offending in the target group;
- to tackle the underlying needs of the offenders which give rise to offending, with a particular focus on education and training; and
- to provide reassurance to communities through close surveillance backed up by rigorous enforcement.

Each young person subject to ISSP is issued a weekly timetable covering the elements of supervision. The core elements of supervision cover:

- education and training;
- interventions to tackle offending behaviour;
- reparation to victim or the community;
- assistance in developing interpersonal skills; and
- family support.

ISSP began in the second half of 2001 and has been rolled out in England and Wales in four stages. There are now 75 ISSP schemes covering all Youth Offending Team areas.

While reconviction data is not yet available for the ISSP, the NAO Report notes the scheme appears to be well regarded by the courts and by practitioners. The high level of supervision, the structured nature of the programme, and the level of surveillance promote confidence in the programme.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 also led to the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). ASBOs are civil orders and a useful tool in addressing behaviour that could lead to criminal offences in the future. Breaching an ASBO is a criminal offence and young people are beginning to enter the criminal justice system through this route. The Home Office and Youth Justice Board issued joint guidance on the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Orders in November 2002 and further joint guidance on Anti-Social Behaviour for Youth Offending Teams is being prepared.

PARENTING ORDERS AND PROGRAMMES

Parenting orders were introduced to help parents fulfil their responsibilities. Research recognises the link between authoritative parenting and the reduction of risk factors that could lead to offending. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) work with parents of young people engaged in or at risk of anti social behaviour or offending on either a voluntary or statutory basis, using a range of programmes.

Evaluation of parenting programmes have identified a number of benefits, including

- Positive impact on both young people's perception of their parents and on their behaviour.
- Positive changes in parenting skills and competencies.
- 90% of parents said they would recommend the programme to other parents in their situation and court-ordered parents benefited just as much as voluntary participants.

In the year after their parents completed the programme, reconviction rates had reduced by nearly one third, and the average number of offences per young person had dropped by 50%.

Parenting orders are intended to help and support parents in controlling their children's behaviour and are usually supervised by a member of a YOT. Parenting orders can consist of two elements: (1) counselling or guidance programmes; (2) the requirement on parents or guardians to exercise control over their child's behaviour, for a maximum of 12 months.

(Source—Youth Justice Board)

Questions 178–179 (Chairman and Mr Field): Requiring Youth Offending Teams to improve the clarity of their recommendations in pre-sentencing reports.

Following the hearing on 2 February 2004, Mark Perfect wrote to all Youth Offending Teams on 3 February 2004 reminding them of the need to make clear recommendations. The text of that letter is reproduced below:

3 February 2004

To All YOT Managers

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE REPORT ON YOUTH JUSTICE

1. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) took evidence on the youth justice reforms from me, Martin Narey and others on 2 February. I am grateful to everyone who made the task relatively easy by delivering the improvements noted by the National Audit Office and the Audit Commission.

2. However, the National Audit Office reported that 48 out of the 146 Youth Offending Teams responding to their survey have a policy of not recommending custody in any circumstances. The MPs were shocked. Some young people do need to be held in secure facilities for the safety of themselves and/or the public. We have reached the point now where it is not acceptable to make no recommendation when a custodial sentence is appropriate. In these cases Youth Offending Teams should recommend to the court the services the young person should receive while in secure facilities and on rehabilitation. Failure to do so undermines confidence in pre-sentence reports. If any Youth Offending Team manager disagrees I would be grateful if they could let me know so I can identify a way forward that will command the confidence of local steering groups, the Board, Ministers and Parliament.

3. Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes should be offered for many cases where custody would otherwise be inevitable. But if the young person proves unable to keep to the terms, or if the nature of the offence makes custody appropriate, Youth Offending Teams should be specifying the services the young people need in secure facilities to prevent further offending. The YJB and Prison Service have together developed a sentence management tool that starts from the ASSET risk factors and helps ensure services in secure facilities address the needs of young offenders. This tool is to be piloted in Lancaster Farms and Wetherby from this March. We will keep Youth Offending Teams and juvenile secure facilities in touch with progress.

4. The Board expects youth offending services to deliver a service based on assessment and reasonable recommendations to courts. Public confidence in our approach will be damaged if services are seen to adopt positions based not on the facts of the individual case but on a previously determined opinion.

Your sincerely

Mark Perfect
Chief Executive

PERCENTAGE OF MINORS AMONG PERSONS CONVICTED

| | <i>Criminal offences Total:</i> | <i>Traffic offences</i> | <i>International homicide Total</i> | <i>International homicide Completed</i> | <i>Assault</i> | <i>Rape</i> | <i>Robbery</i> | <i>Theft Total</i> | <i>Theft Theft of a motor vehicle</i> | <i>Theft Burglary Total</i> | <i>Theft Burglary Domestic Burglary</i> | <i>Drug offences Total</i> | <i>Drug offences Drug trafficking</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | P32TCM99 | P32TTM99 | P32HOM99 | P32HCM99 | P32ASM99 | P32RAM99 | P32ROM99 | P32THM99 | P32TVM99 | P32BUM99 | P32BDM99 | P32DRM99 | P32DTM99 |
| Albania | 8.1 | 2.7 | 6.4 | — | 10.6 | 9.1 | 18.3 | 30.5 | — | — | — | 1.3 | — |
| Armenia | 5.1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Austria | 6.1 | — | 5.6 | 3.1 | 11.8 | 12.3 | 37.1 | 11.7 | — | 28.7 | — | 12.4 | 8.6 |
| Belgium | 0.5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Bulgaria | 13.5 | 3.9 | 6.8 | 7.7 | 0.6 | 7.7 | 30.1 | 19.4 | — | — | — | 17.2 | 0.0 |
| Croatia | 4.6 | 0.9 | 4.6 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 8.2 | 19.0 | 10.1 | — | 18.3 | — | 6.1 | 1.7 |
| Cyprus | 2.9 | — | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.6 | — | 7.5 | — | 0.0 | — |
| Czech Republic | 6.6 | — | 3.1 | — | 5.4 | 8.6 | 19.8 | 11.1 | — | — | — | 14.2 | 13.8 |
| Denmark | 9.7 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Estonia | 15.8 | — | 2.7 | — | 4.9 | 20.5 | 22.7 | 21.2 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Finland | 7.1 | 4.0 | 5.7 | 4.3 | 13.2 | 4.0 | 23.9 | 11.8 | — | — | — | 11.5 | — |
| France | 6.7 | 0.3 | 8.4 | — | 10.2 | 22.5 | 22.1 | 19.9 | — | — | — | 6.8 | 4.6 |
| Georgia | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Germany | 6.8 | 2.3 | 5.8 | — | 18.2 | 12.1 | 37.4 | 13.4 | — | 25.9 | — | 8.0 | 2.9 |
| Greece | 10.5 | 24.2 | 4.4 | 5.4 | 3.8 | 9.1 | 31.2 | 33.4 | 93.3 | — | — | 14.6 | 12.6 |
| Hungary | 9.1 | 1.8 | 4.0 | 3.6 | 7.2 | 12.3 | 29.0 | 16.1 | — | — | — | 6.2 | — |
| Ireland | 13.4 | 40.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 11.6 | — | 16.2 | — | 6.8 | — |
| Italy | 0.0 | — | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.1 | — | — | — | 0.1 | — |
| Latvia | 14.2 | 1.1 | 7.4 | 8.0 | — | 16.9 | 20.5 | 23.3 | — | 27.3 | — | 3.7 | — |
| Lithuania | 11.4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Luxembourg | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Malta | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Moldova | 10.5 | 0.6 | 3.3 | — | 3.9 | 0.0 | 17.4 | 14.1 | — | — | — | 6.4 | — |
| Netherlands | 7.4 | 0.6 | — | — | 9.3 | 16.3 | 28.7 | 10.4 | — | 16.6 | — | 2.4 | — |
| Norway | 7.6 | 5.7 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 8.4 | 12.9 | 25.3 | 11.3 | 25.8 | 11.4 | 15.6 | 9.1 | 7.0 |
| Poland | 7.1 | 2.5 | 8.6 | — | 9.6 | 4.0 | 16.2 | 14.6 | — | 18.7 | — | 12.5 | 10.0 |
| Portugal | 5.0 | 6.1 | 2.3 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 11.5 | 11.4 | 9.6 | — | — | — | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Romania | 8.9 | 2.3 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 3.2 | 9.7 | 19.2 | 18.3 | 15.2 | — | — | 4.5 | — |
| Russia | 12.0 | — | 5.8 | — | 3.8 | 13.5 | 18.4 | 15.9 | — | — | — | 5.2 | — |
| Slovakia | 12.8 | 4.6 | 14.3 | 16.3 | 2.8 | 16.7 | 22.0 | 44.2 | 4.0 | — | 4.7 | 6.0 | 6.4 |
| Slovenia | 8.6 | 1.1 | 10.2 | — | 5.1 | 13.2 | 25.8 | 19.0 | 17.7 | 20.6 | — | 11.3 | 10.9 |
| Spain | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sweden | 10.4 | 6.5 | 4.4 | — | 18.2 | 5.1 | 44.0 | 17.8 | 30.9 | 17.0 | — | 6.2 | — |
| Switzerland | 14.9 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 18.0 | 11.8 | 35.5 | 38.2 | — | — | — | 37.3 | 16.6 |
| Turkey | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ukraine | 9.0 | 1.7 | 7.4 | — | 15.4 | 9.8 | 16.2 | 14.1 | — | — | — | 2.8 | — |
| UK: England & Wales | 6.5 | 2.0 | 8.8 | 10.0 | 16.3 | 8.5 | 36.3 | 25.0 | 42.1 | 26.7 | 25.6 | 6.4 | 3.9 |
| UK: N Ireland | 3.2 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 5.4 | 12.8 | 15.5 | 16.6 | 16.8 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| UK: Scotland | 0.1 | — | 0.9 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 3.7 | 1.1 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 0.1 | — | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| <i>Mean</i> | 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 21 | 17 | 27 | 18 | 16 | 8 | 6 |
| <i>Median</i> | 8 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 21 | 14 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Minimum</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Maximum</i> | 16 | 40 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 22 | 44 | 44 | 93 | 29 | 26 | 37 | 17 |

(Source—European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics 2003)

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the National Audit Office*Questions 83–85 (Mr Trickett)*

During the Committee of Public Accounts session on 2 February 2004, Mr Trickett requested clarification of the figures for the number of staff working in youth offending teams quoted at paragraph 3.30 of the National Audit Office Report on “Youth Offending: The delivery of community and custodial sentences”.

The second sentence in paragraph 3.30 states there were 10,000 Youth Offending Team staff in September 2003. This figure relates to the salaried staff employed by Youth Offending Teams. It excludes some 5,000 voluntary staff and those funded from other organisations that assist in work with young offenders. In total, therefore, some 15,000 people are involved.

The final sentence in paragraph 3.30 refers to the 472 vacancies amongst Youth Offending Team staff in September 2003 (3.1% of the workforce), of which 325 vacancies were amongst front line staff (6.5% of all front line staff). The 3.1% was calculated by reference to the 15,000 total people working with youth offenders. The reference to 325 vacancies, however, relates only to the front line case workers responsible for managing the sentence of each young offender, of which there are some 5,000 in total.

March 2004
