Evaluation of
Youth Offending Teams
in New Zealand

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were formed in late 2002 at the recommendation of the Youth Offending Strategy (2002). It was intended that through the YOTs, effective working relationships would be built between the four government service delivery agencies that intervene with youth offenders: Police; Child, Youth and Family; Education; and Health. The overall aim of YOTs is to co-ordinate service delivery at a local level to young offenders. There are currently 32 teams spread throughout New Zealand.

The Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG) has been charged with overseeing the performance of YOTs and ensuring that all teams are supported to function effectively. The Youth Justice Leadership Group comprises national policy and operational managers from the Ministries of Justice, Social Development, Health and Education; the Department of Child, Youth and Family; and New Zealand Police.

The Ministry of Justice provides two fulltime YOT Adviser positions to provide support and guidance to YOTs and act as a link between the YOTs and the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

This report presents the findings of a process evaluation of Youth Offending Teams in New Zealand. The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect information about how YOTs operate, with the intention of identifying examples of best practice and opportunities for development, and useful guidelines for improving the efficiency and appropriateness of their functioning. Interviews were held with 45 key informants from seven YOTs, including both current and past YOT members. The key informants interviewed were from a range of agencies and both managers and practitioners were interviewed. In addition, a survey was sent electronically to all current YOT members. A total of 199 members completed the survey, representing a 42% response rate. A focus group discussion was held with members of the YJLG in order to gain an understanding of their views and their expectations of YOTs. A limited-focus literature review was undertaken to inform the recommendations arising from the evaluation.

Purpose of Youth Offending Teams

The evaluation found a lack of a shared understanding about the purpose and role of YOTs and four out of ten survey participants did not believe that 'the role of the YOT is clear to all participants'. There was also a lack of clarity about how the aims should be achieved, with YOT members requesting that direction be provided as to their purpose and how the YOTs should function.

Respondents identified aspects of inter-agency engagement as the most important or significant function of YOTs. Best practice shows that the higher the level of engagement, the greater the potential gain from the inter-agency engagement. On a continuum of collaboration (as identified in the literature review) YOTs tend to be currently positioned at

lower levels of collaboration, and respondents identified communication, information sharing and co-operation as the main forms of the inter-agency engagement.

Youth Offending Teams are generally seen to be effective in encouraging inter-agency collaboration, although they are considered to be 'quite' rather than 'very' effective. YOTs were rated as being far more effective at collaboration between the four core youth justice agencies than between the four core agencies and local community groups.

A specific advantage of YOTs in terms of inter-agency engagement is that whilst there are other inter-agency forums that involve Police and Child, Youth and Family, the YOT's structure includes Health and Education and therefore it allows for a more holistic approach to be taken when addressing youth offending in local areas.

Whilst YOT members consider that they generally meet with the same people at YOT meetings as at other inter-agency meetings, they believe that their YOT does serve a different purpose to other inter-agency groups and that different issues are discussed at the YOT meetings.

Membership

The core composition of a YOT should be made up of a local practitioner and a manager from each of the four key agencies: Police; Child, Youth and Family; Health; and Education. Youth Offending Teams are expected to develop ways of sharing information and keeping other stakeholders up to date, such as holding liaison meetings and inviting interested parties to attend YOT meetings.

There is confusion about what the relationship between YOTs and community organisations should be. There is considerable variation between YOTs, both in terms of what they believe that they should be doing in relation to community involvement, and in terms of what they actually do.

Most of the YOT members involved in this evaluation stated a preference for the membership of their YOT to be extended beyond the current composition, and beyond the four core government agencies. The importance of maintaining a focus on core business was, however, acknowledged by some YOT members who believed that there are both advantages and disadvantages of having community organisations as members of the teams.

Non-core agencies can be involved with YOTs in ways other than through membership. This includes consulting the agency or organisation or involving them in specific initiatives when required. This type of involvement is currently undertaken by YOTs. Consultation and involvement is highest for government agencies, both central government (excluding the four core agencies) and local government. There is a higher level of consultation and involvement amongst Māori than amongst Pacific representation and service providers. Respondents indicated a preference for a higher level of consultation and involvement from other agencies and organisations than is currently the case.

Achievements of Youth Offending Teams

Whilst co-ordination or collaboration was generally seen as the main purpose of YOTs, YOTs fulfil other roles such as identifying gaps in services in the local areas and undertaking projects and initiatives.

A recurring theme that emerged from those who had undertaken specific projects is that the projects are useful for increasing the cohesiveness of the team, and to create a sense of team success. Projects are seen to energise members and to encourage regular attendance. However, many teams do not see projects and initiatives as a necessary function of YOTs and do not believe that they have the resources, in terms either of funding or people, to undertake projects.

Whilst there was a perception amongst respondents that having a set work programme or action plan is very important for the success of a YOT, there is considerable variation among members regarding the extent to which plans are believed to be implemented by their YOTs. Levels of enthusiasm for developing the plans also vary.

Youth Offending Teams are seen to be effective at improving the dissemination and flow of information about youth offending. Information of various types is shared, some of it reasonably informal and some of it more data-driven. There is considerable variation between teams as to the extent and type of information shared.

Some information sharing contributes to one of the purposes of YOTs: identification of service gaps in the local areas. Youth Offending Teams are considered by their members to be more effective at identifying gaps in services available than at implementing projects or initiatives.

Governance of Youth Offending Teams

The New Zealand Police's input to YOTs was considered by YOT members who responded to the survey to be the most valuable of the four core agencies whilst Health's input was rated as the least valuable. For each agency, it was considered by survey respondents that the value of the agency's input was much higher than the value that agency received from their involvement in the YOT. Health was the agency seen as gaining the least from their involvement in YOTs.

Having the representation of both managers and practitioners on YOTs was considered to be an appropriate model, with managers providing the strategic direction and decision making regarding resources, and the practitioners as the frontline people with an overview of what is happening in the community. Some YOT members believed that the managers currently represented on the YOTs are not senior enough, often as a result of delegation by more senior managers. A lack of appropriate senior level management representation appears to be hindering decision making on a number of YOTs. Only six in ten of the survey respondents thought that there is sufficient decision making power from the four core agencies.

The Police, and Child, Youth and Family are more likely to be seen by all respondents to have sufficient decision making power on the YOT than are Education or Health.

Most YOT members were confident that they have the support and encouragement of their managers regarding their involvement in YOTs. However fewer considered that their agency valued their involvement.

The chair is a critical role to the YOT and a motivated chair is considered very important for the success of a YOT. A number of personal characteristics and leadership skills were identified as being important for an effective chair: strategic thinking; passion; team building skills; leading with authority; adhering to good meeting protocols; facilitation skills; communication skills; ability to maintain neutrality; and having drive and clout.

The success of a particular YOT is currently driven to a large extent by the involvement and input of individual members rather than the structure and processes of the YOT. The driving force can be the person who is the chair, but it can also be a motivated member of the YOT other than the chair. Youth Offending Teams are therefore vulnerable to changes in membership and the absence or departure from the YOT of a key member who is a driving force can have a considerable effect on the performance of that YOT.

Funding for projects is considered important for the success of YOTs and the current lack of funding is an issue for YOT members. The perceived lack of funding and resourcing was seen by some as indicative of an overall lack of commitment to YOTs.

Meetings

Meetings are core business for YOTs and are expected to be held monthly. Almost all YOTs do meet monthly, even though a few members would prefer to meet less frequently.

Regular attendance at meetings is an issue and only 16% of the survey respondents indicated that they had attended every meeting in the last year (the majority had attended 'most' meetings).

YOT members were asked about the frequency of representation of managers and practitioners from each of the core agencies at their YOT meetings. According to survey respondents, practitioners are more likely to attend YOT meetings regularly than are managers. Police practitioners are the most likely to attend regularly and Health representatives, both managers and practitioners, are the least likely to attend regularly.

A lack of consistent attendance can impact the value and continuity of YOT meetings and consistency of attendance is considered to be one of the key requirements to ensure the success of YOTs. Reasons given for inconsistency of attendance included: staff shortages; work load issues; other inter-agency meetings; personal motivation; travel time; and travel costs.

High membership turnover was also seen to impact the functioning of the YOT. Turnover increases the time required at a meeting to undertake introductions and briefings on the business at hand, so that perceptions of the usefulness of YOT meetings may be reduced. High turnover also increases difficulties in the building and maintaining of team relationships

and trust. Half of the survey respondents stated they have been involved with YOTs for less than two years and a quarter of them have been involved for less than a year.

Overall successfulness of the Youth Offending Teams

There is considerable variation between YOT members as to perceptions of the overall effectiveness or successfulness of YOTs. There was a general tendency for Child, Youth and Family and also Education representatives to be more positive about the success of YOTs, and for Police and Health representatives to be somewhat less positive.

Whilst almost half the survey respondents stated that their YOT was effective overall, only a very small proportion (8%) stated that it was 'very effective'. Statistical analysis was undertaken that showed that rating the YOT positively on aspects relating to the implementation of projects, clarity of role, having a positive effect on workload and effectively serving the geographic area the YOT covers, is a predictor of an overall positive rating of effectiveness. YOT members believe that it is these outcomes, rather than information sharing and collaboration, that are a true measure of the YOT's effectiveness.

However, YOTs are generally seen to serve a useful purpose, with eight in ten survey respondents agreeing that YOTs in general serve a very useful purpose. Child, Youth and Family representatives were the most positive about YOTs serving a useful purpose and Police representatives were the least positive.

Almost six in ten survey respondents stated that their YOT was successful and the same rating was given for YOTs in general. Rating their YOT positively on aspects relating to the speed of implementation of projects, improving outcomes, serving a useful purpose and effectively covering the geographic area it covers, is a predictor of an overall positive rating of successfulness of their YOT. The analysis showed that aspects relating to collaboration were not significant in driving perceptions of the YOT's successfulness.

Going forward

A number of factors were identified as being important for the successful functioning of YOTs. It was acknowledged that the more successful a YOT is, the better the attendance and participation of members will be, and that this will generate further success. The motivation of the members is seen to be of greatest importance for the success of a YOT; both having motivated people who drive the YOT and having a motivated chairperson. Consistency of attendance at the meetings was also considered extremely important for the success of a YOT.

The need for greater support from a number of sources was identified in this evaluation. Greater support is required from the core agencies, the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Leadership Group. It was considered that a paid co-ordinator could offer support to YOTs, in particular administrative assistance, however support from other sources was seen as more critical for the success of a YOT.

The four core agencies need to provide greater championing and awareness of YOTs within their organisations, and they need to value their representatives for their involvement in the YOT.

The Ministry of Justice could provide more support to YOTs by providing: more information about what is happening with regard to youth offending, including sharing of information about how other YOTs are dealing with issues, a YOT website including contact details of YOT members and possibly a shared database; induction and orientation packages for YOT members; guidance, training and support for the chairperson; and more face to face support, including visits to YOTs and facilitated planning and team building sessions.

The Youth Justice Leadership Group could provide more support to YOTs by: having a greater local presence by undertaking more visits to YOTs and providing more information and regular feedback; becoming more involved with YOTs that are struggling; and championing YOTs at a national level to ensure greater investment in and support for YOTs from the core agencies at the senior management level.

A small number of YOTs have a locally supported co-ordinator to assist them. One role for a co-ordinator could primarily involve undertaking the administrative work for the YOT and this is the role most key informants thought of when asked about a co-ordinator. It was considered that it would be helpful to have a dedicated person to support the YOT chair and to have them undertake the administrative duties that currently fall to the chair. However, some saw that the co-ordinator role should additionally cover research tasks, project co-ordination and management, liaison, information sharing and dissemination and linking with the community. More than three-quarters of the survey respondents thought that having a paid co-ordinator was an important requirement for the success of a YOT. However, other aspects were given higher ratings: having motivated people involved in the YOT; consistency of attendance; a work programme or action plan; support from the Ministry of Justice and the YJLG; and knowing that there is funding for projects were considered more important for the success of a YOT.

Conclusions and recommendations

Youth Offending Teams successfully encourage inter-agency engagement between the four core Youth Justice agencies. However, YOTs are currently operating at the level of communication and co-operation rather than at the higher level of collaboration which is the desired level of engagement.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this evaluation:

- A strong relationship between the Youth Justice Leadership Group, the core Youth Justice Agencies, and the YOT members is critical for the success of the Youth Offending Teams. The Youth Justice Leadership Group and senior management within the core agencies need to offer a clear mandate, leadership and support for collaboration. The YOT members need to have the capacity to engage and build relationships and be able to identify and address local issues.

- There needs to be a championing of YOTs by core agencies at a national level to ensure greater commitment to and support for YOTs by senior managers.

- There needs to be greater clarity of the purpose, role and expected outcomes of YOTs.

- YOTs require clear guidelines (including information on their structure, direction, membership and the role of the chair) to assist them in their day to day functioning.

- A set work programme or action plan was welcomed in principle by YOT members. YOTs require greater support in the development, implementation and management of action plans.

- There needs to be a higher level of reporting and information flow between the YOTs and the Youth Justice Leadership Group, supported by the Ministry of Justice. YOTs need to be clear as to what reporting they are required to provide, and the YJLG and Ministry of Justice needs to provide more information, regular feedback and responses to YOTs in answer to minutes and questions.

- There needs to be greater core agency commitment to YOTs in terms of clarifying the role of the agency representative on the YOT and the seniority of the representative, ensuring that the agency is represented by the appropriate staff and providing support for and valuing staff representation on the YOT.

- The issue of how funding should be provided to YOTs should be reviewed. If it is decided that funding is appropriately provided from existing budgets within the core agencies, this needs to be another focus of the agencies' commitment to YOTs.

- Overall, for YOTs to be successful, there needs to be an increased level of enthusiasm from everyone associated with them.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Youth Offending Strategy (2002) recommended the establishment of local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to provide leadership and co-ordinate youth justice service delivery at a local level to young offenders. There are currently 32 teams spread throughout New Zealand.

After four years of operation it was considered timely that an evaluation of YOTs be carried out to help inform the future direction and support required for these teams.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation conducted to find out about the functioning and dynamics of YOTs.

The evaluation captured variation of operational success, working styles and issues, best practice and information on how YOT members would like to see YOTs working in the future.

It is intended that this report will provide useful information on how to improve the efficiency and appropriateness of the YOTs' functioning, so that they can be more effective in the long term.

1.2 Background

In October 2001, the Minister of Justice established a Ministerial Taskforce on youth offending to develop and drive through a co-ordinated package of initiatives to reduce youth offending and ensure a collective interest approach.

The Taskforce was formed in response to an increase in reported offending and difficulties in the co-ordination of policy and service delivery across the youth justice sector. There were also concerns about ongoing problems in youth justice practice.

The aim of the Taskforce was to focus on improvements to youth justice practice across New Zealand. An Operational Group visited a number of regions to discuss current service delivery and inter-sector co-ordination and ways of improving delivery and best practice.

The April 2002 Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending identified three areas requiring immediate action: intra-agency practice, co-ordination and collaboration at a local level, and national co-ordination and leadership.

To address co-ordination and collaboration at a local level, the Taskforce recommended the establishment of local youth offending teams throughout New Zealand, with representatives from Child, Youth and Family; Police; Education; and Health.

To address national co-ordination and leadership, the Taskforce recommended the establishment of a Ministers' Group to oversee the development of the youth justice sector and at a departmental level, a Youth Justice Senior Officials Group[1] to oversee the operation of the YOTs, and to update Ministers regularly on progress in the implementation of the

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[1] Now known as the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

Youth Offending Strategy. The Taskforce also recommended the establishment of an independent Advisory Council[2] to advise the Senior Officials Group and Ministers.

In response to the Ministerial Taskforce's recommendations, the Youth Offending Strategy (2002) was released to guide government about where to focus its efforts in youth justice policy and to help co-ordinate service delivery by relevant agencies to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending by children and young people.

One of the key focus areas of the Youth Offending Strategy was to improve co-ordination and collaboration between key agencies, on a formal basis, both locally and nationally.

In response to the Youth Offending Strategy, local Youth Offending Teams were formed in late 2002 to build relationships and support effective systems between the four core key agencies: Police; Child, Youth and Family; Education; and Health. Two representatives from each agency, one at management and the other one at a practitioner level, were to meet monthly.

At a national level to oversee the youth justice service delivery and the implementation of the Youth Offending Strategy, a Ministers Group and a Senior Officials Group (Youth Justice Leadership Group) were set up to oversee the performance of the local YOT teams and provide a co-ordinated approach to youth justice policy and services. In addition an Independent Advisory Group of non-government experts was set up to advise both the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the Ministers on youth justice issues.

To provide support and guidance to YOTs, and a link between the YOTs and the Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG), the Ministry of Justice set up a fulltime YOT Adviser position. This was later increased to two fulltime YOT Adviser positions.

1.3   Evaluation methodology

This section gives a brief outline of the evaluation methodology. Further details about the evaluation methodology are available in Appendix 1.

The evaluation of Youth Offending Teams was a process evaluation[3] consisting of four phases:

- A literature review on the theory and the effective practice of inter-agency collaboration

- Key informant interviews with YOT members from seven YOTs

- A survey of all YOT members

- A focus group discussion with members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

An exploratory phase was undertaken at the beginning of the project to find out about the functioning of YOTs and issues facing YOTs. This information was used to structure the interview guide for the key informant interviews and the focus group discussion. It was also used, along with the understanding obtained through the key informant interviews, in the development of the survey questions that were sent to all current YOT members.

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[2]   The Youth Justice Independent Advisory Group.
[3]   Process evaluations focus on ways of improving and enhancing programmes rather than rendering definitive judgements about effectiveness.

The information obtained through the key informant interviews and the survey findings was analysed and incorporated under each topic area in this report. This allowed for both a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the issues.

Information from the focus group discussion was used to further inform the evaluation findings.

1.3.1   Literature review

A limited-focus literature review was undertaken with the purpose of informing the recommendations arising from the evaluation. The literature review looked at the theory and the effective practice of inter-agency collaboration drawing from both New Zealand and international material with most relevance given to the inter-agency collaboration envisaged for YOTs.

The literature review includes sections on factors associated with successful inter-agency engagement and the relevance of the literature to the evaluation of YOTs.

Reference to the literature review is to be found throughout this report and particularly in the conclusions and recommendations section.

The literature review is appended to this report.

1.3.2   Key informant interviews

Forty-five key informant interviews were conducted with YOT members from seven YOTs. Key informants included both current and past YOT members.

The majority of the key informant interviews were conducted face to face. Only two interviews were carried out by telephone.

1.3.3   Survey of all current YOT members

Using issues and opinions uncovered through the exploratory work and the key informant interviews, a survey questionnaire for all current YOT members was developed and sent out electronically to all of the contacts on the Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Policy team YOT distribution lists.

As the survey was intended only for current YOT members, those who indicated that they were not a current member were not asked to complete the survey.

One hundred and ninety-nine current YOT members completed the survey. This represents a 42% response rate.

1.3.4   Focus group discussion with Youth Justice Leadership Group members

A focus group discussion was held with members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG). The main purpose of the focus group was to gain an understanding of the YJLG's views and expectations of YOTs, ways to enhance YOTs' performance, and the relationship between YOTs and the YJLG.

1.4   Outline of the report

Chapter 2 discusses the purpose of YOTs and inter-agency engagement. Chapter 3 discusses YOT membership and other forms of involvement with YOTs. Chapter 4 looks at the achievements of YOTs and Chapter 5 looks at governance. Chapter 6 reports on aspects of YOT meetings. Chapter 7 examines the overall successfulness of the Youth Offending Teams. Chapter 8 reports on ways forward in terms of support that would be helpful to ensure the success of YOT. And finally Chapter 9 presents the overall conclusions of the report and recommendations.

In addition, appendices contain further details about the methodology, the literature review, and evaluation materials relating to the key informant interviews, the internet survey of YOT members, and the focus group discussion with YJLG members.

2.   PURPOSE OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

The Ministry of Justice provided guidelines for Youth Offending Teams[4] that set out the purpose of the teams. The guidelines state:

> The overall aim of Youth Offending Teams is to co-ordinate service delivery at a local level to young offenders. Youth Offending Teams:
>
> - have oversight of the operation of the youth justice system within their area
> - troubleshoot specific issues or service failures
> - have a bottom-up response to youth justice issues, and
> - have a voice at national level through the Youth Justice Leadership Group.
>
> Youth Offending Teams will achieve these aims by strengthening existing relationships, and building new relationships between government agencies and with local community groups and providers.

2.1   Understanding of purpose

Interviews with YOT members began by asking the respondents what they considered to be the aim or purpose of Youth Offending Teams. There was generally a partial understanding of the purpose of YOTs, with only a few having a clear in-depth understanding. While many discussed one or more of the purposes, such as inter-agency collaboration, or identifying gaps in the service to young offenders at the local level[5], a smaller proportion commented that they considered that the purpose of YOTs was unclear.

> *One of the biggest things in the YOTs is the sheer frustration about getting your head around what is it we are supposed to be. Everyone is coming to those meetings from a totally different perspective.*

> *That [the purpose] is one we all struggle with all the time. I always start off and explain to people that it was mandated by the Government that we should meet, so that is the purpose. I mean that is not the purpose, but that is actually the bottom line. We will meet because we have been told that we have to meet. … The second purpose is that we have dialogue, that we have good relationships between those major sectors.*

A perception held among a small number of key informants was that YOTs were established as a "fairly knee-jerk" reaction to a specific case where a lack of inter-agency co-ordination had a significant and well publicised effect.

> *Well I understood they came about through a fairly public case reported in the media, and continues to be so, and the lack of government agencies talking to each other around these young people.*

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[4]   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.
[5]   Inter-agency collaboration and identifying gaps in the service to young offenders is discussed under the specific sections in the report.

Well my understanding has always been that it arose out of a glaring shortcoming by government agencies just not interacting with each other and not communicating.

Survey respondents were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'The role of the YOT is clear to all participants'. Fifty-eight percent agreed that the role is clear to all participants but only approximately one in five YOT members (22%) stated that they 'strongly agree'.

Table 2.1   Agreement with statement 'The role of the YOT is clear to all participants'

	Percentage (n=199)
Strongly agree	22
Slightly agree	36
Neither agree nor disagree	11
Slightly disagree	14
Strongly disagree	15
Don't know	3

Police (14%) and Health (17%) representatives were less likely to 'strongly agree' that the role of the YOT is clear to all participants than were Education (35%) and Child, Youth and Family (29%) representatives.

2.1.1   Understanding of how the purpose will be achieved

Many of those who were aware of the stated aims or purpose, commented that there was a lack of clarity about how these aims should be achieved. When key informants were asked about what could be done to ensure that YOTs work more effectively, they responded that providing direction regarding the purpose of YOTs and how they are intended to function would be useful. That particular theme is summed up in the following respondent's expressed viewpoint:

I believe the aims are to get Police, Health and CYF together, to work together, for the good of the young youth offenders. Make sure that there is none falling through the gaps, and if there are gaps what are they. My question being 'gaps having been identified, who is tasked to fill that gap and to find a service if it is not existing, or change one that is'. That is not clear to me.

The survey asked YOT members, with no prompting, to state what they believed were the main barriers to the successful functioning of their YOT. The comment most frequently made relates to a lack of direction or the need for more specific direction. Another barrier that was mentioned was that YOT members are not clear about the key functions of the YOT, or its purpose.

2.1.2   Understanding of the target groups

The issue of who, in terms of age group and level of offending or reoffending, is supposed to be targeted by the YOT was raised by key informants as an issue requiring clarification. The guidelines for Youth Offending Teams[6] refer generally to young offenders but specifically

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[6]   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

make reference to 'children and young people' in some places. There is no reference to the level of offending or potential offending. However some YOT initiatives, such as truancy programmes, clearly relate to potential offenders as much as to current offenders.

The lack of clarity about who the YOT is intended to be working with impacted the extent of involvement and input of each of the four core agencies. Some of the agencies deal with only a subset of offenders and potential offenders. Equally, for some agencies (or significant sections of an agency), young people who are offenders or potential offenders are their main business (Police; and Child, Youth and Family) whereas for other agencies (Education and Health), they are only a small part of the agency's 'business'. This further led to discussion about who (in terms of role) should be representing the agencies on the YOT. This is discussed further in this report in Section 3.5: Key agency composition.

> *Everyone is coming to those meetings from a totally different perspective. … Do we work in the area of prevention and early detection, do we look at the kids who have already offended, and how can we have input into their lives so that they don't reoffend? I think there is still a lot of confusion about what area we should be targeting in actual fact.*

There appears to be considerable variation between YOTs as to who is considered to come under the auspices of the YOT. For example some YOTs have run very successful truancy programmes, but the comments from one YOT indicate that truancy is not considered to be an appropriate YOT initiative.

> *It wasn't anything to do with prevention. It was only about offenders. So we only deal with alternative action, those kids who have actually offended. Truancy is not something that YOT would deal with.*

A perception emerged from the responses that direction as to who should be targeted has changed over time:

> *So at the time we almost didn't tell anyone what we were doing, because the YOTs weren't meant to do that. Because it was preventative work. YOTs were meant to deal with the hard end, the offender, while they are offending. Now we have changed that. Now YOTs are being invited to look at some preventative options.*

> *Well it is a Youth Offending Team, so by virtue of the name you are assuming that the focus is on young offenders. So I suppose the original remit must have been to look at that group of kids, that is the 14 to 16 year olds who are in the youth justice system. I might be wrong, but that is what I am assuming. Then as time has gone on, there has been a recognition that there needs to be more early intervention.*

Some felt there had never been any clear direction and so the YOT had made its own decision as to who should be targeted.

> *There has been discussion around what youth offending is. But no, there has never been any clear resolution about what needs to be targeted. That is why with the [area] one we have actually chosen to target a specific group, that alternative action group.*

A higher proportion of the survey respondents believed that there is agreement within their YOT as to the age group of young people that the YOT is working with, than believed that there is agreement within their YOT about the level of offending or potential offending they are working with. Seven in ten (72%) rated that there is agreement within their YOT as to the age group of young people they are working with, and 40% 'strongly agreed' with this statement. Six in ten (61%) rated that there is agreement within their YOT as to which young people they are working with in terms of their level of offending or potential offending, and 27% 'strongly agreed' with this statement.

Table 2.2 Whether there is agreement regarding the YOT's target group

	Agreement within YOT as to age group (n=199) %	Agreement within YOT as to level of offending or potential offending (n=199) %
Strongly agree	40	27
Slightly agree	32	34
Neither agree nor disagree	11	18
Slightly disagree	8	11
Strongly disagree	3	7
Don't know	7	5

2.2   Inter-agency engagement

The main role of Youth Offending Teams is to co-ordinate service delivery at a local level to young offenders. The teams co-ordinate service delivery in a number of ways, one of which is:

- ensuring co-ordination and collaboration between key agencies and providers – making sure the right people are connected and working well together[7].

The guidelines[8] state that Youth Offending Teams will achieve their aims by strengthening existing relationships, and building new relationships between government agencies and with local community groups and providers.

This section focuses primarily on relationships between the four core youth justice agencies (Police; Child, Youth and Family; Education; and Health) and co-ordination within the team generally, while the next chapter presents issues specifically relating to community group involvement.

2.2.1   Inter-agency engagement as a purpose of Youth Offending Teams

Many of the key informants mentioned some aspect of inter-agency engagement when they were asked to comment on the purpose or the benefits of YOTs and many understood that the inter-agency interaction was intended to have the overall result of reducing youth offending in their local area. Inter-agency engagement tended to be the purpose or function of YOTs that was recalled **first** by key informants when they were asked to state the aim or

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7   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.
8   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

purpose of YOTs (i.e. it is seen as the most important or significant), and it was recalled more frequently than other functions such as identifying gaps in the service available to young offenders, or undertaking initiatives or projects.

However, there was little use of the word 'collaboration' in relation to the level of inter-agency engagement and many discussed what could be considered to be 'lower level' behaviours of inter-agency engagement, i.e. communication and co-operation[9].

> *I believe the aim of the Youth Offending Team was and should be, to increase the conversation between the four agencies involved, and to iron out those gaps and barriers between and within our organisations. We all deal with the same kids and often we are not talking to each other.*

> *I think initially perhaps around the country it was decided that the inter-agency relationships weren't particularly sharp. So I think it was a Government initiative to try and bring these agencies together. The key four. It is Education, Police, CYF and Health.*

Inter-agency engagement, in the form of communication, co-operation and sharing of information, was seen as the primary purpose of YOTs. Project work and initiatives were seen as secondary to this and there was acknowledgement that YOTs are not case-based and that co-operation and sharing is the main purpose.

> *What we have taken the aims of the Youth Offending Team is about a better understanding of how each of us works and better communication around that. And about looking at how we can improve our processes and our working relationships. I guess the project stuff is another thing that comes out of that, but that is not one of the key things of YOT that we saw.*

> *... and the need for there to be more co-operation and sharing about what is going on in the community, rather than specifically cases.*

There was comment by some key informants, however, that there were other forums for inter-agency engagement and that the YOT meetings were not necessary if this was the only purpose of the YOTs. This was particularly so in smaller areas, or among key informants who had been working in the field for a number of years.

> *We all know each other anyway.   … I think we have informal relationships going anyway.*

> *I think it [YOT] has certainly enabled some links in the community. Some of the links were there anyway in [area]. Like there are other venues where the links happen. So it is a bit unclear sometimes whether the YOT adds to that.*

There was also comment that although the purpose was for inter-agency engagement, it was unclear exactly what form that would take.

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[9]   Refer to the literature review section in the appendix and the discussion of Horwarth and Morrison's model of inter-agency engagement.

The underlying main purpose is to get the four identified departments working together around the issue of youth offending within the areas. Whatever that means. And that varies. Once again it is the principle, the philosophy of the people involved, that really shapes the direction of individual Youth Offending Teams through New Zealand I presume.

A perception held by a few key informants was that the intention of YOTs was to include Education and Health in the relationship with the key players of Police and Child, Youth and Family. This was generally considered to be a useful approach.

I think the original purpose still is very much the same purpose. That is to gather together in a very formalised fashion the four sectors that are supplying services to youth offenders. The two major sectors of course being the Police and Child, Youth and Family, but initially it was to draw the sectors of Education and Health in because they were very much not part of the delivery of services. That has been relatively successful – in some cases very successful.

2.2.2 Effectiveness of collaboration

YOT members consider Youth Offending Teams to be effective in encouraging inter-agency collaboration, although they are generally seen to be 'quite' rather than 'very' effective in this role.

The key informants were generally positive regarding the inter-agency engagement and interaction that occurred through the Youth Offending Teams. For example, *"I like the information sharing. I like the networking"*. Others however were of the opinion that inter-agency relationships still need improvement.

Some specifically commented on the positive flow-on of the inter-agency engagement and interaction on their day to day functioning in their job.

The intangible result is, I actually think that by meeting on a regular basis, … those networks have been strengthened amongst people and I think some of the barriers have come down between various organisations. There has been quite a lot of dialogue going on. … It does work, yes. On several levels. One level is that we have actually managed to develop really good positive relationships with the other agencies within the meetings. But that has also flowed over into just everyday practice. The staff that they can ring up staff from other agencies, get information, share information, discuss ideas and perhaps resolve problems that may arise in a less formal way. So that is good.

The networking and keeping up to date with what is going on, and being able to work together. That was really useful. I don't think collaboration happens enough. I don't think you can get too much of it. So I think it is really important to make those connections.

A few key informants stated that YOTs have not achieved the desired level of communication between agencies any more than other inter-agency meetings have. Specifically, a couple commented that YOT meetings would be more useful for newer members of the team than

those who have been practitioners for longer as it is a forum for networking and building relationships.

> *To improve the communication really between the teams, so that we weren't working in little silos but working across. Personally I don't think it has achieved that yet. I don't think it does any more in that area than what a lot of the other inter-agency meetings I have always been involved in the last 20 years has done. So maybe for newer clinicians on the block it does, because of good networking and you build the relationships up. … The only way we are going to do it [address youth offending] is by decent co-ordination and collaboration between all the agencies dealing with young people. I just don't think we have got there yet, and I don't think Youth Offending Teams fill that gap yet. I live in hope.*

Many of the positive comments about the effectiveness of YOTs in encouraging inter-agency interaction were primarily in relation to the four core youth justice agencies, rather than including community groups. Community involvement is discussed in the next section of this report.

One key informant who considered that YOTs were effective at improving inter-agency engagement suggested a specific approach to improve it further and to ensure that it continues.

> *I was just sort of wondering. What could we do to actually develop that relationship better amongst agencies. Maybe there could be a directive to the agencies that every year every agency holds an education day for the other three agencies to attend. That should be a really big step. Because that then gets your case managers working together, talking together on a day over a cup of tea. Then finding 'gosh I didn't realise your agency dealt with OCD' or 'I didn't realise that the youth development stuff is attached to the Police' or whatever. Making those days happen.*

There was some comment that it is important that the improved communication between teams should be translated to the provision of services to youth.

> *At the end of the day we can all go to meetings and sit around and talk about the beautiful things we are going to do, but implementation is the challenge. That would be YOT's biggest challenge, or opportunity I suppose to put it in a more PC way. The biggest opportunity is around implementation.*

> *What I would like to see YOTs do more of is actually translating that improved communication to services on the ground. So where we step outside the boundaries of what we would normally do, and do that little bit extra because this is what that kid needs so the next department can do their bit.*

Specifically, it was suggested that whilst communication was effective, YOTs are hampered by a lack of resources, an issue which is discussed elsewhere in this report.

> *I will be honest. It has got relevant benefits in terms of building relationships and communication. I think the expectation that it would provide more than that hasn't been met. That is not being critical. It is like saying the expectation is that you will reduce these youth offending but within what resources you have.*

Survey respondents were asked to rate how effective they believe their YOT is at collaboration between various agencies and groups.

Figure 2.1   Rating of effectiveness of collaboration of 'your YOT'
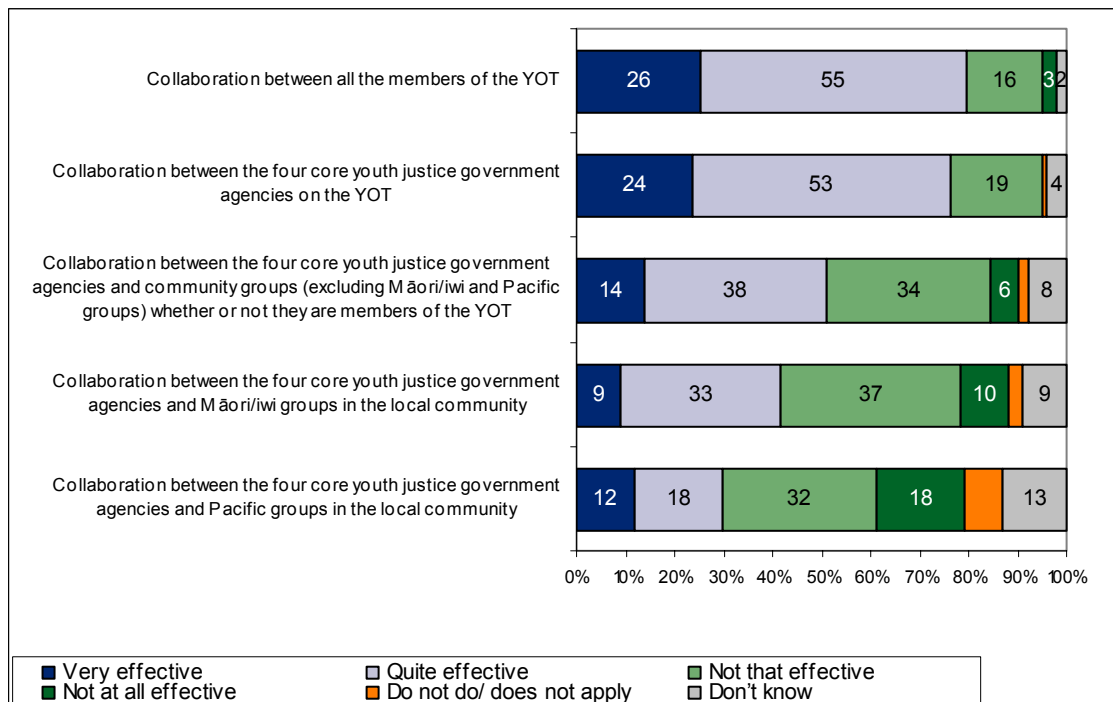
Base: All respondents (n=199).

The above chart clearly shows that YOT members who responded to the survey considered their YOT to be far more effective at collaboration between all the members of the YOT and also between the four core government agencies than at collaboration between the four core agencies and local community groups.

The high rating for effectiveness of collaboration between all members of the YOT most likely reflects the low proportion of non-government agencies that are members of YOTs (see section on membership of YOTs). That is, when rating the collaboration between 'all members', most respondents would only have been considering the four core youth justice agencies.

While total 'effective' ratings were high for collaboration between all the members of the YOT (80%) and between the four core youth justice government agencies (77%), only a quarter of the respondents rated collaboration as 'very effective', with the majority rating it as 'quite effective'. This indicates that, in the opinion of the YOT members who responded to the survey, there is still room for increased effectiveness in this respect.

YOT members who represent Education were generally more likely than representatives from other agencies to rate their YOT as 'very effective' at collaboration (32% 'very effective' at collaboration between all the members of the YOT, 32% 'very effective' at collaboration between the four core agencies, and 24% 'very effective' at collaboration between the four core agencies and community groups excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific groups).

2.2.3 Facilitating engagement that would not have otherwise occurred

There was a difference of opinion between key informants as to whether or not YOTs facilitate inter-agency engagement that would otherwise not have occurred.

While some key informants believed that YOTs have provided an essential forum for collaboration, others believed that there are other forums already providing this opportunity.

> *It has certainly put me in touch with people who I wasn't in touch with before. Although some of the players I already knew, I have been around a long time. That has been really helpful. … So it has widened the networks. I think that is probably one of the pluses, is that it does allow that networking stuff.*

A key advantage of YOTs was seen to be broadening the range of the agencies they engage with. A couple of key informants specifically mentioned that the YOT has meant that Education and Health have been included in the inter-agency engagement. One key informant commented that Police and Child, Youth and Family work well together, and when asked whether that was because of the YOT, they stated that *"no, they were working well before YOT. I believe they were working well before the YOT, and that has continued to work"*. However, for this informant the advantage of the YOT is:

> *… trying to get that buy-in with Health and Education. Because they are crucial elements for my key business, for Youth Justice Family Group Conferences, to getting those resources and reports to the families. So it is important to have that buy-in with those agencies.*

> *I think because of the YOT and the way that we all, especially Education, have jumped right up there as being one of the most important parts, whereas before the YOT, Education were not seen to be, by staff in this office anyway, weren't seen to be a relevant concern. But we all know now that of course it is one of the vital cogs, have to keep these kids at school. … That certainly wouldn't have happened without the YOT, because they were just another government department that we didn't have anything to do with. The same with Health, Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.*

The survey respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that YOTs generally have encouraged communication and facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have occurred in the absence of YOTs. From Table 2.3 it can be seen that YOTs are considered by the respondents as being more effective at encouraging communication and networking than at facilitating inter-agency collaboration.

Just over seven in ten respondents agreed that YOTs have encouraged communication and networking that would not have occurred without the YOT and just over six in ten respondents agreed that YOTs have facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have been achieved without the YOT.

It may be that some of the less positive ratings can be accounted for by the emphasis in the statement that the communication and collaboration 'would not have occurred without the YOT'. Almost a third (32%) of the survey respondents 'strongly agreed' that they meet with

the same people at their YOT meetings that they see at other meetings[10]. Therefore, the less positive ratings (i.e. those who disagree) may not indicate a lack of communication, networking and inter-agency collaboration within the YOT. Rather they may indicate a belief that the communication and collaboration may have been achieved through other forums in the absence of the YOT.

Table 2.3   Whether YOTs have encouraged communication and facilitated inter-agency collaboration

	YOTs have encouraged communication and networking that would not have occurred without the YOT (n=199) %	YOTS have facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have been achieved without the YOT (n=199) %
Strongly agree	42	34
Slightly agree	30	29
Neither agree nor disagree	12	11
Slightly disagree	8	13
Strongly disagree	6	10
Don't know	2	4

Agreement with both these statements was higher among YOT members who represent Education (65% 'strongly agree' that YOTs have encouraged communication and networking and 54% 'strongly agree' that YOTs have facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have been achieved without the YOT).

2.3   The uniqueness of the YOT as an inter-agency forum

Some Youth Offending Team members believed YOTs were duplicating other inter-agency structures and meetings, particularly with respect to the collaborative purpose, i.e. networking, co-ordination and communication.

Other forums that were seen by key informants to compete with, or to some extent duplicate, YOT functions included: Strengthening Families, Youth at Risk, Whole of Government, Inter-sectorial forums, Safer Communities, Youth Court liaison lunch meetings, Police POL 400 notifications meetings, MSD High Risk Families, Youth Gangs project, High and Complex Needs, Health meetings that require CYF attendance, Youth Network (run by Police), Social Well-Being Strategy (Hamilton), Youth Māori Service Providers (Wellington).

Not all key informants considered that the overlap between forums and meetings is necessarily a bad thing. A positive aspect is that people already know each other and thus meetings can be more efficient. In addition, a person who is involved with more than one forum can feed information from one forum back to another.

You tend to find when you go off to another inter-agency meeting about something else, that the same people are there. I don't personally find that to be inefficient or

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[10]   The uniqueness of the YOT as an inter-agency forum is discussed further in the next section.

ineffective. I think it is quite good. Through the Youth Offending Team strategy we have actually met people for whom when you meet in another context it is much easier just to sit down and get on with the business of why you are now here for another purpose. I don't find that imposing or inefficient in any way at all. In fact I think it has been beneficial that we have actually through the YOT strategy got those relationships already set up, so it makes it easier for the other stuff to happen.

Some key informants did believe that there was a specific role for YOTs that was not covered by other meetings or forums.

Because a lot of those other meetings are for particular mental health issues or family violence issues. So they each have their own particular flavour. I think like for the YOT, that is focused around young offenders and I guess some preventative work also. So I see it has a purpose in being here.

For some, it was a challenge to ensure that the various groups worked effectively and the overlap was minimised at the same time as ensuring that the various groups worked effectively together.

It does require a higher level of strategic thinking to make it work properly, to understand where the Youth Offending Team fits in relation to Strengthening Families, to be able to draw that line and say, 'well this is what YOT should do, this is what Strengthening Families should be'. You do have a lot of the same players. So finding ways to minimise the amount of double-up is quite important as well. Also, if you have too distinct a difference, then you end up with silos basically. We have Youth Offending off here, Strengthening Families off here, and you lose a lot of synergy or opportunities. Like you have got the continuum, you have got the hard full youth offending at one end, and you have got Care and Protection at one end. Then somewhere in the middle they sort of join.

However some key informants would prefer a rationalisation of the various groups. Many of those who preferred this did so because of a general perception that too much time is taken out of the working day by participation in meetings. A general theme running throughout the responses was that there are too many meetings competing for an individual's time.

With inter-agency forums here it is a nightmare. What concerns me is hearing all these new groups that are setting up and starting up. The same people are attending them. Why don't they just have one meeting and deal with everything in one meeting, as opposed to having all these different forums. It is just ridiculous, because they are not actually doing anything. They are not doing any basic work because they are attending meetings all the time. … But it is a real big drive now to have all these inter-agency forums. There is an inter-agency forum for everything. At one part of it I was expected to attend all of them.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the difference between their YOT and other inter-agency initiatives they are involved with. They were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements:

- I meet with the same people at my YOT meetings that I see at other meetings

- My YOT serves a different purpose to other inter-agency groups that I belong to

- We discuss different issues at my YOT meetings than we discuss at other inter-agency meetings.

Figure 2.2   Rating of uniqueness of 'your YOT' compared to other inter-agency groups
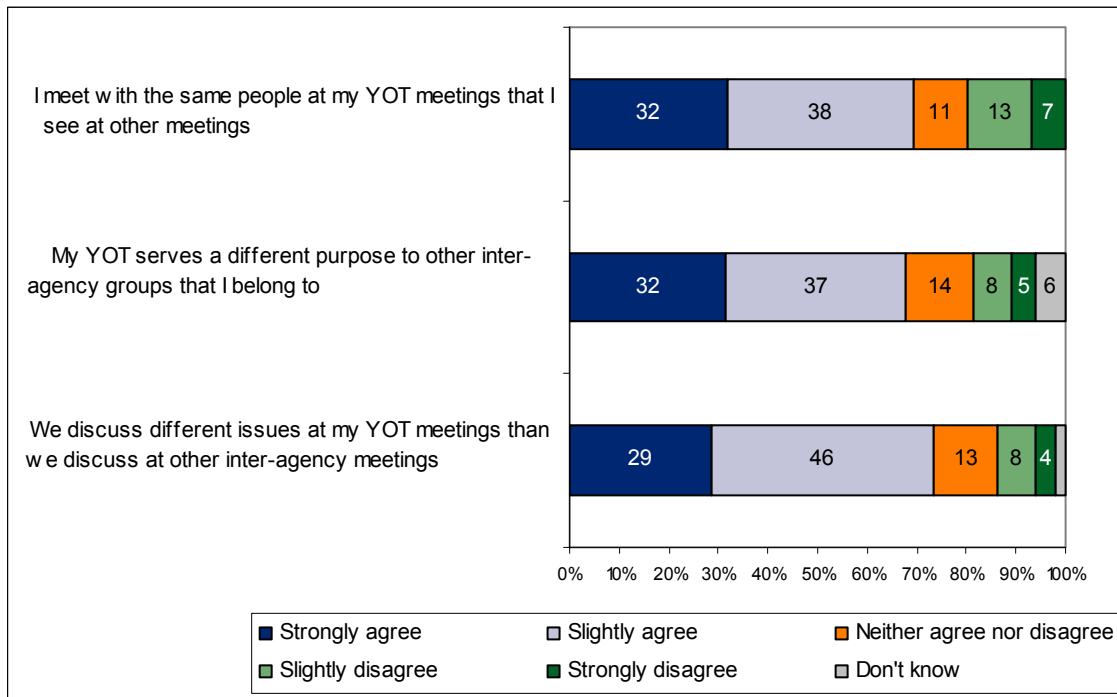
Base: All respondents (n=199).

Whilst the YOT members who responded to the survey generally meet with the same people at the YOT meetings as they do at other inter-agency meetings, they believe that their YOT does serve a different purpose to other inter-agency groups and that different issues are discussed at the YOT meetings.

In total, seven out of ten respondents (69%) agree that they meet with the same people at their YOT meeting whom they see at other meetings. Just over three in ten (32%) stated that they 'strongly agree' that this is the case. Agreement that they meet with the same people was higher among representatives from Police and Child, Youth and Family (for both agencies 40% 'strongly agree') than for Education (24%) and Health (19%) representatives.

Whilst seven out of ten stated they meet with the same people, the same proportion of respondents (69%) agree that their YOT serves a different purpose to other inter-agency groups they belong to and approximately a third 'strongly agreed' with this. Agreement (at the 'strongly agree' level) that the YOT serves a different purpose was higher among Education (43%) and Child, Youth and Family (36%) than among Health (28%) and Police (22%) representatives.

Three-quarters (74%) of survey respondents agreed that the issues they discuss at their YOT meetings are different from those that they discuss at other inter-agency meetings, and 29% 'strongly agreed'. There are only small variations between agencies for this statement.

Of those YOT members who 'strongly agreed' that they meet with the same people at the YOT meetings as they see at other meetings (32% of all respondents), two-thirds (68%) of them agreed that the YOT serves a different purpose (37% 'strongly agree'). Two-thirds (67%) of them also agreed that they discuss different issues at the YOT meeting (30% 'strongly agree'). Therefore, meeting with the same people does not preclude discussing different issues. Neither does it dissuade respondents from the belief that the YOT serves a different purpose to their other meetings.

There are differences in the rating between managers and practitioners from the four core agencies. Of those respondents who stated that they represent management level on the YOT, 48% 'strongly agree' that they meet with the same people, compared to only 18% of those who represent practitioner level. Even though almost half the managers stated that they meet with the same people, managers were slightly more likely (36%) than practitioners (29%) to 'strongly agree' that the YOT serves a different purpose to other inter-agency groups that they belong to. However, managers were slightly less likely (25%) than practitioners (32%) to 'strongly agree' that they discuss different issues at the YOT than at other inter-agency meetings.

2.4   Case management

There was generally the opinion among the key informants that YOT meetings are not supposed to include case management, except as a means to discuss 'typical' cases so as to identify gaps in service and problems with inter-agency engagement.

However, this is not the case for all key informants interviewed, with some informants (from more than one YOT), believing that a discussion about the 'top ten offenders' or similar, was an important part of a YOT meeting and some even considered that it was part of the YOT process. In general however, the view was expressed that YOT meetings are not supposed to be case managements forums.

When I went down to Wellington for two days, they made it pretty clear that you could talk about some individual cases if it illustrated some sort of problem. But it wasn't primarily a case-meeting type meeting.

There was some agreement that this instruction was appropriate, either because of confidentiality issues of clients, the fact that case management could take over the more strategic approach required or that other inter-agency forums deal with case management.

I think that our attitude was that it was not the best respect of confidentiality of the client when we should be talking about kind-of like the issue itself and the social factors that were maybe leading to the behaviour of said client without talking about said client.

Then you wouldn't pay attention to those higher level strategic type oversights that you are looking for.

There was the perception that YOTs are not about case management, and comments were made that this can be done outside the YOT meeting. There may be discussion about individual cases at a break in a meeting or at the end of a meeting.

> *We have held pretty much the line that YOT meetings are not about practice, they are not about case discussions. So if there is a case discussion to be held, then effectively we adjourn the meeting and the Social Worker and the Youth Aid Officer sit down and talk about the case. Or Health or whoever. But it is outside of the meeting.*

A few of the key informants stated that some YOT members did want to talk about specific cases, either young people or families, and that in particular, practitioners 'get frustrated' that this is not done at YOT meetings. In this situation the case management is dealt with at the end of the YOT meeting.

The use of specific cases to highlight issues or gaps in service was mentioned by a few key informants.

> *Some YOTs have quite a formal part of their meeting to discuss cases. I think we have done that in the past only as examples. So what we have done is we have looked at practice issues, sometimes around communication exchange etc., and we have used specific cases to highlight because it is the only real way to do it.*

The issue of confidentiality and the Privacy Act arose when key informants spoke about using cases to highlight issues. There was the general opinion that they would be 'careful' as to who was at the meeting when any specific cases were discussed. Others commented that 'because they know everybody' they know what level of detail they can talk about at the YOT meeting.

> *If we were talking names around the table, I certainly would filter out some of the content depending on who is in the room.*

A few key informants held the perception that privacy issues are more of a problem for Health representatives on YOTs than for any of the other core agencies.

The YOT members who responded to the survey were asked to rate how effective they believed their YOT was at improving case management. As would be expected, given that case management is not a purpose of the YOT, ratings for effectiveness were lower than ratings for collaboration, identifying gaps in service and improving dissemination and flow of information about youth offending. Nine percent of the respondents stated that their YOT is 'very effective' at improving case management, and 42% in total stated that it is effective.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

The Guidelines for Youth Offending Teams[11] that were released in July 2003 and updated this year stated that the core focus of Youth Offending Teams is based on the outcomes that can be achieved by Police, CYF, Health, and Education working together. It was noted that there is concern that the purpose of YOTs should not be diluted or overwhelmed by a range of other objectives that could be brought by other partners. The reasons given for this approach were the need to address the poor collaboration between the four agencies that was identified by the Ministerial Taskforce and the belief that the purpose of the YOTs (improved quality and effectiveness of service delivery and interventions with young offenders) would be best achieved by keeping membership focussed on the core function of the YOT.

There has, however, been a change in direction between the two Guidelines, the original released in July 2003 and those updated in 2007. In 2003 it was stated that 'the Youth Justice Leadership Group continues to encourage YOTs to keep their membership focused on the four core agencies'. This sentence, reflecting a change in approach, was rewritten in 2007 to 'the Youth Justice Leadership Group continues to encourage YOTs to keep their membership focussed'.

In stating that membership should be focussed, it was acknowledged that there are risks: key stakeholders in local communities can be unaware of the YOT's activities (or the existence of YOTs) and that local problems could be defined too narrowly without tapping into local information and understanding of issues and the ways in which they might be addressed.

The guidelines stated that for YOTs to be effective they need to develop ways to share information and keep other stakeholders up to date. It is suggested that there are ways to ensure this happens:

- hold regular liaison meetings to discuss local issues and YOT activities
- invite interested parties to attend YOT meetings
- develop ways to share information and provide feedback on practices.

The updated guidelines note that:

- some YOTs have extended their membership to include the wider community and run their meeting in two parts. The first half contains the core government agencies and this is followed immediately with the wider local youth justice network.

The involvement of non-core agency groups in YOTs was discussed in the key informant interviews, both the current involvement and what involvement was considered to be desirable. There is a full spectrum of what involvement can involve, with full membership only one option and a range of other options in terms of the level of involvement.

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[11] Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

3.1 Including community groups as members of the YOT

Most of the YOT members involved in this evaluation stated a preference for the membership of their YOT to be extended beyond what it is at the moment, and beyond the four core agencies.

There is confusion about what the YOTs should be aiming for in relation to community involvement, with some key informants believing that they have been instructed to include only the four key agencies as members, and others believing they have been instructed to include the wider community as members. There is considerable variation between YOTs, both in terms of what they believe they should be doing in relation to community involvement, and what they actually do.

> *At the beginning there was a little confusion around priority stuff, and who was allowed to come. … Well they have all kind of just gone off and tried to do their own things sort of thing. I don't know that there is a lot of consistency between what each YOT does or doesn't do.*

Some key informants believed that community groups were not supposed to be members of YOTs and that membership was supposed to be restricted to the four core youth justice agencies.

> *Initially we were told it had to just be the four agencies. That was sort of the initial message we got.*

Mention was made that some YOTs had discussed whether membership of the team should be extended beyond the four key agencies. Some were of the belief that they had been instructed (probably based on e-flash #2, July 2003) that they were not to extend membership of the YOT.

> *The message came back very clearly, we were told by the Leadership Group that they ran it past the Ministers, the Ministers who had the overview of our four sectors who said, 'this is the four sectors, and that is where you will stay'. So we never progressed ours any further than that. I know some of my colleagues in other YOTs have progressed it to NGOs and all sorts.*

Most of those key informants who thought membership should be restricted believed that they had been instructed to do so. Others, however, thought that limited membership is the best approach:

> *I did make a comment that I thought we should bring it in to the four core agencies … because we were thinking of going broader. I said, 'look I quite disagree with that. It needs to be that core stuff.' So they did get rid of a lot of the sort of outliers.*

One of the reasons for preferring that only core agencies attend was the need to be able to trust others, specifically when gaps in service were identified and also if specific cases were discussed.

Some key informants commented that at times there was a large number of people attending the YOT meetings and that that this brought some problems and issues.

We had a never-ending feast of people, different people around the table. Used to rock on up to the Youth Offending Teams, each with their own agenda really around what they wanted us to do. Then when it was quite clear that that wasn't going to happen, then they wouldn't come back. So it seemed to be almost an open invitation to some extent for a while.

While many key informants believed that community groups should not be members, some were adamant that they could be, and in fact were encouraged to be. Some thought that a more 'advanced' YOT would include members outside the four core agencies, and that greater representation is one of the things that makes a YOT work well.

A key informant who considered that other government and non-government agencies that deal with youth should be included in the membership of the YOT commented:

These four key agencies may be leading the charge but what they don't have is they don't encompass the community, the non-government agencies. If you are trying to tackle youth problems as four key agencies, the Youth Offending Team is going to struggle. They need assistance from the community who just happen to be non-government agencies providing a service to youth.

There was the suggestion that when there is attendance from community groups on a YOT, it would be beneficial to have only one representative from the group who would then report back to the group, rather than having many representatives on the YOT. Minutes from the meetings could also be circulated to a wider group to provide greater contact with the YOT, rather than extending membership too far.

Many of the key informants could see both advantages and disadvantages for having community involvement in terms of membership on the YOT.

The advantages would be that you get a wider spread of issues and information but there are the disadvantages, I think, of losing the cohesion.

"… we wanted good input from others as well, but we were not getting on with our core business." This key informant commented that once there had been a reduction in the extent of involvement of community groups the attendance from core agencies then improved.

There was also comment from key informants that there needs to be a careful and considered approach taken when including community groups. Again, the inclusion of community groups brings both advantages and disadvantages.

We opened the doors but we opened the doors far too wide.

Maybe some key people from some of those. It has to be strategic. You need to have the links. How do you do that? Often you will have some key people that are members of a whole range of organisations or community groups. It is utilising them as like the conduit between those organisations and the YOT. Otherwise you end up with every man and his dog wanting to be on the YOT, and you spend your meetings going around introducing people and bringing them up to speed with what you are about, rather than actually doing your business as well.

One of the YOTs that was included in the key informant interviews had developed a structure whereby the first part of the YOT meeting involved only the four core agencies (seen as the main stakeholders) and then the second part of the meeting involved community providers as well as the main stakeholders. However, that model was changed as it was deemed by some to be exclusionary, and the YOT reverted to one full meeting that was attended by the community providers as well as the core agencies. It was acknowledged that there were challenges in conducting a meeting with 40 people and that it had to be very structured.

In addition, in this geographical area practitioners from the four core agencies met to deal with case management quite separately from the large YOT meeting.

As stated in the introduction to this section, the approach with two parts to the meeting has been suggested as a practice for including stakeholders in YOTs.

The YOT members who responded to the survey were asked to indicate which agencies and organisations (from a list supplied) are currently members of their YOT, and which they would like to have as members of their YOT. The question specified that they were not to include as members any agencies or organisations which they invite to give presentations or attend certain meetings or which are involved with specific initiatives, but which are not members of their YOT.

The four key agencies were listed first and every respondent (100%) stated that Police; Child, Youth and Family; and Education were currently members of their YOT and that they wanted them as members of their YOT. Ninety-four percent stated that Health was currently a member and 99% stated that they would like them to be a member.

For all other agencies and organisations listed, greater proportions of survey respondents said that they wanted the organisation to be a member than stated that the organisation was a member.

Local government agencies, including councils, are the agency (other than the core agencies) that is most frequently represented on YOTs. Approximately half the respondents (56%) stated that they are currently a member. However, 84% of the respondents stated that they would like them as a member, the highest proportion (equal with Māori/iwi representation) of the listed agencies.

Approximately three in ten respondents (30%) stated that Māori service providers were currently members or that there was Māori/iwi representation (28%) on the YOT. However, much higher proportions wanted these groups to be members; 84% of respondents wanted Māori/iwi representation and 73% wanted Māori service providers to be members of their YOT.

Current membership of Pacific groups is extremely low (Pacific community representation 9% and Pacific service provider 5%). Two thirds of the respondents (67%) would like Pacific community representation as a member of their YOT and 60% would like Pacific service providers as members.

Figure 3.1   YOT membership of non-core youth justice agencies; current membership and preferred membership

Other national or central government agencies
- Currently a member: 30
- Would like as a member: 68

Local government agencies
- Currently a member: 56
- Would like as a member: 84

Māori/iwi representation
- Currently a member: 28
- Would like as a member: 84

Māori service provider
- Currently a member: 30
- Would like as a member: 73

Pacific community representation
- Currently a member: 9
- Would like as a member: 67

Pacific service provider
- Currently a member: 5
- Would like as a member: 60

Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)
- Currently a member: 36
- Would like as a member: 67

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Currently a member
□ Would like as a member

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Note: The above graph shows only the 'yes' responses. The remainder of the responses were either 'no' or 'don't know'. Some of the 'don't know' proportions were reasonably high, with up to 21% of respondents stating they did not know whether specific agencies are currently members of their YOT and up to 16% stating they did not know whether they would like an agency to be a member.

The biggest gaps between the current and desired situation was with Māori and Pacific groups, both in terms of representation from those groups and as service providers.

3.2   Community involvement other than membership of the YOT

As already outlined, there are many types of involvement that allow community or local input to the Youth Offending Teams that do not require membership. Many key informants considered that community involvement was essential, but that this does not necessarily mean that the other agencies need to be members of the YOT, rather that another form of involvement might be preferable.

> *It is clear that we can [invite other agencies or community groups onto the YOT] if we wish to. Absolutely clear. But I see the value of getting other agencies and individuals involved as a Youth Offending Team develop a particular project. Then you look at what resources are best out there in the community and you may bring on two or three other people to help you develop that project. That sub-committee works but your group of eight remains the same. The reason is that once again it is meant to be developing those networks within those four agencies.*

However, it was thought that community groups may raise issues or have a perspective that would not have been considered by the core agencies on the YOT. Thus there may be value in the interaction with community groups being wider than purely input into projects.

It is a chicken and egg thing. Do you invite the community in and then say 'what do we need?', or do you have some things and say 'well this is what we would like to achieve, these are the people in the community that we need on this steering group or this small group'?

It was indicated that one of the ways that YOTs can interact with other agencies that does not involve extending membership was for YOT members to have links into, or receive feedback from, other organisations. Thus YOT members could attend other organisations' meetings and provide feedback.

It is perhaps more about having links into those community organisations.

You are getting feedback all the day. I mean the Youth Aid, and we are talking about youth offending, aren't we, youth offending. They are dealing with youth offenders. They are talking to the principals all the time and the guidance counsellor. So there must be some feedback coming back. It is not coming to the YOT as such, but it is coming to a member of the YOT team. So is there any difference?

Some key informants were of the opinion that whilst community input and involvement is important, YOT meetings would be more efficient with just the core agencies.

I think it is necessary to hear from the community and that is probably why that sort of comes out of the ethos because we need to know where the gaps are, but I don't think sitting around the table with six different NGOs around there and then saying 'oh, where are the gaps in our system?'. I don't think you are going to get any movement. If you really want to get movement and identify exactly what issues people are coming up with, you need to do it in a smaller group with the people who actually know the systems within their agencies. And say 'oh yeah, that is an issue'. They all go back to their agency and say 'what can we do about this gap, this barrier?'

There had been discussion among members of YOTs as to what the involvement of community groups should be, and various viewpoints expressed. Some thought that the four core agencies needed to be working more effectively before membership was extended. One person commented that "*well I really think we would need to be a little bit more productive in our meetings anyway, before we invited too many people along to them*".

For many teams, the solution was to invite local service provider groups along to a YOT meeting to give a presentation about the service they offer and how the agencies can access their services. Some key informants commented that this had resulted in referrals from the agencies that would probably not otherwise have occurred. In this situation the community group was seen *"more as a guest"* than a member.

Associated with this approach was the situation when the YOT would identify a topic for discussion or an initiative or project, and invite specific groups of people to different meetings depending on the purpose of the meeting.

It depends on what the focus is, what we are trying to do or achieve at the time.

3.3 Value of non-government and community organisations to the YOT

The survey of YOT members asked respondents to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the two statements:

- Non-government and community organisations have an important role to play on YOTs

- Non-government and community organisations add value to my YOT.

Note that these statements did not specify what the involvement was, whether it was as a member of the YOT or providing input when appropriate.

There is a very high level of agreement that non-government and community organisations have an important role to play on YOTs. Over half the respondents 'strongly agreed' and in total 78% agreed with this statement. The level of agreement was highest amongst representatives of Child, Youth and Family (87%) and lowest amongst Police (66%).

Six in ten respondents (60%) agreed that non-government and community organisations add value to their YOT. It is interesting to note that therefore the level of agreement that the organisations add value is lower than the level of agreement that the organisations have an important role to play. This indicates that the YOT members who replied to the survey believe that there is an unmet opportunity for non-government and community organisations to add value to YOTs. This is consistent with the finding relating to current membership: greater proportions of survey respondents stated that they wanted organisations to be members of their YOT than said that the organisations were currently members.

Table 3.1   Agreement that non-government and community organisations have an important role and add value to the YOT

	Non-government and community organisations have an important role to play on YOTs (n=199) %	Non-government and community organisations add value to my YOT (n=199) %
Strongly agree	55	29
Slightly agree	23	32
Neither agree nor disagree	11	23
Slightly disagree	5	4
Strongly disagree	2	4
Don't know	6	10

3.4 Consultation with non-core agencies and involvement in initiatives

The survey respondents were asked to indicate for those non-core agencies who are not members of their YOT:

- whether the agency/organisation is consulted when required

- if they are not consulted (including 'don't know'), whether they would like to have them consulted when required

- whether the agency/organisation is involved in specific initiatives when required

- if they are not involved (including 'don't know'), whether they would like to have them involved in specific initiatives when required.

Figure 3.2   Consultation with non-core youth justice agencies and involvement in initiatives, where the agency is not currently a member of the YOT
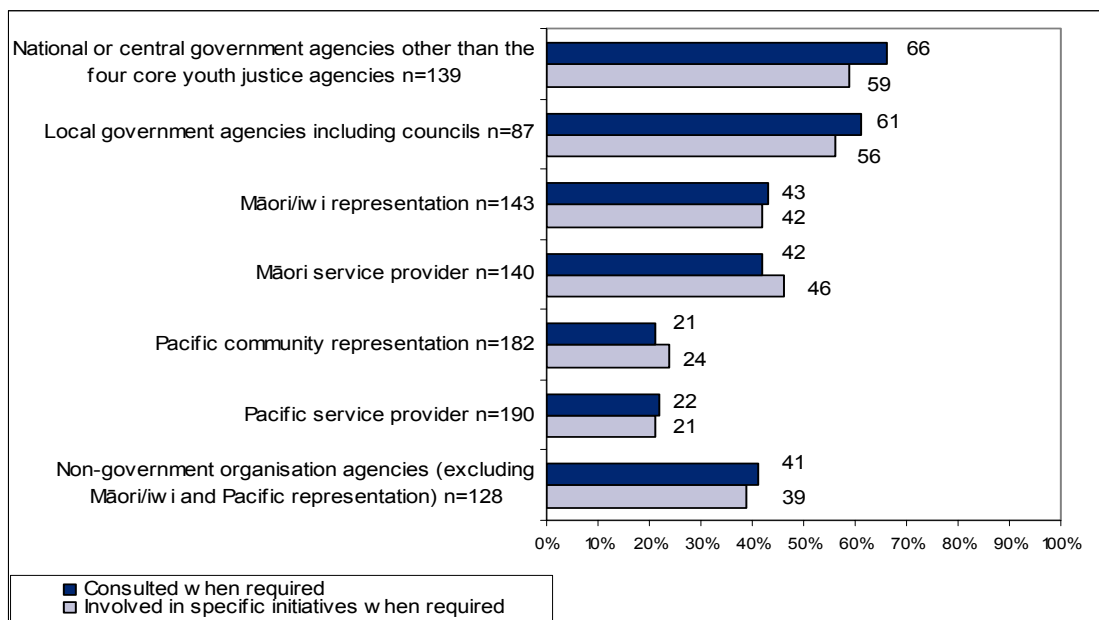
Base: Respondents who had stated that the non-core agency is not currently a member of the YOT.

There are similar levels of involvement from agencies and organisations in terms of consultation and being involved in specific initiatives, where the agency or organisation is not a member of the YOT. The highest levels of involvement are for government agencies, both central government (excluding the four core agencies) and local government. There is a higher level of consultation and involvement in initiatives among Māori than Pacific representation and service providers. Other non-government organisation agencies are consulted and involved to approximately the same extent as Māori/iwi representation and service providers.

Those respondents who stated that the organisations were not members and were not consulted or involved in initiatives when required (including the 'don't know' response), were asked whether they would like them to be consulted and involved in specific initiatives when required.

Between approximately eight out of ten and nine out of ten of these respondents[12] stated that they would like the organisations consulted or involved, again reinforcing that respondents stated a preference for a higher level of involvement from other agencies and organisations than is currently the case.

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[12]   Percentages for wanting to have agencies and organisation consulted when required although they are not currently consulted vary between 77% and 89%. Percentages for wanting to have agencies and organisations involved in initiatives although they are not currently involved vary between 84% and 93%.

3.5 Key agency composition

Whilst YOTs may include a wide range of participants from other agencies, it is expected that core membership will include representatives from Child, Youth and Family; Police; Education; and Health.

The preferred composition of a YOT[13] is:

- Police Youth Aid Officer and Youth Aid or Station Sergeant
- Child, Youth and Family Youth Justice Co-ordinator and Service Delivery Unit Manager
- Health Clinician and District Health Board Manager
- Education Manager and practitioner from either Group Special Education or National Operations.

Many key informants raised concerns regarding which services within Health and Education would offer the most appropriate representation on YOTs.

> *I think there needs to be pressure from within each organisation to work out who is the best people to be on these things, and to give them the time and the authority or whatever it is. Because it is very ad hoc at the moment. Would you like to come on our YOT? You know. Well shouldn't it be the best people from each organisation? I just get the impression that it is done a lot on just good will. And particularly Health and Education. Police it is quite easy, you just go to the Youth Aid section basically and they are the youth offending people. And you can go to CYF and you can narrow it down to them. But how do you do that with the others? How do you tie in the youth offending with Education? Who has that kind of interaction?*

Key informants felt that a range of health issues, including drug and/or alcohol abuse and mental health, needs to be addressed as part of the response to offending.

> *Are we talking mental health for young offenders … are we talking physical health issues? It is generally like the mental health issues that are often the driver for youth offending. So is it someone from that area that should be there?*

> *With regards to Health, because that is like a fickle beast as well, because it is like do you go from the mental health side or do you go from the practical. Like Drug and Alcohol, I mean that would be really useful to have a representation of somebody from the A&D area, but also it would be useful to have a hands-on about general health as well. But then, who do you get for your manager? So that in itself is complicated. Or do you have a manager from each of those areas and a practitioner from each of those areas?*

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[13] Youth Offending Teams e-flash#2.

Education is in a similar position to that of Health, as it has a range of functions which could be represented on YOTs.

Education has always been hard. Because if you involve from Education say a Principal of a local high school, to find a Principal of a local high school that can see the bigger picture for the whole area and not just worry about his kids in his school, is difficult. So I don't think we have even been down that track. If you involve somebody from Group Special Education, from GSE, you need somebody who can see the bigger picture from Education, not just the role that GSE plays within the Education sector. Quite useful, we have been lucky enough to have usually a rep from the Ministry of Education who is in the Student Support area. So knows Education well, because by the time you get into working in the Student Support you have actually usually worked in every other aspect of Education, including in front of the kids in the classroom.

3.5.1   Child, Youth and Family restructuring

Discussion during key informant interviews mentioned the restructuring of Child, Youth and Family. This restructuring which would create a specialist Child Youth Family team with a dedicated Youth Justice Co-ordinator to focus on preventing re-offending, was regarded as positive for YOTs.

The future for us in [area], I see as a really bright future in terms of Child Youth and Family finally starting to get their house in order, the YOTs finally being located in a fashion that will allow some real strong local buy-in. Yes, I think those two factors should make a huge difference.

I think that with the restructuring there is supposed to be more focus on your communities, which means we could probably identify issues better.

I see them really fitting in well, and actually being able to provide better support and guidance and participation in the Youth Offending Teams.

I guess some of the benefits to the Youth Justice design has brought the co-ordinators under the site managers now. So we will be working as one organisation, as one business not a number of businesses where the co-ordinators in the past reported to their own managers who report direct to the National Office. So that is the benefits for the sites, Child, Youth and Family in the regions.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

This chapter covers issues relating to perceptions of specific achievements of the YOTs, such as initiatives and projects, information flow regarding youth offending, identifying gaps and developing and implementing action plans and work programmes.

The Guidelines for Youth Offending Teams (e-flash #2) stated that the Youth Offending Teams are to co-ordinate service delivery at a local level to young offenders. One of the ways they are to do that is by:

- Linking with the wider community – identifying service gaps, developing initiatives to solve identified problems and educating the community about the youth justice system.

4.1 Initiatives and projects as a purpose of YOTs

When asked what they believed the aim or purpose of Youth Offending Teams was, most key informants commented on co-ordination or collaboration as being the main purpose. A few key informants also commented on other roles that YOTs were involved with, specifically undertaking projects and initiatives, or identifying gaps in services.

Key informants commented on whether or not they believed YOTs are tasked with undertaking projects or initiatives, and the extent to which they are undertaking them. Some key informants were clearly enthusiastic about the projects that had been achieved by their YOT and saw them as a measure of success. There was however, considerable variation between key informants as to whether initiatives and projects were currently undertaken by their YOT, and whether or not it was an important and valuable role.

Those key informants who commented on initiatives and projects as a purpose of the YOT tended to place them as secondary to co-ordination and collaboration roles. Thus for some, co-ordination and collaboration was seen as the first step, while the second step was identifying gaps in service delivery, and then the third step was to undertake any projects or initiatives that were identified as being needed in their area.

It is about communication and relationship building, and progressing any initiatives that we think are good.

When asked about the successes of their YOT, many talked about specific initiatives rather than collaboration and co-ordination. Some key informants commented that undertaking projects or initiatives seemed to be the measure of success of the YOTs. One indication of this is that they receive details from the Ministry of Justice of the initiatives other YOTs are undertaking and there is the implication that their team should also be undertaking initiatives.

The third function seems to be that they are keen on us to have projects or initiatives. That has been a big bugbear for me. The reality is I am the chair. I don't have any control over what any of the other agencies do, … who actually does the project.

This person believed that the team was supposed to be undertaking projects because *"it seems to be an almost constant sort of thing that 'have you got any projects going?' "*. He felt that this emphasis on projects from the Ministry of Justice was because it was an easy measure of performance of YOTs compared to co-ordination and collaboration within the team.

> *I might be wrong about the projects thing, but in my mind the view was that it was one thing that they quite liked because the Leadership could say, I mean what else can a Leadership Group report on? That some YOT teams seem to be meeting regularly or not, and this is a list of initiatives that YOTs have taken. What else do they measure? What else do they report on? I have no idea.*

Other key informants commented that co-ordination, sharing of information and collaboration is sufficient for YOTs and that initiatives are not seen to be necessary.

> *I suppose just to provide leadership and a strategic overview of youth offending issues. … It is not to necessarily do the services, ... it is to bring the key players together. … Very much on the knowledge base though, and the leadership, as opposed to actually doing it as well.*

> *I think there are enough other forums to engage with practice, that sort of practice. … Youth Offending Teams are set up specifically to address the issues around youth offending and we need to come back to that because that is what it is about.*

> *What we have taken the aims of Youth Offending Teams, is about a better understanding of how each of us works and better communication around that. And about looking at how we can improve our processes and our working relationships. I guess the project stuff is another thing that comes out of that, but that is not one of the key things of YOT that we saw.*

A few key informants stated a belief that YOTs should be undertaking initiatives but this has not always happened.

> *I guess the other [purpose] of course is advocating for development of services within the particular patch it covers. I think that is a role that hasn't been utilised as much as it should in large urban settings. In some of the smaller – I was going to say rural type environments – but certainly some of the smaller cities I have seen that develop extremely well, that they have been strong advocates for the development of services. They have taken quite a social development role, and I think that is excellent. That is what you should be able to do when you get that mix of people together.*

As previously stated, there is the opinion held by some key informants that undertaking projects or initiatives is important and is a logical outcome of increased collaboration.

> *What I would like to see YOTs do more of is actually translating that improved communication to services on the ground. So where we step outside the boundaries of what we would normally do.*

4.2   Implementation of projects and initiatives

Key informants were asked to discuss some of the projects that had been undertaken and to comment on the value of those projects to the functioning of their YOT.

Some of the key informants identified specific projects and initiatives that had been undertaken in response to the identification of a service gap or of general inter-agency communication.

Some of the key informants appeared to be quite critical of their YOT in terms of a lack of projects or initiatives but nevertheless were able to identify some projects that they were involved in. Some of these YOT members commented that they believed that while the initiatives were assisted by the involvement of the YOT, they would have occurred even without the YOT involvement. For this reason they were not seen to be YOT projects, despite acknowledgement that the YOT was involved. There was also comment that there were some projects already occurring in the community that if they had not been, the YOT would have undertaken.

However, some key informants identified definite successes in terms of initiatives and projects, those that were YOT initiatives and would not have happened if there hadn't been the Youth Offending Team. There was also comment that without the YOT a project may have happened, but it would not have happened in a cohesive way with a joint approach.

A recurring theme from those who had undertaken specific projects is that the projects are useful for increasing the cohesiveness of the team, and for the team to have a feeling of success.

> *I think that drew us all together.*

Projects are seen to 'energise' members and to encourage regular attendance.

> *… by having a specific project and seeing some results and that we have actually got a focus and working towards some outcomes that might energise it.*

> *There is a run on the board if you like. That will give them the confidence to then try something else. Then it will become habit forming. Then before they know it they are on the way.*

The YOT members who responded to the survey were asked to state how effective their YOT is at:

- Implementation of projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending
- Making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise.

There is a fairly even split of opinion as to whether or not YOTs are effective at implementing projects or initiatives, and at making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise. These are lower effectiveness ratings than were given for collaboration between the core youth justice agencies and for identifying gaps in services available.

Table 4.1   Effectiveness of YOT in implementing projects and initiatives

	Very effective	Quite effective	Not that effective	Not at all effective	Do not do/ does not apply	Don't know
Implementation of projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending	10	36	35	9	2	9
Making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise	12	34	35	10	1	9

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: 'YOTs in general have achieved projects or initiatives that would not have been achieved without them'. Almost six in ten (56%) stated that they agreed YOTs had achieved this, with three in ten (29%) stating that they 'strongly agreed'. Eighteen percent 'neither agreed nor disagreed' and the remainder disagreed (18%) or did not know (9%).

Intensity of opinion (ie rating 'strongly agree') was considerably higher among Education and Child, Youth and Family representatives (43% and 40% respectively) than among Police (22%) and Health (19%) representatives.

A higher rating was given for 'YOTs in general' having achieved projects or initiatives that would not have been achieved without them (29% 'strongly agree'), than for rating 'their YOT' as effective in making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would otherwise (12% rated their YOT 'very effective'), or implementing projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending (10% 'very effective').

4.3   Having an action plan or work programme

Having a clear strategic focus is considered to increase the successful functioning of a YOT, and teams are encouraged to have an action plan or work programme and to monitor progress against the plan.

While all YOTs have informed the Ministry of Justice that they have completed an action plan, there was considerable variation in awareness among the key informants about whether their YOT has an action plan or work programme. There was also considerable variation as to the extent to which key informants consider that the plans are implemented by their YOT, and also in enthusiasm for the process of developing the plans.

Key informants were generally of the opinion that, in principle, action plans were important and very helpful in the functioning of YOTs. Some commented that a more structured planning day would be helpful and that it is also important to evaluate progress against the plan at the end of the year.

Yes, I think it is important. Because I think if you don't have an idea about what you are trying to achieve over the year, that it is just another meeting to go to, and I don't think we would make any difference for any young person. Whereas if we have a plan of work and a view, I think we will actually commit to that and we will achieve probably a lot more.

The generally positive opinion held by the key informants of the value of having work plans is supported by the results of the survey of YOT members (reported below). Having clear action plans encouraged YOT members to *"feel like we are going to be progressing and moving forward"*.

Comments were also generally positive about planning sessions that have been held. A couple of key informants commented that statistics about youth offending that were presented and shared at these meeting were very helpful. The planning session was also seen as encouraging cohesiveness among the YOT members.

The YOT does have a very structured operation. They conduct a one-day planning session on an annual basis. Put the key performance objectives with an action plan underneath that, put that in place. Then they monitor and track those throughout the year.

Some key informants were aware that there had been assistance provided for the planning days, including having Ministry of Justice input, and having money to employ someone to facilitate the day and to provide morning tea.

Despite the general opinion that action planning was very important for the success of their YOT, not all YOTs implemented the developed plan. Some key informants commented that their YOT was not able to get down to the specifics of who would do what by when and that the plans needed to be broken down into manageable tasks and that ownership needed to be accepted for specific actions. Most of those who had been involved with developing an action plan commented that it had not been actioned, predominantly because existing work commitments took over.

You take a day off and you develop an action plan but somebody has actually got to drive that to make it work. That seems exciting when you do it, do the action plan and everything. But when you come back to the realities [of day to day work] then I am afraid the action plan sort of goes down the track and I am sure it is filed somewhere.

There was an action plan which was drafted, but nothing ever, really we got stuck on who was actually going to implement it.

A couple of key informants commented that their YOT had made the decision to concentrate on addressing one thing on the plan and then move on to the next instead of *"doing half a dozen things half-pie at the same time"*.

Over three-quarters (77%) of the survey respondents stated that having a set work programme or action plan was 'very important' for the success of a YOT and in total 95% stated it was important. This response would relate to the principle of having a set work programme, not that they had an action plan and followed it. Having a work programme or

action plan was not rated as important for the success of a YOT as having motivated drivers of the YOT, or having consistency of attendance at meetings. However, having a work programme or action plan was rated more highly than having a paid co-ordinator or getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group in terms of a requirement for success[14].

Representatives from Child, Youth and Family rated the importance of having a set work programme or action plan higher than did representatives from the other core agencies. Eighty-four percent of them stated it was 'very important' for the success of a YOT. Sixty-four percent of Police representatives stated it was 'very important', 76% of Education and 78% of Health representatives rated it 'very important'.

4.4   Information flow regarding youth offending

Monitoring data about local level offending and re-offending trends and monitoring overall outcomes for children and young people in the youth justice system and designing system improvements are listed as roles of the YOTs[15]. While some of the information shared was reasonably informal or an update on what was happening within agencies or specific agency-initiated projects, other key informants spoke of sharing information that was more data-driven. In some YOT meetings, members bring data from their own agency regarding youth offending (including trend summaries and information that is part of that agency's reporting process).

Some key informants commented that often the information provided was useful to the other agencies as it can help make sense of what the other agencies are experiencing in terms of changes or trends in youth offending behaviour.

Many key informants saw sharing information as an important aspect of co-operation and collaboration between the agencies. Some key informants considered the sharing of information to be one of the key benefits of the YOTs and for it to be important in addressing youth offending.

I think it is a huge information sharing forum.

If there is something of note or something new that is coming up within any agency, [they are] really good in forwarding that on to the rest of us so we know what is happening in the other agencies.

Once you break down those barriers and once you get that information flowing, you are not doubling up on services, you are actually providing services better and quicker to kids. You are getting through the system quicker and probably having a greater impact on them.

A couple of key informants saw benefit in having a regional research programme whereby data is gathered from all sources and the main trends that are emerging are identified.

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14   See Section 8.1 for the tabulated results.
15   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

The survey respondents were asked to indicate how effective their YOT is at improving dissemination and flow of information about youth offending. Just under a quarter (22%) of respondents stated that their YOT was 'very effective', and in total just under three-quarters of respondents (72%) stated that their YOT was effective in improving the dissemination and flow of information. This aspect is given one of the higher ratings of effectiveness along with collaboration between the four core agencies and identifying gaps in services.

Thirty-two percent of representatives from Education rated their YOT as 'very effective' at improving dissemination and flow of information. Health at 28%, rated the effectiveness of their YOT on this aspect higher than did Police (16%) and Child, Youth and Family (22%).

4.5 Whether involvement in the YOT makes day-to-day work easier

There was discussion in the interviews about whether or not involvement with the YOT makes YOT members' day-to-day work easier.

When asked to rate how effective their YOT is at making their day-to-day work easier, only 8% of the survey respondents stated that their YOT was 'very effective' at making their day-to-day work easier, and in total 35% rated their YOT as effective. This is one of the lower ratings of effectiveness of all of the aspects measured.

4.6 Personal value of being part of YOT

Many key informants see value in the YOT meetings. They see the meetings as an opportunity to keep up to date with what is going on in the sector, to brainstorm ideas, as well as to establish and maintain work-related networks and relationships.

I think that it has probably been the vehicle for establishing those networks and relationships. I guess I just don't see it as separate from our job. It is our job, is collaborating. So we have this monthly meeting but that is just kind of what happens every day and every week in our job.

It fills some of the portfolios that I hold which is youth and also family violence and several other portfolios, so it is a great network in terms of what I can get out of being a part of the Youth Offending Team.

4.7 Identifying gaps in service in the local area

One of the roles and responsibilities of Youth Offending Teams is to identify service gaps in their local area. Whilst only a few of the key informants specifically commented on this aspect of their work when discussing the purpose or function of YOTs, it does seem to be one of the functions the teams generally undertake in the course of their work. In addition, identification of gaps was viewed as one of the achievements of the YOTs.

I think the YOT programme where we are looking at what are the issues for youth and families in this area, identifying the needs and the gaps and what is it we need to do to address those needs and gaps, it is the addressment (sic) of those needs and gaps that is the sticking point for us.

I would see it very much as they are meant to identify where the gaps are in service and develop strategies to fill those gaps and perhaps sponsor some development of those gaps. And not to manage them, not to manage any programmes that arise out of it – just a facilitator.

Examples of identifying gaps in service were given by informants and some also referred to actions that had been taken as a result of the identification of gaps.

One of the things we did was we did an overview of the patch and an understanding so that we all knew what [area] looked like and what the hiccups and the issues are, and where the gaps in maybe service delivery were.

We are identifying the issues that are bubbling up and starting to present.

Other key informants spoke more generally about the sharing of information that occurred through the YOT, but in practice it appears that much of the information shared was in effect working towards the identification of service gaps.

… it was sharing information with everybody. We have also looked at where the gaps were.

YOT members who responded to the survey were asked to state how effective their YOT was at:

- identifying gaps in services available to young offenders in the local area

- identifying gaps in services available to 'at risk' youth in the local area.

Table 4.2   Effectiveness of YOT in identifying gaps in service

	Very effective	Quite effective	Not that effective	Not at all effective	Do not do/ does not apply	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Identifying gaps in services available to young offenders in the local area	20	55	20	3	0	3
Identifying gaps in services available to 'at risk' youth in the local area	20	57	19	2	1	2

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Perceptions of effectiveness of the YOT in identifying gaps in services available to young offenders and to 'at risk' youth in the local area are extremely similar. Three-quarters of the respondents believe that their YOT is effective at identifying gaps in services available in their local area, and 20% consider their YOT to be 'very effective' at this.

4.8   Rating of Youth Offending Teams improving outcomes

Survey respondents were asked to rate how effective their YOT is at improving outcomes for young people and their whānau. Only seven percent of the survey respondents stated that their YOT is 'very effective' at improving outcomes for young people and their whānau, and in total 39% stated it was effective. On the other hand, half (50%) the respondents stated that it was not effective. (The remainder stated they did not know or that it did not apply.)

Representatives from Child, Youth and Family (48%) and Education (43%) were more likely to rate their YOT as effective than were Health (36%) and the Police (32%).

5.   GOVERNANCE OF YOTS

This chapter covers the governance aspects of YOTs. It looks at the appropriateness of the contributions of the four core agencies, including their decision making power on YOTs, the value of their input to YOTs and the value they receive from their participation in YOTs.

The chapter also looks at the role of the chair, the importance of structure versus personalities, project funding and issues of geographic coverage of the YOTs.

5.1   Contribution of all agencies appropriate

YOT members were asked in the survey whether the four core agencies all contribute appropriately to their YOT.

Only just over a quarter (28%) of survey respondents 'strongly agreed' that the four core agencies all contribute appropriately to their YOT.

Child, Youth and Family respondents were most likely (36%) to 'strongly agree' that the four core agencies all contribute appropriately to their YOT, whilst Police respondents were considerably less likely (18%) to 'strongly agree'.

Figure 5.1   Level of agreement that the four core agencies contribute appropriately to their YOT
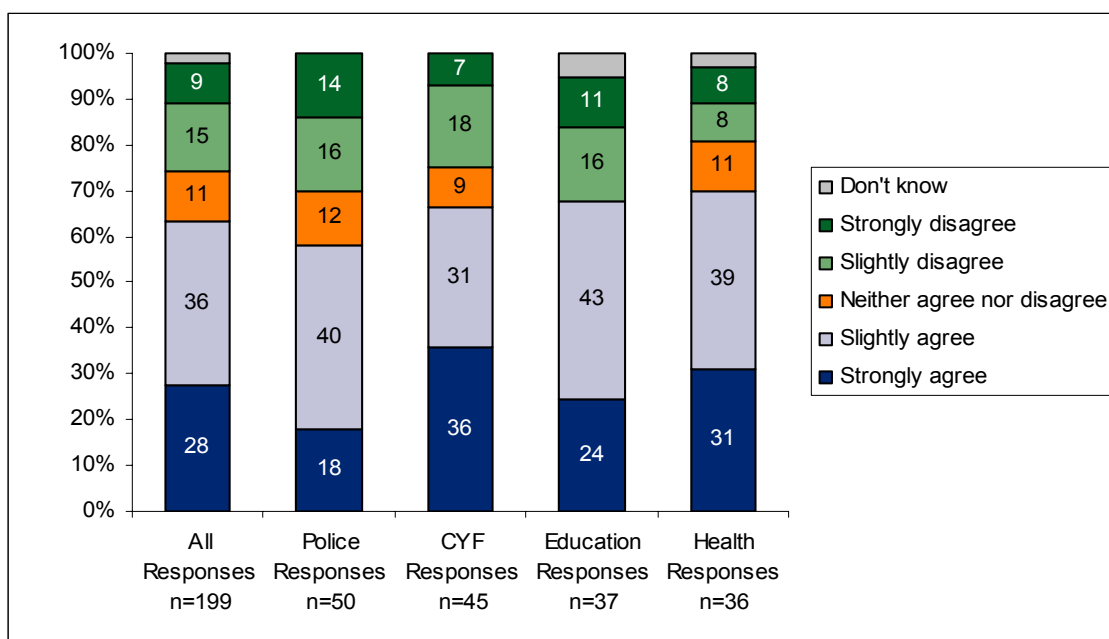
Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

5.2 Value provided by agency

A number of key informants mentioned that they value the opportunity to share information and gain information from other agencies on their YOT. They also value hearing different perspectives from each agency on an issue.

Other agencies will bring to our notice things that we have missed.

We are always happy to bring information in. We feedback on where we have got to with our different plans.

YOT members were asked in the survey about how valuable, in their opinion, the input of each agency was to their YOT.

Overall, the input of Police was considered to be the most valuable, with 73% of survey respondents indicating that Police's input in their YOT was 'very valuable'. Police survey respondents however were less convinced about the value of their input, with only 62% rating Police input as being 'very valuable'.

Health was considered to be least valuable in terms of input into their YOT, with just less than half (46%) the respondents indicating that Health's input in their YOT was 'very valuable'.

5.3 Value received by agency

YOT members were asked in the survey to rate the value received by each agency from their involvement in their YOT.

In comparison to the proportions of survey respondents that rated the value of each agency's input into their YOT as being 'very valuable', considerably fewer survey respondents rated what agencies gained from their involvement in their YOT, as being 'very valuable'.

Of the four core agencies, Health was considered to be least likely to gain from their involvement in YOTs, with only 23% of survey respondents indicating that what Health gained from their involvement in YOTs was 'very valuable'.

Police and Child, Youth and Family were viewed as gaining more than Education and Health from their involvement in their YOT. Thirty-seven percent of all survey respondents indicated that what Police gain from their involvement in YOT, is 'very valuable' and 36% indicated this for Child, Youth and Family.

However, once again Police survey respondents were less convinced about the value of what they and other agencies gained from their YOT, with less than a quarter (24%) of Police survey respondents rating the value of what they get out of their involvement in YOT, as being 'very valuable'.

Figure 5.2   Rating of a) value of each agency's input to YOT and b) value received from each agency's involvement in YOT as 'very valuable'
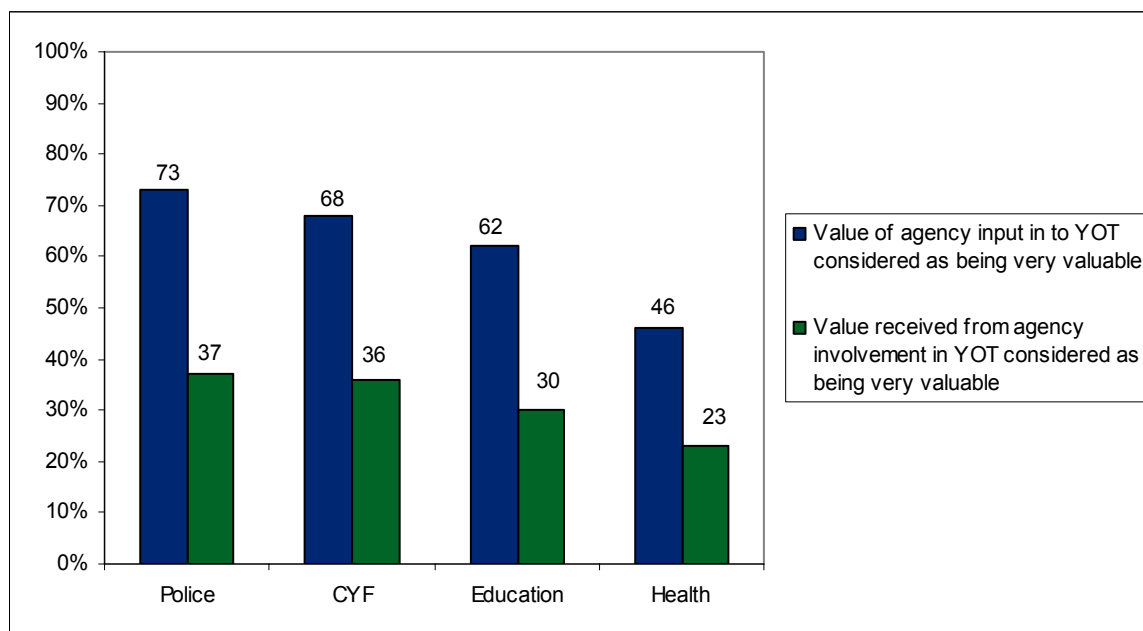
Base: All respondents (n=199).

5.4   Manager/Practitioner representation

A number of key informants mentioned that they thought the representation of both managers and practitioners on YOTs was an appropriate model. They see managers as providing the strategic direction and decision making regarding resources and the practitioners as the frontline people who have an overview of what is happening with the young people and their communities.

I like the idea of having the mix of managerial and practitioner… I think it is essential to have that level of decision makers, but we also have got to have the practitioners.

The concept I like. I think it is great, because I think too often we have managers at the talk-fest and nothing happens.

Because the practitioners, you get the ideas and you see the trends and so forth, but you need the managers that have the understanding of their budgets and their policies and so forth, what they can and can't do.

However, as commented on later in this report, some key informants are concerned that the managers represented on YOTs are not senior enough.

To address the lack of senior management on YOT, two key informants suggested that linkages could be made between YOTs and regional governance groups which involve higher level management from each organisation.

What I think could happen that would improve the whole thing is if somehow or another there was an overriding strategy above YOT, I mean in the [area] it is meant to be called [name], the Intersectorial Group. Well they may well be meeting and they may

well have a whole lot of things going on, but none of us in the YOT or in our other work feel connected to it.

From sort of a strategic governance level, like Strengthening Families, YOTs needs something a little bit bigger than themselves, to take issues that are bigger than them. In most regions now there are governance bodies that can do that, and represent all the key agencies.

5.5 Organisational value of YOT attendance/involvement

Some key informants mentioned that their attendance/involvement in YOT was not valued by their agency.

No, not really. I think there is a sense that somebody needs to do it. So in that respect that someone is actually doing this, so that somebody else doesn't have to do it, yeah. But I think it is probably seen a little bit as peripheral to our core business.

For some YOT members their role on the YOT is seen as part of their job which may or may not be formalised in their performance agreement.

In the early days, none of us. None of the sectors had it built in as part of our job. It is just an extra. So we struggled for a long time to find time to do that. Something else would lose when you went away and did your work around YOTs.

Some key informants mentioned that their membership of YOT being valued and supported by their organisation has been variable over time and according to the profile and activities of the YOT at the time.

Well it is when you have the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice and the Police and everything coming and wanting to get a presentation. So we are up in the 4th floor and the bosses come in there and say 'yes this is great'. But on a practical day-to-day level, no I don't really think so.

However, some key informants mentioned that their manager is supportive and passionate about YOTs.

I am certainly supported by my manager who also attends now. Our Service Centre manager also attends on a fairly regular basis, not every meeting. But he is certainly absolutely committed to YOT. So it is considered a really key part of our work.

Approximately two thirds of survey respondents (65%) 'strongly agreed' that their manager supports and encourages their involvement in their YOT. Child, Youth and Family survey respondents were most likely (82%) to 'strongly agree' that their manager supports and encourages their involvement in the YOT.

Whilst the majority of survey respondents were confident that they had the support and encouragement of their manager regarding their involvement in the YOT, a smaller proportion (42%) 'strongly agreed' that their **agency** values their involvement in the YOT.

Child, Youth and Family survey respondents were most likely (60%) to 'strongly agree' that their agency values their involvement in the YOT.

Only one-quarter of Health YOT members (25%), 'strongly agreed' that their agency values their involvement in the YOT.

5.6   Sufficient decision making power from the four core agencies

Managers representing their agency on the YOT need be able to make decisions regarding strategic direction and funding. A lack of appropriate senior level management representation appears to be hindering decision making on a number of YOTs.

> *Well I think there is a huge expectation that people at a local level are going to have the ability to actually change things strategically and I don't think they do.*

> *Senior management on the YOT is lacking. It is definitely lacking for the fact that at that level it comes back to that resourcing issue that I was talking to you about earlier on. It is only at that hierarchy level that you can strengthen and further collaborate better outcomes.*

There is also concern that management representatives on YOTs are not following through with their agencies regarding decision making and access to resources.

> *The issue that I have is sometimes, for month-to-month the minutes say 'so and so was going to do this and do that'. Things just don't follow through sometimes. That is the issue that I have now. Whether they can't follow through because they are not in a position of their organisation to make that happen, or whether as I said before, they don't have the motivation to be there. It is just another thing that they won't get done.*

YOT members were asked in the survey about whether there is sufficient decision making power on the YOT from each of the four core agencies and also whether overall there is sufficient decision making power from the core agencies on their YOT.

Sixty-one percent of survey respondents thought that overall there is sufficient decision making power from the four core agencies on their YOT. Twenty-seven percent stated that there is not sufficient decision making power and 12% stated that they did not know.

Police and Child, Youth and Family were more likely to be perceived by survey respondents as having sufficient decision making power on the YOT than were the other agencies. Only half the survey respondents thought that Health has sufficient decision making power on their YOT.

This ties in with the findings (section 6.3) that Police and Child, Youth and Family have the highest frequency of management representation at YOT meetings. Health managers were considerably less likely than managers from the other core agencies to regularly be represented at YOT meetings.

Table 5.1   Whether there is sufficient decision making power from each of the four core agencies on the YOT

	Police (n=199) %	CYF (n=199) %	Education (n=199) %	Health (n=199) %
Yes	79	77	69	50
No	15	15	22	37
Don't know	6	8	9	13

More Child, Youth and Family respondents (87%) rated Child, Youth and Family as having sufficient decision making power on their YOT compared with the percentage of Police (80%), Education (70%) and Health (56%) respondents who rated their own agency as having sufficient decision making power on their YOT.

5.7   The role of the chairperson

Many key informants believed that the role of chair is important to the effectiveness of a YOT.

> … having a chair who has the skills and commitment to also take on that role too, because it can be quite time intensive and can be the difference between whether a YOT works successfully or not.

YOT members were asked in the survey about how important they thought having a motivated chairperson was for the success of a YOT.

Results showed that nearly all (99%) of survey respondents think that having a motivated chairperson is either 'very important' or 'quite important' for the success of a YOT and 92% stated it is 'very important'.

At the time of establishment, having a YOT chaired by either Police or Child, Youth and Family representatives was identified as one of the minimum performance standards required of the Youth Offending Teams, and an indicator as to whether they were likely to be successful in enhancing inter-agency co-operation and collaboration at the local level[16].

The requirement of having a YOT chaired by either the Police or Child, Youth and Family representatives, was changed more recently to having a YOT chaired by a representative of one of the core government agencies[17].

YOT members were asked in the survey whether they were currently the chair of their YOT. Just over half[18] of the respondents who indicated that they were currently the chair, were from Police, and a third were from Child, Youth and Family. These figures are comparable with Ministry of Justice information[19] on current proportions of YOTs with chairs from Police (53%) and Child, Youth and Family (38%).

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[16] Youth Offending Teams e-flash#2, March 2003.
[17] Youth Offending Teams e-flash#2, 31 January 2007.
[18] Caution: small sample size (n=24).
[19] Ministry of Justice figures show that in September 2007 there were 17 Police chairs; 12 Child, Youth and Family chairs; 2 Education chairs and 1 chair from Health.

Whilst most YOTs are currently chaired by someone from Police or Child, Youth and Family, many key informants do not think that YOTs necessarily need to be chaired by either the Police or Child, Youth and Family representatives. Most felt that the leadership skills of an individual are more critical than the agency they represent.

But I just think it should be the person who is the most dynamic meeting leader. In every group you have got somebody that stands out and is the one that directs the conversation.

Key informants mentioned the following personal characteristics and leadership skills they considered important for an effective YOT chair:

- able to think strategically

Organisation, … skills, high level of knowledge of your agency area and being able to share that with other people. But also an understanding of the big picture of the area. I think part of that is around that strategic thinking, being able to think strategically for the district. To get other people to think that way, to think strategically as well.

- passion

Well they need to have a lot of passion. For – not just the role of chairing the YOT – but they have got to have passion for youth justice, for the purpose of services to youth justice.

- team building skills

It is the sort of thing that takes some strong leadership, and someone who has the time to work with others and develop a team. A lot of it is about teamwork. It is about understanding demands of other agencies that work in the field as well. Knowing what you can and can't do, and working to people's strengths as well.

- adherence to good meeting protocols

… ensure that the meeting flows and ensure that people are meeting their action plans or their guidelines of what they are tasked to do. And I think it is obviously essential that minutes are taken and disseminated timely.

- able to lead with authority

To make sure that there is some leadership happening. Leading with authority too. Those are some of the key skills which I find are important to have as chairman, and to make sure that those initiatives that have been suggested around the table at the YOT meetings are carried forward.

- facilitation skills

I think any meeting needs a good facilitator, because you need somebody who can bump you along from topic to topic, and make sure that everyone has a fair go at

talking and things. So in that sense I think the role of the chair is really important. Otherwise you have dead meetings. You won't have meetings with action.

- communication skills

Good communication skills. That is what I am saying. That listening thing was a huge issue. It was a huge barrier and it has actually held up some of the things because of that, and it needs to be addressed. I think you have got to be a good communicator.

- able to maintain neutrality

The chair has got to be able to maintain some neutrality. It is quite difficult at times to not wear your sector hat because a discussion may well see you wanting to leap in and say 'well this is a load of rubbish'. But in essence you need, like any good chair, to keep the discussion flowing and not shut it down in case it is actually going to end up with something really positive at the end.

- have drive and clout.

I actually think the chair is important, but I think if you are seen to be in that role then there is an expectation that you have the ability to drive and get things done. The chairman has got some clout and is going to make things happen.

5.8   Importance of structure versus personalities

Many key informants believe that having the right people is important to the success of the YOT.

I think that the success or failure of Youth Offending Teams throughout New Zealand is very dependent on the personnel involved in them, and the passion and drive that those individuals have for dealing with youth offenders.

Some key informants commented that they were concerned that the success of YOTs is too dependent on the people rather than structure and processes.

So it is too sort of personality-based, too individual-based as opposed to it being a structure that actually exists over time and has got its own integrity really, and is not so dependent on individual participation. … And obviously where it is working well, it works well. But I think the difficulty is that it is so dependent on the group of people that are contributing. So the rise and fall of them is totally dependent on the people that happen to be working in the area, and the shape of them and everything. So I suppose I am very keen on systems-based models where the system is what is key. That you have got the good system in place where it is not dependent on individual people as opposed to the model where you get a good bunch of people together and they enjoy working together but actually if two or three members disappear for some reason the whole thing just kind of collapses.

YOT members were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the success of their YOT depends on the people who are involved in the YOT at a particular time. YOT members were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the success of their YOT depends on its processes rather than the membership at any particular time.

Almost nine in ten (89%) survey respondents agreed that the success of their YOT depends on the people who are involved in the YOT at a particular time. Six in ten (61%) 'strongly agreed' that this is the case.

Only 42% of survey respondents agreed that the success of their YOT depends on its processes rather than the membership at any particular time. Only 13% 'strongly agreed' that this is the case.

Table 5.2   Whether the success of the YOT depends on the people who are involved in the YOT at a particular time

	All Responses (n=199) %
Strongly agree	61
Slightly agree	28
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Slightly disagree	1
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	1

Table 5.3   Whether the success of the YOT depends on its processes rather than its membership at any particular time

	All Responses (n=199) %
Strongly agree	13
Slightly agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	21
Slightly disagree	17
Strongly disagree	16
Don't know	5

5.9   Funding for projects

Key informants identified that funding for projects was important to the success of YOTs and the current lack of funding was an issue, particularly in relation to projects and initiatives.

> *I think what the success of YOTs will boil down to, [is] having enough resources when a good action point is come up with.*

We have looked, talked about doing a project and getting Ministry of Justice funding, but then when we found out there was none of that left it was like 'oh well there is none so that is it'. That got shelved.

YOT members were asked in the survey about how important they thought knowing that they would get funding for projects was for the success of a YOT.

Results show that nearly all (93%) survey respondents thought that knowing that they would get funding for projects is important for the success of a YOT. And nearly three-quarters (74%) thought it is 'very important' for the success of a YOT.

Survey respondents were also asked, without any prompting, to state what they believed are the main barriers to the successful functioning of their YOT. One of the barriers mentioned was related to the lack of funding and financial support.

Some key informants thought that the expectation that agencies will contribute local funding resources to YOTs was not helpful.

There was always this presumption that the YOTs somehow would be able to find money. Each of the sectors would suddenly produce money and pop it into a pool. Or that we would go out and we would be able to convince industry to give us money.

A few key informants mentioned that their YOT was able to find money for initiatives from within their region.

So we have typically found that if you can come up with the right initiative and do some planning around it and come up with a good business case, funding shouldn't be an issue. We will get it from somewhere.

But we tend to always look within our region and our own knowledge as to what can be jointly funded and we work together on how we are going to do that. Because some of those things there is money already sitting in our region for that specific area. So we will just try and tap into that. We just share resources if we can.

Someone said to me 'there is no point you sitting on this forum or on this team if you are not going to front up with the money'. So I said 'okay that is fine, I will front up with the money. You better be there with yours as well.' But that is right. Funding is the key element here.

Some key informants thought that it would be helpful if a pool of money was made available to YOTs for initiatives.

I think if people said there is a pool of money, that all you professionals and you agencies or whoever is involved could perhaps apply to or tap into if you had a sound projected programme, that would help.

I guess if we identified as part of that action plan resourcing and of course funding may be a part of that, that there was a way of accessing that, that would enable what we are wanting to achieve to come to fruition.

5.10   Effective for the geographic area

The initial locations for Youth Offending Teams were selected on the basis of population figures, offending trends and whether there were existing services to support a Youth Offending Team - typically including a Youth Court to act as a hub for the aggregation of youth justice services. These teams may serve other smaller communities in their area if there is a need and they have the capacity. An additional Youth Offending Team may be established so that coverage of an area can be divided up to better manage the volume of youth justice activity or better reflect the communities of interest. Or, teams may merge in some locations in order to be more effective and efficient.[20]

Key informants indicated a range of responses with regard to whether they felt that their YOT serves the geographic area it covers.

Those key informants whose YOT was in an area that had clear boundaries with similar communities within that area, and all agencies represented locally, felt that their YOT was effectively serving the geographic area it covers.

However, many key informants whose YOT served a large geographical area had concerns about the value of their YOT covering such a large area.

Some of these key informants mentioned problems in dealing with a number of distinct communities with different issues.

So we have got a rural sector and an urban sector for want of a better word. Their differences are miles apart.

So you have got very poor communities, you have got very rich communities, you have got very high populated Māori communities, you have got highly densely populated European communities… So quite diverse communities with their own sort of sets of problems. The communities don't interact a great deal with each other. That is the problem that you have got.

Other key informants felt that agencies on their YOT were not able to represent all the communities in their area due to issues such as differing agency boundaries, time and travel costs.

Like for instance the Youth Aid Officer from [area] has 1½ hours travel to come to the YOT meetings. So that is three hours out of his day that would be spent on the road. Whereas [area] is only 40 minutes away so that is not such an issue. For community agencies often the ability for them to travel to [area] for meetings, their budgets and funding does not allow them that level of travel.

YOT members were asked in the survey about whether they agree or disagree that their YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers.

Whilst half the survey respondents agreed that their YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers, a quarter disagreed and a quarter neither agreed or disagreed or didn't know.

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[20]   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

Table 5.4   Agreement that their YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers

	All Responses (n=199) %
Strongly agree	21
Slightly agree	31
Neither agree nor disagree	20
Slightly disagree	15
Strongly disagree	10
Don't know	5

In response to difficulties in covering a large geographic area, the South Auckland YOT recently split into three YOTs. Key informants saw this split as a positive way to improve the functioning of the YOTs through having YOT members focusing on local issues.

I think that it probably is going to make them function a lot better, because you have got much more of a kind of ownership, local commitment, you are dealing with a smaller patch I am presuming.

I think it was a wise decision to say well if it is not working as one YOT team trying to cover everything, let's see if putting local people on that YOT can identify the issues for their locality in relation to youth offending and work on maybe identifying specific projects or areas that they could address in their local area.

The chairs of the YOTs in the greater Auckland area have initiated joint quarterly meetings. At these forums issues are discussed and information is shared at the regional level. So whilst there was seen to be the need for additional YOTs to be formed in South Auckland so they could focus on local issues, the YOTs also saw the need for co-ordination at a regional level.

6.   MEETINGS

Meetings are core business for YOTs. YOT meetings are expected to be held monthly and be attended by two representatives - a local practitioner and a manager, from each of the four core agencies.

This chapter looks at YOT meeting frequency and attendance.

6.1   Frequency of meeting

YOT members were asked in the survey how often their YOT meets and how often they would like it to meet.

The majority (89%) of survey respondents indicated that their YOT currently meets once a month and 9% stated it meets once every two months.

Three-quarters of survey respondents (76%) said that they would like their YOT to meet once a month and 18% would like to meet once every two months. A few respondents therefore have the preference that their YOT should meet less frequently than it does.

6.2   Frequency of attendance

YOT members were asked in the survey about their frequency of attendance at YOT meetings over the last year.

Only sixteen percent of survey respondents indicated that they had attended every meeting in the last year, whilst the majority (60%) said that they had attended most meetings.

Of the four core agencies, Health survey respondents were most likely (25%) to have attended fewer than half of their YOT's meetings in the last year.

Table 6.1   Frequency of attending YOT meetings

Frequency of meeting attendance	All Responses (n=199) %	Police (n=50) %	CYF (n=45) %	Education (n=37) %	Health (n=36) %
Every meeting	16	18	13	24	11
Most meetings	60	58	62	57	61
About half the meetings	12	14	18	14	3
Fewer than half the meetings	12	10	7	5	25

Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

6.3   Frequency of practitioner and manager representation at meetings

Each of the four core agencies is expected to have two representatives on YOT – a local practitioner and a manager. This combination is to ensure that there is detailed knowledge about practice and the needs of children and young people, as well as a management focus on overall service provision and access to resources, with the ability to make decisions[21].

Many key informants agreed with the structure of having both a local practitioner and a manager from the four core agencies.

> *It makes perfect sense to me. You can't just have a decision maker at the table, I mean, saying 'we are going to implement this stuff' and there is no one there to do the work. You need representatives at both levels.*

YOT members were asked in the survey about the frequency of representation of managers and practitioners from each of the core agencies at their YOT meetings.

According to survey respondents:

- Practitioners are more likely than managers to 'always' be represented at their YOT meetings.

- Police practitioners have the highest frequency of 'always' being represented (almost half, 48%, of the survey respondents indicated Police practitioners are 'always' represented at their YOT meetings).

- Health practitioners and managers are considerably less likely than practitioners and managers from the other core agencies to 'always' be represented at YOT meetings.

- Health managers are most likely to be 'seldom' or 'never' represented at their YOT meetings. More than a quarter (27%) of survey respondents indicated that Health managers are either 'seldom' or 'never' represented at their YOT meetings.

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[21]   Youth Offending Teams e-flash #2.

Figure 6.1 **Frequency of Representation of the Core YOT Agencies by Manager and Practitioner Level**
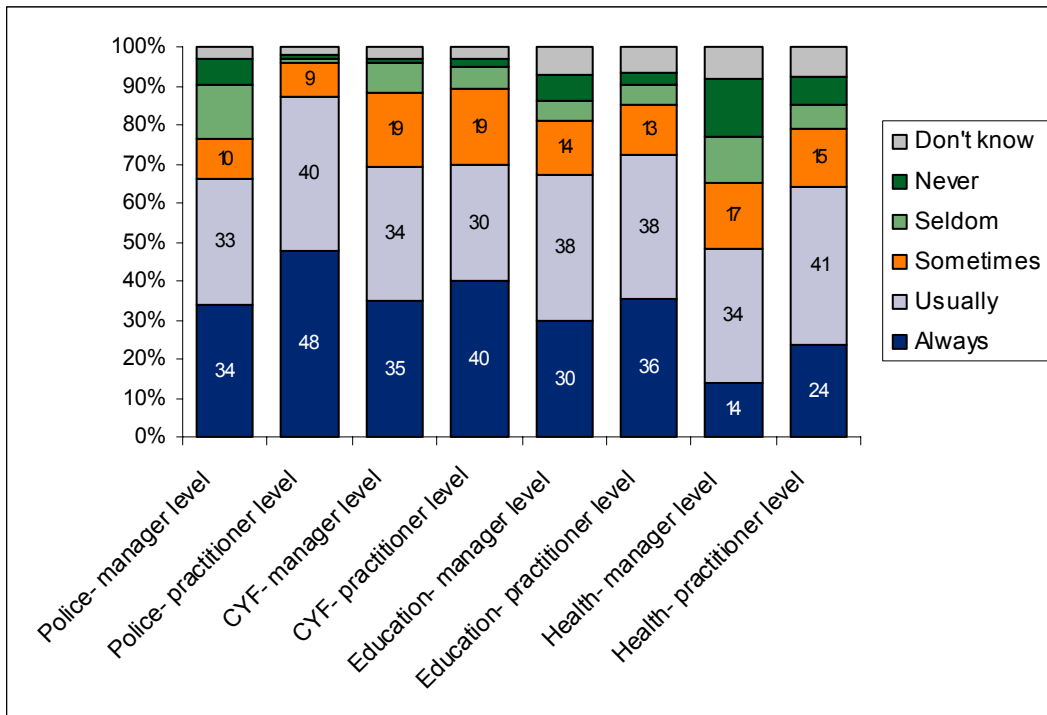
Base: All respondents (n=199).

6.4   Consistency of attendance

Whilst some key informants mentioned that their YOT had consistently good meeting attendance by members, a number of key informants mentioned that their YOT had inconsistent attendance and this was impacting the value and continuity of their YOT meetings.

The view that was formed by staff was that they weren't terribly useful forums to attend, because the membership was very variable as well. You didn't always get the same people. There was no consistency really across YOT meetings. So from one meeting to the other you could have a completely different cohort of people that maybe weren't aware of the previous agenda.

At the last two meetings we have got back to who wasn't at the meetings again. So there is vital information there that we needed for the next part of our planning of where we are going to go on something and if a representative doesn't turn up the information isn't being e-mailed through beforehand that we requested. So it just seems to stop for another month.

Reasons mentioned by key informants for inconsistency of attendance included staff shortages, work load issues, other inter-sector meetings to attend, personal motivation, travel time and travel costs.

YOT members were asked in the survey to indicate how important they thought having consistency of attendance at meetings was for the success of a YOT.

Results showed that nearly all survey respondents (98%) thought that having consistency of attendance at YOT meetings is either 'very important' (85%) or 'quite important' (13%) for the success of a YOT. Consistency of attendance was rated as the third most important factor for the success of a YOT, after having people who are motivated to drive the YOT and having a motivated chairperson.

6.5 Turnover of members

Membership turnover was also mentioned by key informants as impacting the functioning of their YOT.

> *I guess over here our biggest problem is changes of representation on the group, and it is not organisational representation all the time, it is the individual. Like the staff change, people move on, and that has always been an issue here. So to hold this group together has been difficult. It has been very difficult.*

High membership turnover was mentioned by key informants as impacting the proportion of meeting time spent undertaking introductions and briefing on YOT business, project traction, perceptions of usefulness of YOT meetings, and difficulties in the building and maintaining of team-oriented relationships and trust.

YOT members were asked in the survey about the number of years that they have been involved with YOTs.

Half of all survey respondents indicated that they have been involved with YOTs for less than two years and a quarter have been involved for less than one year.

Police representatives who responded to the survey were most likely (approximately one third) to have been involved with YOTs for less than one year.

Table 6.2   Number of years involved in YOTs

Number of years involved in YOTS	All Responses (n=199) %	Police (n=50) %	CYF (n=45) %	Education (n=37) %	Health (n=36) %
Less than 1 year	25	32	18	14	25
Between 1 and 2 years	25	20	24	30	25
Between 2 and 3 years	13	6	18	14	11
Between 3 and 4 years	11	8	13	11	11
Between 4 and 5 years	17	22	13	24	17
Over 5 years	10	12	13	8	11

Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

7. OVERALL SUCCESSFULNESS OF THE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

7.1 Perceptions of effectiveness, usefulness and successfulness of the Youth Offending Teams

There was considerable variation in key informants' perceptions of the overall effectiveness or successfulness of Youth Offending Teams. There tended to be a general consensus between members of a particular team, in that most members would consider their team to be either well-functioning or not, although, as would be expected, there was some variation between members.

There was a general tendency for Child, Youth and Family representatives and also Education representatives on YOTs to be more positive about the success of YOTs and Police and Health representatives to be somewhat less positive.

Some key informants were very positive about the effectiveness and successes of their YOT.

It is working extremely well. Very successful. Very strong collaboration between the four key agencies, and also between some of the NGOs that are on there. I think they have a strategic planning process on an annual basis. They have got some very successful projects, … some very key tangible outcomes that have only come about because of the strength of collaboration of the [area] YOT. Hugely successful.

I think there are YOTs working incredibly well in different areas …

Some key informants related specific aspects of their YOT that had been particularly beneficial.

The only thing I would say is that it has in the past improved relationships, particularly with Education. That is the one that stands out for me.

Other key informants held more negative perceptions.

I will be honest, the YOT is sometimes called a sinking yacht because it doesn't seem to be going anywhere. And despite us having all of these meetings, which I think are quite valuable, they are becoming quite repetitive. One is that if we are to address this major problem in the community, what do we address it with? If people are saying well like it goes back to 'utilise what you have locally'. When you are stretched with resources and stretched with staff, it doesn't become the priority.

I can't tell you of anything that is really substantial that we have achieved. It seems to me that we go around in circles.

What is a Youth Offending Team? It is just some people who meet. There is no budget. There is no staff. There is only me who is harassed to get minutes out, and I have to use a PA who has got other things to do. … But there is no YOT as such which does anything. There are just the different agencies on the YOTs.

We are meeting as required, but I would suggest the minutes are suggesting to the people that are reading them that we are not really achieving any outcomes. So I thought perhaps an alarm bell would have gone off somewhere, and somebody perhaps would have contacted us and said 'well look, you obviously need some assistance in relation to the direction'.

Some YOT members commented that the success of their YOT has changed markedly over time, and that motivation levels can vary quite considerably. This variation was seen to be due in part to the people involved and also to progress relating to specific initiatives or projects.

I think the reason that they have survived for as long as they have is because individuals there are passionate about it. But the perceived lack of resources or funding or support from a central agency, and all the other demands that the various agencies have on them really makes those individual teams I think struggle. Some do well. Some do badly. The ones that are doing well sometimes do badly as well.

Interestingly, at the end of some of the in-depth interviews, key informants who had been quite critical of either their YOT or YOTs in general, then commented that they did consider there were some positive aspects of the teams.

I feel like I have been a little bit harsh on [area] YOT during this conversation, but it's not all doom and gloom. I think that they have had some successes, and I know that they do push a number of things.

Well I feel as if I have been really negative towards the team. It is a good solid team that has some really good strengths. To look at the outcomes is a little bit more tricky.

There was also a feeling of optimism expressed by some, that although their YOT had not been particularly successful to date, there was the hope that this might change.

I have always had this optimistic sort of view that it might all come together. … I do believe that if you have got a group that is actually achieving something, it is more likely to attract people to it. It is vibrant, it is doing something.

7.2   Rating of overall effectiveness

The YOT members who responded to the survey rated their perception of the overall effectiveness of their YOT. They were asked 'and overall, how effective do you believe your YOT is?' after they had been asked to rate the effectiveness of specific aspects of their YOT (e.g. collaboration, identifying gaps, undertaking projects).

In total 49% of survey respondents stated that their YOT was effective overall (either 'very' or 'quite' effective). However, few thought their YOT was 'very effective'; only 8% gave it this rating and this is not a particularly positive result. Differences between agencies were minor: 52% of Police, 51% of Child, Youth and Family, 59% of Education and 47% of Health representatives rated their YOT as effective.

Table 7.1   Rating of overall effectiveness of own YOT

	Total (n=199) %	Police (n=50) %	CYF (n=45) %	Education (n=37) %	Health (n=36) %
Very effective	8	6	13	5	8
Quite effective	42	46	38	54	39
Not that effective	41	44	44	35	28
Not at all effective	4	2	4	5	6
Don't know	6	2	0	0	19

Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

Logistic regression analysis was undertaken[22] and it was found that respondents who were more likely to rate their YOT as effective (i.e. either 'very' or 'quite' effective) were those who rated the following statements about their YOT positively:

- Making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise

- Improving outcomes for young people and their whānau

- Implementation of projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending

- Making day-to-day work easier

- The role of the YOT is clear to all participants

- My YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers.

Thus, rating the YOT positively on aspects relating to the implementation of projects, clarity of role, having a positive effect on workload and effectively serving the geographic area it covers, was found to be a predictor of an overall positive rating of effectiveness. It is interesting to note that aspects relating to collaboration were not found to be predictors of overall ratings of effectiveness.

7.3   Rating of whether YOTs serve a useful purpose

Survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with two statements that YOTs serve a useful purpose ('their YOT' and 'YOTs in general'). As has been found in other areas relating to perceptions of YOTs, respondents were slightly more positive about 'YOTs in general' than they were about their own YOT. Seven in ten respondents (70%) agreed with the statement 'I believe my YOT serves a very useful purpose' (41% 'strongly agreed') and eight in ten respondents (80%) agreed with the statement 'I believe YOTs in general serve a very useful purpose' (49% 'strongly agree').

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22   Refer to the Methodology section for details.

It is a positive finding that four in ten respondents 'strongly agree' that their YOT serves a useful purpose (and that five in ten respondents 'strongly agree' that YOTs in general do). Given the less than favourable ratings many specific aspects were given by respondents, it indicates that many respondents do consider YOTs to be useful, despite having some specific issues with them.

Child, Youth and Family and Education representatives were the most positive, both about their own YOT serving a very useful purpose and YOTs in general serving a very useful purpose. Police representatives were the least positive.

7.4 Rating of overall successfulness of the YOT

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to rate how successful their YOT and YOTs in general are.

Table 7.2 Rating of overall successfulness of own YOT

	Total (n=199) %	Police (n=50) %	CYF (n=45) %	Education (n=37) %	Health (n=36) %
Very successful	13	12	22	14	8
Quite successful	44	38	42	57	44
Not that successful	33	36	31	24	33
Not at all successful	4	8	2	3	3
Don't know	7	6	2	3	11

Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

In total 57% of survey respondents stated that their YOT was successful (either 'very' or 'quite' successful). Differences between agencies were not statistically significant, but Police (50%) and Health (53%) representatives were less positive and Child, Youth and Family (64%) and Education (70%) were more positive about their YOT.

Logistic regression analysis was undertaken[23] and it was found that respondents who were more likely to rate their YOT as successful (i.e. either 'very' or 'quite' successful) were those who rated the following statements about their YOT positively:

- Making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise

- Improving outcomes for young people and their whānau

- I believe my YOT serves a very useful purpose

- My YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers.

Thus, rating their YOT positively on aspects relating to the speed of implementation of projects, improving outcomes, serving a useful purpose and effectively covering the geographic area it covers, was found to be a predictor of an overall positive rating of successfulness.

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[23] Refer to the Methodology section for details.

In total 57% of survey respondents stated that YOTs in general are successful (either 'very' or 'quite' successful). Differences between agencies were not statistically significant, but follow the trend where Police are less positive and Child, Youth and Family are more positive about their YOT: Police 50%, Child, Youth and Family 64%, Education 57% and Health 50%.

Table 7.3   Rating of overall successfulness of YOTs in general

	Total (n=199) %	Police (n=50) %	CYF (n=45) %	Education (n=37) %	Health (n=36) %
Very successful	10	8	16	5	3
Quite successful	47	42	49	51	47
Not that successful	21	30	20	16	17
Not at all successful	2	2	2	0	3
Don't know	21	18	13	27	31

Note: Caution, small sample sizes for agency sub-group analysis.

The level of positive ratings of the respondents' own YOT and YOTs in general were the same (57% of respondents rated them as successful) however there is a higher 'don't know' rating for YOTs in general (21% compared to 7% for their own YOT) and a higher negative rating for their own YOT (37%) compared to YOTs in general (23%).

8. GOING FORWARD

This section looks at areas of support that would be helpful to ensure the success of YOTs.

8.1 Success of YOTs

A number of factors were identified by key informants as being important in the successful functioning of YOTs:

- Having a set work programme or action plan, undertaking planning annually and reviewing progress
- Scoping the needs of the community and identifying gaps
- Knowing that there will be funding for projects
- Having a motivated chairperson or strong leadership
- Having a person or people who are motivated to drive the YOT
- Having consistency of attendance at the meetings, a solid core of people
- Members having passion and commitment
- Having a paid co-ordinator, administrative support or assistance for the chair
- Team members need to feel valued – both by the YOT and their agency
- Receiving support from the Ministry of Justice
- Getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group
- Senior management representation as well as practitioner level representation.

Comment was made that the more successful a YOT is, the better the attendance and participation will be, and that this will generate further success.

> *In order to get people to attend and to participate, you need to show some worth in why they are participating, and vice versa. In order for initiatives to be working well you need to show people why their participation was important in the initiative operating as well as it was.*

The survey respondents were asked to indicate how important they thought a number of variables are for the success of a YOT. The results are presented overleaf.

It can be seen that, of the factors presented to them, the survey respondents rated the motivation of YOT members as being of greatest importance for the success of a YOT. Having one or more people who are motivated to drive the YOT and having a motivated chairperson were of almost equal importance for the success of a YOT. Consistency of attendance at the meetings was also considered extremely important for the success of a YOT.

Figure 8.1 Importance of variables for the success of a YOT

Having a person or people who are motivated to drive the YOT — Very important 94, Quite important 5

Having a motivated chairperson — Very important 92, Quite important 7

Having consistency of attendance at the meetings — Very important 85, Quite important 13

Having a set work programme or action plan — Very important 77, Quite important 19

Receiving support from the Ministry of Justice — Very important 75, Quite important 20

Knowing that you will get funding for projects — Very important 74, Quite important 20

Getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group — Very important 65, Quite important 22

Having a paid co-ordinator — Very important 59, Quite important 18

Legend: ■ Very important ▢ Quite important ▢ Not that important ▢ Not at all important ▢ Don't know

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Whilst six in ten (59%) considered it is 'very important' to have a paid co-ordinator, this support, and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the Ministry of Justice, was rated considerably lower than the involvement and motivation of drivers or leaders within the YOT.

8.2 Support provided by the core agencies

When discussing the support required for YOTs, key informants identified the need for greater buy-in and top-down support for YOTs from senior management in the four core agencies. It was felt that the four core agencies should provide greater championing and awareness of YOTs within their organisation.

You may get day to day practitioners coming together on a YOT, but you also need to have the heads of those agencies meeting on a regular basis to strategise them and show how they can support better as well, and that often doesn't happen.

And it shouldn't be just the Leadership Group either feeding back. It should be coming down through the organisations as well. Business as usual should be that there is that level of support and knowledge through the whole organisation so there is a loop between the YOTs, the Leadership Group and through the organisations. At the moment the loop is just between the YOTs and the Leadership Group perhaps, but it needs to be more through the organisation.

Top-down support for YOT should also be about giving staff clear direction regarding their role and expected level of input on YOT, as well as matters such as how much agency release time they will be given to attend meetings and carry out YOT business.

I would have to say that there certainly has never been any real steer from our department about what YOTs should be doing, or how much time you should be giving them, at all.

8.3 Support provided by the Ministry of Justice

This section looks at the support provided to YOTs by the Ministry of Justice.

According to the YOT induction pack, Youth Offending Teams can expect the following support from the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Leadership Group:

- Clarity about the purpose of the YOTs and the expected outcomes

- A simple reporting framework

- Feedback and best practice sharing to compare/develop local services

- Advocacy and support for continuous improvement

- Liaising between government agencies re systemic roadblocks

- National forums to collate local reports, identify trends, and promote policy initiatives and system enhancements

- Assistance with the creation of action plans.

The Ministry of Justice has two FTE positions that keep regular contact with YOTs, corresponding through the chairperson and supporting the YOTs in achieving their goals by providing information and disseminating best practice information. They also provide a pivotal link between the YOTs and the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

To ensure that members of the YOTs receive information about the YJLG and the youth justice sector in general, the Ministry of Justice sends information via e-flashes. An e-flash is an e-mailed newsletter containing information about best practice, new policy initiatives etc. An e-flash is sent whenever information needs to be circulated to the YOTs.

Whilst a number of YOT members were unaware of the support role of the Ministry of Justice, most said they had received and found helpful the written material including the e-flashes prepared by the Ministry of Justice.

Well the support that I have been conscious of the part was around data and information. Like the booklets and the guidelines as well, and goals and objectives for YOTs. I think there was one particular strategy that was released I think, and I forget what the name of it was, but it was a document that just helped YOTs who may have been struggling on why they existed. This document was produced to give them a bit of a pathway on how to look at the infrastructure and operate in line with the policy.

There was support for the Ministry of Justice allowing for autonomy for YOTs to make local decisions for local issues rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.

There was a time there where I was very aware that we had things, and I don't mean this horribly – imposed from Wellington – that I questioned the value for us or for our community. I think that has changed, because I think that the Ministry of Justice has

recognised that for a Youth Offending Team to work it needs to be adapted to their own community. As opposed to being kind of – I wouldn't say dictated to – but strongly suggested that this is how it will be. That is really good because I think there is recognition there that some communities actually are doing okay, and some might need a little bit more hand than others.

I think one of the things we have been successful is we have been allowed to make local decisions for local issues, and have local people given authority to develop plans that work.

Those key informants who have received visits, assistance and support from the Ministry of Justice, generally see that engagement as being very positive, supportive and helpful.

Well we sort of ran into a black hole last year and we got people from the Ministry of Justice. I think all the team found that pretty motivating. Just sort of headed us off on a more enthusiastic and giving it a little bit more structure to what we do, which is good.

One of the things that was useful was when the people came and helped us do a review of our YOT, and we spent some time refocusing where we were at and what our projects might be over the next 12 months. That was helpful.

However, many felt that apart from the requirement of sending minutes to Ministry of Justice staff and receiving e-flashes and the odd visit, the support role provided by Ministry of Justice was not significant and communication between some YOTs and Wellington could be greater.

From my point of view I don't think they play any significant role in our YOT. I know that we report information to them and we get reports back, but really I wouldn't have anything to do, or very little to do, with them otherwise.

Key informants mentioned the following ways that the Ministry of Justice could provide more support to YOTs:

- provision of a shared database

If we had the shared database we would come to the meeting having already read the information on kids who have got issues that we need to deal with, and we would be much more focused on the actions and the outcomes that we need to do …

- a YOT website with contact details of all YOT members

… a site you could go to where you could actually get the names of the chairs and the people who belong to the different YOTs in different parts of the country, then that would be a good way of sharing information.

- more information about what is happening with regard to youth offending

So one of the things that would be really helpful would be if there was some analysis of the sort of offending that is quite current at the moment, or sorts of different offending that goes on and for there to be literature that people can easily access.

- more information about what is happening with YOTs around the country, analysed by YOTs which are serving similar communities with issues in common, to allow for the sharing of information about how YOTs are dealing with issues and what works well

I am thinking if there was somebody who did some analysis of what actually is going on in different YOTs around the country, and sent that information around to people.

I would like some definitive examples of good YOTs, and that would take into account the demographics, the population base, how many schools there are, all those things and then give me some solid examples of what is working. That would be helpful.

- an induction and orientation package for new YOT members containing information and guidance on the role of being a YOT member

An introductory booklet for each new person that comes onto the YOT would be very very handy. So that the chairman could say 'welcome to the YOT. Here is your booklet. Read it up. This is what is expected of you next time you come'.

There was talk about like an introductory handbook, or something along those lines about explaining what YOT is and so forth. That would be helpful.

- guidance, training and support for the chairperson

I really noticed that when I was first elected chair I was thinking, here you are in the role of chair, you are trying to run a meeting and you really don't know too much about your role and nobody does or nobody did. So I definitely think that support is needed.

- more visits to YOTs and facilitated planning/team building sessions

Well we have got our action plans that we are meant to be doing. I think maybe they should be reviewed yearly or every couple of years. It would be nice to actually have another opportunity to have a day facilitated where you make sure people are on track.

Provide a focus on where we should be going in Youth Offending Teams.

I think that thing of the Youth Justice person coming around and disseminating information and also supporting the facilitation of the group would support us. Because you can drift.

YOT members were asked in the survey to indicate how important they thought receiving support from the Ministry of Justice is for the success of a YOT.

Nearly all (95%) survey respondents considered that receiving support from the Ministry of Justice is 'very important' or 'quite important' for the success of a YOT. Three-quarters considered the Ministry of Justice's support is 'very important' for the success of a YOT.

8.4   Support provided by the Youth Justice Leadership Group

This section looks at YOT members' perspectives of the support provided to YOTs by the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

The Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG) consists of national policy and operational managers from the Ministries of Justice; Social Development; Health; and Education; the Department of Child, Youth and Family; and New Zealand Police. The YJLG communicates regularly with Youth Offending Teams and oversees the performance of Youth Offending Teams to ensure that all teams are supported and are able to function effectively[24].

Communication with YOTs is achieved via YJLG members making regional visits, and the answering of queries from YOTs recorded on monthly reporting forms which are submitted to the Ministry of Justice with the YOT monthly minutes.

Key informants were asked about their knowledge of the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

Whilst the majority of key informants were aware that the Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG) exists, few were certain of the role or purpose of the group or the support that they offered YOTs.

> *But in terms of what they do for us, I am not sure. I don't want that to sound negative in that sense. They are not a monthly presence.*

Of those key informants who were knowledgeable about the YJLG, most viewed the group as the Wellington-based top tier of the YOT structure, the information resource and guidance group, who are knowledgeable about the youth offending policy and the national picture of YOTs.

> *I see it as more as a resource group, with regards to policies and that type of information, and possibly advocating with our respective Ministers for resources.*

> *Support if we need it. We have obviously used it before, keeping us up to date on what is actually happening around initiatives and possibly reporting back on what other areas are doing as well.*

A number of key informants saw the YJLG as the group to take a question or a problem to.

> *I know that the Leadership Group are there for advice, and you can ask questions on your minutes and they are supposed to send us back the answers.*

> *And if there are any problems local[ly] we know that we can contact those people.*

> *We have gone to the Youth Justice Leadership Group. I am not sure whether it went as far as the Minister, but that is how we got a representative from [organisation] on board.*

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[24]   Youth offending Teams e-flash #2.

A few key informants had met members of the YJLG and were aware of their visits to YOTs around the country.

There was a heap of them that arrived. They were actually challenged quite a lot by individual agencies about some of the things, some of the areas of concern for [area]. They responded very well. I took them on a tour around different organisations and showed them the organisations that we would work with in this area.

We have had the Leadership Team come up and offer us support.

However, it was commonly felt that at times the lines of communication between the YJLG and YOTs are not that great and there is some dissatisfaction with answers to questions.

So in terms of communication with the Leadership Group, there has been a fairly high degree of dissatisfaction with that. You asked me about policy, and this was one of our problems as part of the communication, is [that] we actually often don't know what policy comes from. Sometimes we don't even know it has changed. We suddenly hear some discussion about it and we say 'whoa hold on, is that what we are doing, we didn't used to do that before'. 'Well, no. Now it is permitted.' 'When was it permitted?' 'Who knows.'

We don't hear very often from the Youth Justice Leadership Group unless you ask them a direct question. Then usually when you ask them a direct question, you end up answering it yourself within your agency because it has been fed back down to you.

We would send questions to the Leadership Group, that is what we are meant to do, and we would either get no answer or we would get an answer and you would look at it and say 'but this is not my question'.

In addition, key informants tended to feel that the Youth Justice Leadership Group know more about YOTs at a high level than information about individual YOTs or local issues.

From what I got from talking to them, they knew who we were. Not specifically, but knew what a YOT was and stuff. Maybe to have a little bit more of a presence on YOTs would verify our existence maybe.

Key informants mentioned the following ways that YJLG could provide more support to YOTs:

- have a greater local presence by undertaking more visits to YOTs, supporting local initiatives developed by YOT and providing more information, regular feedback and help out YOTs that need facilitation or development

I think they need to come out and see some of the stuff that goes on. We have had one meeting in five years with the Leadership Group, and now it has changed. It has probably been lost largely. But they did come out once to sort of hear and get a presentation and go and visit a few things, and that was great. But once in five years isn't enough. I think they should go out once a year somewhere to a YOT.

I think maybe annually having a get-together with other areas with the Leadership Team coming to each area and keeping a focus on there.

- become more involved with YOTs that are struggling

… maybe the Leadership Group should get more involved where a particular YOT are not functioning where we know they can or should.

- champion YOTs at a national level to ensure greater investment in and support for YOTs from the core agencies at the senior management level

Support is needed at a national level to say 'hey you guys are the practitioners on the ground, you are the experts, you know what you are talking about, our role will be to support you'.

To champion it. Make sure that there are supportive processes and practices within each of those organisations.

YOT members were asked in the survey to indicate how important they thought getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group is for the success of a YOT.

The majority (87%) of survey respondents considered that getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group was important (either 'very' or 'quite' important) for the success of a YOT.

8.5   Support provided by a paid co-ordinator

A small number of YOTs have a locally supported co-ordinator to assist them. National funding for a paid administrator/co-ordinator is not currently available to YOTs.

This section looks how helpful YOT members believe it would be for each YOT to receive support through having a paid co-ordinator.

Few key informants raised the issue of a paid co-ordinator unprompted. When specifically asked about the value of YOTs having a co-ordinator, the majority of key informants thought that having administrative assistance would be helpful to the functioning of their YOT. Some were aware that there had been discussions about this possibility.

It is commonly viewed that sharing the YOT administration work, such as the minute-taking, amongst the agencies doesn't work well, and that it is helpful to have a dedicated independent person to support the YOT chair.

An admin person. They are like the glue. They hold it all together. Because when you are a member of a team and you also have got to take minutes, you often don't make as many contributions as you would like to because you are too busy bogged down. But I would like to see an admin person.

Strengthening Families limped along for a while in [area] as well, until we were able to source funding for a full time or part-time co-ordinator. I think that makes a difference too, having a co-ordinator. Someone whose role it is to pull people together, to keep

them informed, to perhaps project manage some work as well. Otherwise day-to-day work tends to over-power the best of intentions – overwhelm.

Those key informants whose YOT currently has a paid co-ordinator, were most positive about the support provided by the role.

Our YOT would be just a completely different YOT if we didn't have that administrative support. Because there is just no way somebody else could take on all that we have managed to achieve in [area] without having that support.

When asked about the role of a co-ordinator, most key informants related the role to undertaking administrative tasks. Key administration tasks for a co-ordinator mentioned by key informants included:

- arranging the meetings and the venue
- keeping up to date a directory of people who are attending meetings and a key contacts list
- calling for agenda items, sending out meeting reminders and agendas along with relevant meeting papers
- taking minutes, recording action points, and following up anything that has arisen from these action points
- writing issue letters to agency decision makers, setting up initiatives that come out of the decision making.

Some key informants, however, expressed the view that ideally the co-ordinator role should more than an administrative role and should cover research tasks, project co-ordination and management, liaison (including keep in touch with what other YOTs are doing), information sharing and dissemination, and linking with the community.

I think we have been fortunate that the people we have had in it, and we have had three people, have had that strong community link base. We have really employed them because they have had those networks, and that they know how to access the key people and get the buy-in from them if they need to for particular initiatives. So they do have a communicating role to perform.

One would be to probably help with funding, the education, the ideas, and information from other YOTs.

YOT members were asked in the survey to indicate how important they thought having a paid co-ordinator would be for the success of a YOT[25]. Whilst more than three-quarters (77%) of the survey respondents thought that having a paid co-ordinator was an important requirement for the success of a YOT, this is a lower rating than was given to the importance of the other aspects rated (i.e. having motivated people involved in the YOT, consistency of attendance, a set work programme, support from the Ministry of Justice and the YJLG and knowing that there is funding for projects).

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[25] It should be noted that, in asking this question, the co-ordinator's role and duties were not clarified.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Conclusions

Youth Offending Teams were established to improve inter-agency engagement between Child, Youth and Family; Police; Health; and Education. The YOTs' overall aim is to co-ordinate service delivery at a local level to young offenders. The conclusions that follow provide an overview of the issues that have emerged from the evaluation. Further detail regarding these issues is provided in the body of the report.

Youth Offending Teams successfully encourage inter-agency engagement between the four core youth justice agencies. Specifically, the sharing of information and communication between the agencies is considered to be one of the key benefits of YOTs in addressing youth offending. However, on the continuum of collaboration (as presented in the literature review), YOTs are currently operating at the lower levels of communication and co-operation rather than at the higher levels of collaboration that they have the potential to operate at.

Whilst there are other inter-agency forums that involve Police and Child, Youth and Family, the YOT's structure includes Health and Education and therefore allows for a more holistic approach to be taken to addressing youth offending in the local areas.

However, there is a lack of a shared understanding about the purpose and role of the YOTs and also about their governance and day-to-day operation. This is perhaps one explanation for the considerable variability in the functioning of teams. Specifically, there is a lack of clarity as to whether the purpose of the teams is primarily interaction between the members (i.e. networking, collaboration, sharing information) or operational (undertaking initiatives and projects), or the extent to which both roles are expected.

The success of a particular YOT is currently driven, to a large extent, by the involvement and input of individual members rather than the structure and processes of the YOT. The individual YOTs are therefore vulnerable to changes in membership and the absence or departure from the YOT of a key member can have a considerable effect on the performance of that YOT. This dependence on individual members is another explanation for the considerable variability in the functioning of teams.

In terms of the day-to-day operation of YOTs, there is a lack of clarity regarding how community organisations should be involved with YOTs. There are issues both about consulting with community organisations and involving them in specific initiatives, and also whether membership of the YOT should be core agency membership only or whether community members should also be members. The literature indicates that before successful collaboration can happen between government agencies and NGOs, core agencies need to be working together properly.

There is also a lack of clarity as to which services within Health and Education offer the most appropriate representation on YOTs. In some teams this has led to a level of disillusionment, both by the Health and Education representatives and representatives from the other agencies, as to the role that Health and Education are expected to take on the YOT.

Having clear action plans along with systems and processes that support the planning process, are important factors to creating a culture of success within YOTs. Once a culture of success is achieved, further success becomes more easily achievable.

Current perceptions of effectiveness and success of YOTs are related to outcomes associated with projects or initiatives and improving outcomes for young people and their whānau, rather than with aspects of collaboration.

Despite some specific issues, Youth Offending Teams are considered by their members to serve a very useful purpose; they effectively encourage inter-agency engagement and information sharing and achieve positive benefits that would not have occurred without the teams.

9.2   Recommendations

The following recommendations relate to issues that need to be addressed; they are not the solutions to those issues. The group primarily responsible for addressing each of the recommendations is identified, as is the group that needs to take action.

1.   A strong relationship between the Youth Justice Leadership Group, the core Youth Justice Agencies, and the YOT members, is critical for the success of the Youth Offending Teams. Striking the right balance between a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' model for YOTs will ensure greater success. The Youth Justice Leadership Group and senior management within the core agencies need to offer a clear mandate, leadership and support for collaboration. The YOT members need to have the capacity to engage and build relationships and be able to identify and address local issues.

   ➢   Responsibility/action: All

2.   Involvement in and support for YOTs from senior management within the core agencies is critical in encouraging appropriate participation from each agency. There needs to be a championing of YOTs at a national level to ensure greater commitment to and support for YOTs from the core agencies at the senior management level. The Youth Justice Leadership Group has a critical role to play in ensuring that senior management are appropriately involved with, and supportive of, YOTs.

   ➢   Responsibility/action: YJLG

3.   There needs to be greater clarity of the purpose, role, and expected outcomes of YOTs. There is a lack of a common understanding and agreement among YOT members as to the rationale for YOTs, the group that should be targeted, especially in relation to the level of offending or potential offending, and the achievements that are expected from the YOT. YOTs have received different messages, both over time and from different sources, as to what is expected of them and this compounds the lack of clarity that exists.

   ➢   Responsibility: YJLG, Action: MoJ

4. The provision of clear guidelines for YOTs including their structure, direction, membership, and the role of the chair, would assist the YOTs in their day-to-day functioning. This includes clarification as to the role of community organisations in relation to the YOT, the level of the manager and practitioner representative on the YOT and the required decision making power and level of budgetary responsibility from the agency representatives.

   ➢ Responsibility: YJLG, Action: MoJ

5. Having a clear strategic focus is considered to increase the successful functioning of a YOT and an action plan or work programme provides the means to achieving this. Whilst having a set work programme or action plan was welcomed in principle by YOT members, there was a lack of active implementation of a plan or programme and a lack of enthusiasm for the process of developing the plan. Greater support for the development, implementation and management of action plans would assist in the increased utilisation of those action plans. Facilitated planning sessions are one way of providing that support. In addition, monitoring progress against the plan would assist the YOT in focusing their efforts and provide a benchmark for achievement.

   ➢ Responsibility: YJLG, Action: MoJ/YOT members

6. There needs to be a higher level of reporting and information flow between the YOTs and the Youth Justice Leadership Group, supported by the Ministry of Justice. The YOTs need to be clear as to what reporting they are required to provide, and from the YJLG and Ministry of Justice there needs to be more information, regular feedback and responses to YOTs in answer to minutes and questions. The Youth Justice Leadership Group needs to develop a plan around what data can be provided to YOTs from different agencies at both a national and local level, and guidelines for interpreting that data.

   ➢ Responsibility: YJLG, Action: MoJ/YOT members

7. There needs to be greater core agency commitment to YOTs. Agency commitment should not just be about agency representation, it should also be about:

   • Clarification of agency representation on the YOT in terms of the role the representative is expected to take on the YOT and the required level of seniority of both the manager and the practitioner

   • Ensuring that the agency is represented on the YOT by staff who are committed to the work of the YOT and who are capable of fulfilling the role required of them

   • Providing support for and valuing staff representation on the YOT, including the possibility of including the role in the staff members' performance objectives.

   ➢ Responsibility/action: Agencies

8. The issue of how funding should be provided to YOTs should be reviewed. If it is decided that funding is appropriately provided from existing budgets within the four key agencies, the provision of funding needs to be another focus of the agencies' commitment to YOTs. The perceived lack of funding and resourcing of YOT initiatives and projects was seen as indicative of an overall lack of commitment to YOTs.

   ➢ Responsibility: YJLG, Action: Agencies

9.   Overall, for YOTs to be successful there needs to be an increased level of enthusiasm for YOTs from everyone associated with them. There needs to be a greater support for YOTs from those involved at all levels and the work of YOTs needs to be championed in their day to day work.

❯   Responsibility/action: YJLG/MoJ/Agencies/YOT members

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

1.1   Introduction

The evaluation of Youth Offending Teams was a process evaluation consisting of four phases:

- A literature review

- Key informant interviews

- A survey of all YOT members

- A focus group discussion with members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

An Evaluation Advisory Group was set up to provide professional support and guidance to the Ministry of Justice Research and Evaluation project team, and in particular:

- comment on the research proposal outlining the suggested programme of research;

- provide advice on some of the research instruments (data collection sheets, questionnaires, interview guides etc.);

- receive progress reports during the research project;

- be briefed on any issues and problems that arise during the project; and

- comment on the draft final report.

Membership of the Advisory Group included Māori and Pacific Peoples cultural representation, Ministry of Justice Youth Justice policy staff, and representatives from the four key agencies (Police, Child, Youth and Family, Health and Education).

1.2   Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation of Youth Offending Teams were to:

1.   provide an understanding of the dynamics of Youth Offending Teams,

2.   provide descriptive information about the set up and operation of Youth Offending Teams,

3.   identify existing and potential problems,

4.   identify aspects of Youth Offending Teams that are working well, and

5.   identify how Youth Offending Team members would like to see Youth Offending Teams working in the future.

1.3   Exploratory Work

To assist with project scoping, an initial exploratory phase was undertaken at the beginning of the project to find out about the functioning of YOTs and issues facing YOTs. During the exploratory phase, members of the Research and Evaluation project team met with staff from the Youth Justice Policy team of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Unit, Ministry of Justice, members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the Youth Justice Independent

Advisory Group. They also visited YOT team meetings in Wellington, Porirua and the Hutt Valley, and attended a regional YOT planning day.

Issues identified during the initial exploratory phase were used to structure the interview guide for the key informant interviews and the survey that went to all current YOT members.

1.4 Literature Review

A limited-focus literature review was undertaken with the purpose of advising the recommendations arising from the evaluation. The literature review, which was carried out by a contractor, looked at the theory and the effective practice of inter-agency collaboration.

A workshop was held between members of the evaluation project team and the contractor to discuss the findings of the literature review.

The literature review is Appendix 2 of this report.

1.5 Key Informant Interviews

The main method of obtaining the qualitative information for the project was carrying out key informant interviews with selected YOT members. To ensure that a wide range of opinion was canvassed, staff from the Youth Justice Policy team identified a range of informants (from different agencies and community groups) from seven YOTs based on the YOTs' reported current level of activity (high, medium and low activity), history, geographical location, and the ethnicity of the area covered by the YOT. Informants included both those actively engaged with the team and those who were less engaged. Interviews were also undertaken with some past team members. Whilst this approach did not mean that everyone involved in a particular YOT was interviewed, it did ensure that a range of perspectives was represented in the evaluation.

Table A1.1   Breakdown of key informant interviews by YOT attended

YOT	Number of interviews
Kaikohe	7
Counties Manukau-Manurewa	4
Papakura/Pukekohe	6
Counties Manukau-Manurewa and Papakura/Pukekohe	1
Hamilton	9
Wellington	8
West Coast	1
South and Mid Canterbury (Timaru)	9
Total	45

One of the seven YOTs chosen was selected to be the pilot in the evaluation. The purpose of the pilot was to develop fieldwork procedures, and to further identify the range of issues that exist for YOTs, before carrying out interviewing in other areas.

The majority of the key informant interviews were face to face, with members of the Research and Evaluation project team travelling to the location of each YOT. Only two interviews were

carried out by telephone, one due to a YOT member being unavailable at the time of the interviews in their local area and the other due to the geographical location of the interviewee.

Prior to the interviews being carried out at each location, available paperwork such as the YOT's meeting minutes, action plans and other relevant documents were read to gain background information to the interviews. Staff from the Youth Justice Policy team of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Unit, Ministry of Justice, notified the YOTs selected for the interviews that they may be contacted to be interviewed for the evaluation.

The Evaluation Advisory Group and the Child, Youth and Family (CYF) Research Access Committee commented on the interview guide for the key informant interviews, the key informant information sheet and key informant consent form (see subsequent appendices for copies of these).

In total, forty-five interviews were undertaken. Where interviewees agreed, interviews were taped and transcripts were prepared for analysis. Where requested, copies of transcripts were sent to interviewees.

1.5.1 Key informant interview analysis

A software package for the analysis of qualitative data, NVivo, was used to analyse the key informant interview transcripts.

1.6 Survey of All Current YOT Members

Using issues and opinions uncovered through the exploratory work and the key informant interviews, a survey questionnaire for all current YOT members was developed (see subsequent appendix for a copy). This document was also commented on by the Evaluation Advisory Group and the Child, Youth and Family (CYF) Research Access Committee.

An e-mail from the Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Policy team was sent to YOT chairs asking them to notify their team members about the forthcoming survey.

The survey was a self-completion survey set up on a WAPI system and hosted by Consumer Link. The link to the survey was e-mailed to YOT members along with introductory information. YOT members were informed that their participation in the survey was voluntary and the survey would take 10-15 minutes to complete.

E-mail addresses were obtained for all YOT members from the Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Policy team YOT distribution lists. Whilst the survey questionnaire was sent to all names on the distribution lists, the covering e-mail for the survey asked whether the recipient was a current member of a YOT and if not, they were thanked and told that they were not required to complete the survey.

Two reminders were sent to non-responding YOT members in order to increase the response rate.

1.6.1 Survey response rate

The Ministry of Justice sent a database containing the name and e-mail addresses of 601 YOT members to Consumer Link. Once the 44 duplicates were removed, there remained a total of 557 members who were sent the e-mail link. However, 88 of these responded that they were not current members, reducing the eligible sample to 469.

Completed responses were received from 199 YOT members. The reasons for non-response are listed in the table below.

Table A1.2   Response rate

	Number
Database sent from Ministry of Justice to Consumer Link	601
Duplicates removed	44
Survey invitations e-mailed out	557
Response that they are not a current member	88
Eligible respondents	**469**
Response:	
Completed	**199 (42%)**
Non-response:	
Did not attempt to do survey (did not click on survey link)	166
Timed out (clicked on link but did not complete survey)	51
Access problems (including no access at work)	29
On leave for duration of survey period	21
Replied that too new a YOT member to complete the survey	3
Total non-response	**270**

The response rate, taken as the proportion of eligible respondents (i.e. current YOT members on the database) is 42%.

As estimate has been made of the response rate by the four core agencies. This is an approximation only as there was a small level of variation between the agency listed on the database details and the agency that was identified by the respondent as being the agency they represented on the YOT. It can be assumed that this would also be the case for non-responding YOT members. Given this caution, the estimated response rates are as follows: Police 49%, Education 46%, Health 46%, CYF 40%.

Note that the overall response rate of 42% is also a reflection of the non-core agency representatives in the database, which tended to have a lower response rate. Numbers are too small to undertake response rate analysis of this group.

1.6.2 Survey analysis

Tables presenting the responses to the survey questions were produced by Consumer Link. They also provided the data in Excel which permitted further analysis.

Regression analysis was also carried out using the statistical package called SAS.

Two logistic regression models were developed in order to find the variables which were associated with overall effectiveness and overall successfulness of the respondent's YOT.

Answers for questions 17 and 22 were taken as response variables. For the purposes of the regression analysis, the original answers for these questions were grouped in the following manner:

Question 17: And overall, how effective do you believe your YOT is?	Question 22: Overall, how successful do you think your YOT is?
1 = 'very effective/quite effective',	1 = 'very successful/quite successful',
2 = 'not that effective/not at all effective'.	2 = 'not that successful/not at all successful'.

Individuals whose original answer for either question 17 or 22 was 'don't know' were excluded from the analysis of that question. As a result, an effectiveness model was developed using 187 out of 199 individuals who participated in the survey, and the successfulness model used 186 out of 199 individuals.

The developed logistic regression models measured the probability that responses for questions 17 and 22 were given as 'very effective/quite effective' and 'very successful/quite successful' respectively, based on the answers for other survey questions.

A wide range of variables, based on questions asked in the survey, was tested for inclusion into regression models. The significance of each variable at 5% level and adequacy of odds ratio estimates were used as the criteria to retain the variables in the models.

Responses for questions 16 and 18 that were selected for the inclusion into both models were grouped as shown below:

Question 16	Question 18
1 = 'very effective/quite effective',	1 = 'strongly agree/slightly agree',
2 = 'not that effective/not at all effective',	2 = 'slightly disagree/strongly disagree',
3 = 'do not do or does not apply/don't know'.	3 = 'neither agree nor disagree/don't know'.

The likelihood ratio test indicated the joint significance of the explanatory variables in each model. The Wald Chi-square statistics was used to check the significance of individual regression coefficients and the results showed that all parameters selected into the final models were significant ($p<0.05$). The max-rescaled R-square value for the effectiveness model was 0.87, and 0.72 for the successfulness model.

1.6.3   Information about survey respondents

Table A1.3   Number of respondents by agency or organisation represented on the YOT

Agency represented	N
Police	50
Child, Youth and Family	45
Education	37
Health	36
National or central government agencies other than the four core youth justice agencies	7
Local government agencies including councils	15
Māori/iwi representation	3
Māori service provider	2
Pacific community representation	0
Pacific service provider	0
Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	4
Total	199

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Table A1.4   Number of respondents by whether they are currently or previously have been a YOT chair

	N
Currently the chair of their YOT	24
Have previously been a YOT chair	20
Have never been a YOT chair	155
Total	199

Base: All respondents (n=199).

Table A1.5   Number of respondents by whether they represent management or practitioner level on their YOT

	N
Management level representation	67
Practitioner level representation	76
Both management and practitioner level representation	23
Not established	2
Total	168

Base: Respondents who represent one of the four core youth justice agencies (n=168).

1.7   Focus Group Discussion with Youth Justice Leadership Group

A focus group discussion was held with members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group (YJLG). The main purpose of the focus group was to gain an understanding of the YJLG's expectations of the YOTs, how effective they consider YOTs to be and what they consider the strengths and weaknesses of YOTs to be, what could be done to enhance YOTs' performance, and the relationship between YOTs and the YJLG.

A focus group discussion consent form, giving information about the focus group and how issues of informed consent would be dealt with, was sent to participants prior to the meeting (see subsequent appendix for a copy of this document).

The focus group consisted of five members of YJLG, with one senior official representative from Police, Child, Youth and Family, Ministry of Social Development, Health and Justice. The senior official from Education was not able to attend.

The focus group discussion was taped and a transcript was prepared to inform the evaluation findings.

1.8   Ethical Issues

Project documents were submitted to the Child Youth and Family (CYF) Research Access Committee to gain approval to interview and survey CYF staff and to give assurance that confidentiality would be maintained for both the YOTs and individuals in the information gathering and reporting stages of the evaluation.

Assurance and levels of confidentiality were stated on all evaluation information documentation. Consent forms (see subsequent appendices for copies) were used for the key informant interviews and focus group discussion.

Where key informants agreed, interviews were taped and transcripts were prepared for analysis. Where requested, copies of transcripts were sent to interviewees. Key informant interviewees were assured that neither they nor comments from their transcript would be able to be identified when results of the evaluation were reported.

Whilst focus group participants were also assured that neither they nor their comments would be able to be identified in the final report, assurances of confidentiality were more difficult, as it was a group discussion, and all participants knew each other and had on-going working relationships. Therefore it was only possible to ensure that participants had the same understanding of the level of confidentiality provided.

Inter-agency collaboration:
A review of the literature to inform the
evaluation of Youth Offending Teams

Commissioned by the Ministry of Justice

Helena Barwick

July 2007

Contents

SUMMARY

Youth Offending Teams were established under the Youth Offending Strategy, released in 2002, in response to the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending. The main role envisaged for the teams was to co-ordinate service delivery to young offenders at a local level.

After four years of operation, Youth Offending Teams are to be evaluated to inform their future direction and the support required. The Ministry of Justice has commissioned this literature review to contribute to that evaluation.

There is a large literature on joint working for social outcomes, but a lack of consistency or precision in the use of terms describing inter-sectoral or inter-agency engagement. A widely cited New Zealand report[26] identifies five types of service-level joint working with increasing degrees of engagement:

- co-ordination and co-operation (low level engagement)

- networks

- collaborations

- partnerships

- integrated service delivery (high level engagement).

Under this classification, Youth Offending Teams would be best described as a network or a collaboration.

In addition to a large body of international literature, several key pieces of work on inter-agency or inter-sectoral engagement have been undertaken in New Zealand since 2000 by the State Services Commission, the Office of the Controller and Auditor General, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Health and the High and Complex Needs Intersectoral Unit.

A large number of factors can support or impede effective inter-agency engagement. Predisposing factors, such as the history of inter-agency relationships and existing formal and informal networks are important, as is a clear mandate with shared goals which link to each agency's core business. A collaboration underpinned by strong government agency commitment and a framework of support while being responsive to the needs and solutions identified by the community has the best chance of success. The capacity of participating agencies to collaborate along with appropriate membership and effective leadership have been consistently identified as factors supporting success. Planning which leads to activities and initiatives clearly linked to agreed outcomes, and systems, structures, and processes that support the work being done are important. Finally, negotiated relationships where roles and communication are clear will allow tensions and power imbalances to be aired and addressed.

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[26] Gray (2002) Integrated service delivery and regional co-ordination: a literature review. http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/strategic-social-policy/integrated-service-delivery-regional-coordination-literature-review.pdf

Collaborations take time to develop. Recognising the developmental phases through which a collaboration moves, and considering the requirements that will enable an initiative to move through each developmental phase, can advance our understanding of the support needed for inter-agency collaboration to be successful.

Youth Offending Teams were conceptualised as a collaboration between four government agencies with local youth justice stakeholders involved as appropriate. This literature suggests that successful collaboration between government and NGOs relies firstly on the importance placed on the collaboration within each government agency; secondly, on the relationship between the government agencies; and thirdly on government agencies building a purposeful and realistic relationship with NGOs.

1.   INTRODUCTION

In 2002 the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending identified inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration at a local level as an area that needed attention, and recommended the establishment of local Youth Offending Teams throughout New Zealand, with representatives from Child, Youth and Family, Police, Education and Health.

After four years of operation, Youth Offending Teams are to be evaluated to inform their future direction and the support required. The Ministry of Justice has commissioned this literature review to contribute to that evaluation.

1.1   The material

The Ministry of Justice had collected a selection of relevant New Zealand references in addition to which the Ministry's Knowledge and Information Services conducted a search of a range of databases[27] using terms commonly found in the literature on inter-agency engagement[28]. Collaboration and inter-agency were the most successful of the terms used. These searches were supplemented by web searching which yielded a number of other papers not catalogued in the databases.

New Zealand material was prioritised for retrieval as were literature reviews and overview papers.

1.2   Approach

A great deal has been written about inter-agency engagement. The purpose of this review was not to give a comprehensive coverage of the literature but to provide background and context for the evaluation of Youth Offending Teams. Within the constraints of this short paper, I have been selective and chosen those references that appear to offer most to the evaluation in that they relate to the New Zealand context and most closely to the type of inter-agency collaboration envisaged for Youth Offending Teams.

1.3   Structure

Following this introduction, section 2 discusses some of the concepts and terms used in the literature. Key New Zealand papers are discussed in section 3 and a selection of international material in section 4. Section 5 looks at factors associated with successful inter-agency engagement, before the relevance of the literature to the evaluation of Youth Offending Teams is discussed in section 6.

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[27] Proquest, National Bibliographic Database, Index New Zealand, PubMed, Ebsco, Australian Libraries, Google, Ingenta, Infotrieve, Ministry of Justice Catalogue.

[28] Multi-agency, government, collaboration, interagency, inter-agency, youth, crime, coalition, alliance, cross-sector, public, partnership, intersectoral, coalition, alliance, joint, joined-up, co-operation, cooperation, council, justice, inter-agency, interagency.

2.   FROM CO-OPERATION TO PARTNERSHIP – CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Alison Gray's 2002 synthesis of local and international literature has been widely cited in other New Zealand work. Gray distinguishes three levels of inter-sectoral engagement – whole of government joint working, inter-sectoral action, and service-related concepts. As do virtually all other writers, Gray notes a lack of consistency or precision in the use of terms describing inter-sectoral or inter-agency engagement. She distinguished five types of service-level inter-agency engagement:

- Co-ordination and co-operation – not identical but similar in being non-formal relationships. Co-ordination involves a compatible mission and joint planning, whereas co-operation may not have either, but may simply be an understanding that information will be shared as needed.

- Networks – often informal arrangements with a loose structure and little authority, commitment of resources or accountability. Usually addressing high level matters such as strategic policy or planning.

- Collaborations – voluntary engagement for planning or policy development frequently designed to improve services.

- Partnerships – formal arrangements to carry out a particular task, usually involving shared authority, responsibility, investment and accountability.

- Integrated service delivery – a mechanism for delivering services which can involve either or both of vertical and horizontal integration and may include any of central government, local government, NGOs, community and voluntary groups[29].

Using Gray's typology, Youth Offending Teams could best be categorised as a network or collaboration.

As an example of the challenge of semantics in the literature on inter-agency engagement, Horwarth and Morrison (2007) identify five different levels of inter-agency engagement – communication, co-operation, co-ordination, coalition and integration – which arguably match Gray's five levels of engagement fairly well, but are given different labels. Recognising this, Horwarth and Morrison suggest that different levels of inter-agency engagement can best be distinguished on a range of dimensions and developed a diagram (reproduced below, slightly adapted) to indicate that inter-agency engagements are all at different places on a range of continua.

Each inter-agency engagement is different in that it will be at a slightly different place on the continuum of each of the dimensions in the table below. In reading this review, it is important to recognise that a level of generalisation has been adopted which may at times mask the wide range of collaborative endeavours covered by the literature.

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[29]   Gray (2002) Integrated service delivery and regional co-ordination: a literature review.
http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/strategic-social-policy/integrated-service-delivery-regional-coordination-literature-review.pdf

Communication → Co-operation → Co-ordination → Coalition → Integration		
Low level collaboration	**Dimension**	**High level collaboration**
Limited or no formal agreement	Formality	Formal agreements/contracts
Agencies remain autonomous	Autonomy	Agencies sacrifice autonomy
Agencies have different targets and goals	Goals	Shared goals and targets
Agencies each maintain control of resources and funding	Resources	Joint responsibility for resources and funding
Staff managed by individual agencies	Staffing	Staff managed by partnership
Focus on individual case	Focus	Focus on whole service
Decision making stays with agency	Decision	Joint decision-making
Collaboration voluntary	Mandate	Clear mandate for collaboration at regional or government level
Variable practice dependent on individuals	Strategic direction	Focus of activity in strategic plans
Affiliation to own agency or discipline	Affiliation	Affiliation to partnership
Accountability to own agency	Accountability	Accountable to partnership
Agency focused → → → → → → → → → → → → *Collaboration focused*		

Adapted from Horwath and Morrison (2007).

The characteristics of Youth Offending Teams, as they currently operate, would seem to position them closer to communication and co-operation in this schema than to coalition or integration. However, it is probable that they were intended to operate, and indeed have the potential to operate, at a level closer to co-operation and co-ordination. Horwarth and Morrison note that the literature indicates potential gains are likely to be greater from the higher levels of engagement (Horwath and Robinson 2007)[30].

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[30] Horwath and Morrison. Collaboration, integration and change in children's services: Critical issues and key ingredients. *Child Abuse and Neglect* (31) 2007 55-69.
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V7N-4MS9JYW-1&_user=10&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2007&_rdoc=7&_fmt=full&_orig=browse&_srch=doc-info(%23toc%235847%232007%23999689998%23642742%23FLA%23display%23Volume)&_cdi=5847&_sort=d&_docanchor=&_ct=11&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=ae2b4ea4750a44de6e44e2c2f858a9ee

3. NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This section of the report identifies key pieces of work on inter-sectoral engagement completed in New Zealand since 2000.

3.1 The Review of the Centre

The Review of the Centre of New Zealand's public sector was conducted in 2001. Undertaken by the State Services Commission, the Review was looking for improvements that could be made to the public sector to improve the quality of service and increase responsiveness to the public. One of the areas of investigation under the Review was how to strengthen management and co-ordination processes to ensure a whole of government focus is adopted and maintained by all agencies[31]. This focus became known as the Regional Co-ordination Workstream.

Two pieces of work relevant to this paper emerged from the Regional Co-ordination Workstream:

- a literature review: Integrated service delivery and regional co-ordination by Alison Gray (already mentioned above)
- the Final Workstream Report.

3.1.1 The literature review

Gray's 2002 literature review explores the reasons for service-level inter-agency engagement and the outcomes that integration and co-ordination seek to achieve. While the overarching motivation is to improve the way society addresses its problems, she says that government agencies can sometimes have a second agenda of cost savings, leading at times to confusion about measures of success.

Gray finds little evidence that inter-agency engagement at any level in itself improves outcomes for individuals or families. However, this is in part because inter-agency collaborations are difficult to evaluate, outcome measures are not always clear, and such evaluation activity as is undertaken usually happens long before desired changes could reasonably be expected.

Benefits tend to accrue to participating agencies in the form of improved processes, better relationships and a clearer sense of direction.

Gray's review of the literature led her to conclude that, regardless of the reason inter-agency engagement has been attempted, to be successful:

- partners must agree on the necessity for and make a commitment to joint action including:

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[31] Report on the Advisory Group of the Review of the Centre.
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?navid=177&docid=2776&pageno=3#P119_16430

- o having a shared definition of problems and a shared understanding of successful outcomes

- o seeing the engagement as part of their core business

- o putting time into building formal and informal structures

- o benefiting from it

- o seeing the initiative as consistent with their values, concerns and priorities

- support from the wider community is required, including political support and an appropriate legislative environment

- there is capacity to carry through the initiative, including:

  - o strong leadership at a senior level in partner organisations

  - o partners with time and resources

  - o power to make decisions at a local rather than national level

  - o the involvement of existing community organisations

  - o representation from the target population

  - o buy-in from the local Māori community

  - o assured funding that supports infrastructure being built and gives projects time to work

- relationships, focused on joint action, are negotiated, built and reviewed

- agreed actions are planned and implemented and outcomes are monitored.

In addition to these, every successful local intervention has to be based within the context of unique local circumstances as it can be enhanced by existing networks or constrained by history and relationships (Gray 2002)[32].

3.1.2 Final Workstream Report

The main contribution of the Final Workstream Report to this review is its emphasis on two distinct facets of inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration. The first facet is collaboration between government agencies, and the second, working with other stakeholders.

To support collaboration, government organisations must work with one another to:

- foster a collaborative culture within organisations by rewarding collaboration in performance and accountability measures

- provide leadership and positive role modelling of collaborative behaviour at all levels

- develop appropriate organisational structures to address the inconsistency of service boundaries and the fragmentation of government agencies and funding pools

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[32] Gray (2002) Integrated service delivery and regional co-ordination: a literature review. http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/strategic-social-policy/integrated-service-delivery-regional-coordination-literature-review.pdf

- increase the flexibility of government organisations at a local level to act on opportunities to collaborate and work across boundaries

- enable flexible systems and processes which allow sufficient time and resources to support collaborative initiatives

- support responsive policy development by ensuring policy is informed by regional perspectives and that departments set frameworks and guidelines that empower managers to create local solutions.

A separate and distinct role is for government organisations to work effectively with local stakeholders such as iwi/Māori, local government, community and voluntary sectors. To do this effectively, government agencies need to:

- build sustainable relationships by developing open information sharing, joint consultation processes and clear accountabilities

- strengthen partnership relationships between government and Māori

- effectively consult and involve stakeholder groups to build understanding and facilitate dialogue

- improve the responsiveness of government agencies to Māori and Pacific groups by recognising diversity, improving cultural awareness, providing more flexible services and building capacity

- develop the capacity of communities and community providers by ensuring sustainable funding to support collaboration and developing joint training to share knowledge and capacity across sectors (MSD 2003)33.

3.2   Office of the Controller and Auditor-General

The Office of the Controller and Auditor-General (OAG) has produced two reports on inter-agency collaboration.

A 2003 report examined the way the Ministry of Justice, Police, Department for Courts and Department of Corrections worked together to achieve the Government's goals for the criminal justice sector. The investigation focused in particular on:

- how the Ministry of Justice discharged its responsibility to co-ordinate policy advice and strategic activities across the sector

- how the four agencies managed their relationships

- how the agencies consulted on plans, programmes and shared outcomes.

While the report found a strong commitment to information sharing and collaboration, often supported by formal protocols or understandings, mechanisms in place to co-ordinate planning in some areas of core business were not well used. Furthermore, while shared outcomes had been agreed, the four agencies did not report to government on their collective

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[33]   Ministry of Social Development (2003) Integrated service delivery and regional co-ordination: Final workstream report. http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable_files/integrated-service-delivery-final-workstream-report.pdf

performance in relation to these outcomes. The four agencies did not routinely consult on their draft work programmes, nor look for opportunities to avoid duplication and complement other initiatives. The investigation found the four agencies had responded quite differently to Māori, each establishing its own structures and arrangements in isolation from the others (OAG 2003a)[34].

Following the report on the criminal justice sector, the OAG produced a second report, Key success factors for public sector collaboration, in which it identified principles that it considered would strengthen agencies' work together to achieve the Government's outcomes. The principles are expressed at a number of levels.

At a strategic level, principles relevant to this report are:

- a single agency should be assigned responsibility and given a mandate to lead debate and convene forums for consultation and collaboration

- agency heads should establish a forum and meet regularly to ensure continuing co-ordination of sector initiatives and oversee programmes and projects

- formal working groups for ongoing inter-agency consultation should be established in areas such as policy development, service delivery, planning and reporting, research and evaluation and responsiveness to Māori

- agencies should work to common outcome statements and use them as an agreed framework for their own goals and objectives

- agencies should be accountable for supporting agreed sector outcomes

- arrangements should be in place for collecting information that will measure and report on agencies' collective performance in relation to agreed outcomes.

At a policy level the OAG recommended:

- consideration be given to protocols to govern the way agencies will work together in policy development – such protocols should cover the respective roles of the agencies, outline an agreed policy development process and specify when consultation will occur

- adequate time should be allowed for effective consultation.

At a planning level:

- agencies should have formal processes in place to allow them to plan as a sector

- agencies should consult on their draft policy work programme.

At a project level:

- clear governance arrangements should be established setting out the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved

- a project oversight group should oversee progress and ensure agency project plans are co-ordinated

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[34] Office of the Controller and Auditor-General (2003) Co-ordination and collaboration in the criminal justice sector. http://www.oag.govt.nz/2003/justice/docs/justice-sector.pdf.

- consideration should be given to working groups of senior managers and the contribution to consultation and collaboration should form part of their performance measures

- a project plan should be developed which includes an information technology plan addressing shared information needs.

At a working relationship level:

- agencies should establish agreements or understandings about how they will work together

- where possible, collaboration should build on existing relationships and activities to avoid duplication.

Principles underpinning the management of information include:

- all agencies should have an up to date information strategy that establishes the basis on which information is used and shared

- sector agencies should draw up sector-wide data sharing arrangements

- one agency should take responsibility for monitoring information technology developments relevant to the sector including critical interfaces (OAG 2003b)35.

3.3   Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families is a programme led by the ministries of Health, Education, Social Development and Justice which attempts to create a collaborative network of agencies from both the government and the community and voluntary sector to work with at-risk children, young people and families experiencing multiple problems. Strengthening Families was developed out of concern over the fragmentation of services between the welfare, health and education sectors and the lack of effective inter-agency collaboration. First piloted in 1996, by 1999 the model was in place throughout the country, although without the support of additional resourcing.

Local management groups (LMGs) comprising service delivery and purchasing managers from a range of government agencies underpin Strengthening Families. LMGs also often include representatives from local government, iwi, safer community councils and not-for-profit social sector organisations. In 2005 there were 70 LMGs across New Zealand and 56 local co-ordinators most of whom were employed by government agencies or community organisations.

At the service delivery level Strengthening Families employs a model of collaborative case management and at a more strategic level it is designed to identify gaps and overlaps in services and initiate joint policies and programmes.

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[35]   Office of the Controller and Auditor-General (2003b) Key success factors for effective co-ordination and collaboration between public sector agencies. http://www.oag.govt.nz/2003/key-success-factors/docs/key-success-factors.pdf

Walker has studied Strengthening Families in some depth and notes progress from its inception when differences in structures and accountability requirements between the three main government agencies made it challenging for agencies to work towards common goals; and constant restructuring left roles and responsibilities often unclear and accountability hard to track. Different geographic boundaries made alignment of funding and services difficult. In 2005, Walker reports, where agencies had been able to maintain a focus on a common goal they had been motivated to work through these differences (Walker 2006)[36].

A 2001 exploratory study of families' experiences under Strengthening Families showed that families strongly supported the collaborative concept in principle and reported that the case-management model worked well to identify their needs and provided them with more hope that an effective solution would be found. However, families were unclear about the boundaries and terms of reference of the Strengthening Families process and often felt there was a lack of follow through by participant agencies on agreements made (Oliver and Graham)[37].

3.4   Ministry of Social Policy

In 2000, the Ministry of Social Policy commissioned a review of the literature on models of community-government partnerships and their effectiveness in achieving welfare goals. This review identified three types of community government partnerships:

- multi-agency partnerships based on internationally promoted themes (safer cities, safer communities, healthy cities etc.)

- multi-agency partnerships targeted at geographic locations

- small scale partnerships generated at a local level (Ehrhardt, 2000)38.

This review suggested that a developmental perspective of collaboration is useful in identifying the key tasks at different stages of inter-agency engagement. This is discussed further in section 5.8.

3.5   Ministry of Health

A substantial literature review, commissioned by the Ministry of Health in 2005, examined the ingredients for success in inter-sectoral initiatives designed to improve the health of local communities. The authors used an almost identical typology to that used by Ehrhardt above in defining different types of inter-sectoral and inter-agency involvement. In this report, which updated an earlier piece of work, the authors settled on a three category typology which included:

- overarching area-based or setting-based initiatives such as Health Action Zones, Healthy Cities and Health Promoting Schools

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[36]   Walker A. Child protection and inter-agency collaboration. *Policy Quarterly*, Volume 2(4) 2006.
[37]   Oliver P and Graham C (2001) Report on an exploratory study of the experiences of Strengthening Families clients in six selected regions. MSD Evaluation Unit.
        http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/csre/report-on-an-exploratory-study.pdf
[38]   Ehrhardt P, (2000) Models of community-government partnerships and their effectiveness in achieving welfare goals: a review of the literature. Ministry of Social Policy. Wellington.

- issues-based initiatives, for example community alcohol action programmes, ACC Thinksafe community projects and community injury prevention projects, and,

- case-management services and one-stop shops such as Strengthening Families, Early Start and Social Workers in Schools[39].

Under these definitions, Youth Offending Teams are best described as issues-based local initiatives.

The review found evidence that six overarching requirements must be in place if local inter-sectoral collaboration is to be successful.

Clear agreement on the necessity for inter-sectoral action

This includes getting agreement that the risks involved are worth taking, that working together is likely to be more effective than working alone, and that the goals of participating agencies are likely to be advanced by working together.

It cannot be assumed that people understand what inter-sectoral collaboration will look like, and it is likely that some initial discussion and negotiation will be required to identify common values and align purposes.

Ideally, organisations and individuals involved in inter-sectoral collaboration will have a degree of compatibility in attitude and outlook. A prior record of working together is a big advantage.

Support from the wider community

Optimally, the wider social, economic and political environment should be conducive to locally based inter-sectoral action rather than presenting obstacles to it.

The evidence suggests that a combination of 'top down' political and central government support, and 'bottom-up' local level planning and management is the best recipe for successful community-based inter-sectoral action.

Capacity exists to carry plans through

Successful inter-sectoral action is heavily dependent on the capacity of participants and their host organisations to devote meaningful resources to the process. Capacity is required in several areas:

- leadership capacity must be present, although not necessarily vested in one individual or agency

- realistic funding is required for collaborative projects which are more complex and challenging than working alone

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[39] Maskill C and Hodges I (2005) New Zealand intersectoral initiatives for improving the health of local communities, 2005: An updated literature review examining the ingredients for success. Ministry of Health. http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/Publications-New+Zealand+Intersectoral+Initiatives+for+Improving+the+Health+of+Local+Communities+2005

- sufficient time must be available for joint action to develop

- within organisations, the more levels of management that are involved in the collaboration and supportive, the more likely it is that it will succeed.

In addition, the capacity of the community to participate can be highly variable. While involving community and volunteer groups and other 'grassroots' members of the community is a desirable and in many cases vital goal, achieving it can be difficult – frequently because of lack of capacity within those organisations.

Relationships enabling action are defined and developed

Once an initiative is underway, clarity and definition about the nature of the ongoing relationships between participants must be negotiated. This means working out the structures and processes participants will use to interact with one another in a 'joined up' way, and what skills and resources each can contribute to the initiative.

Relationships should be defined in terms of their degree of formality, intensity, duration and autonomy; and clarification achieved about the degree of inter-sectoral action ranging from information sharing, through co-ordination and collaboration to formal partnerships. Negotiation of these things is particularly important if participants come from organisations that work to different planning, budgeting and accountability requirements.

Co-ordinating structures and decision making processes should be kept as simple as possible.

Agreed actions are planned and implemented

It is important for initiatives to keep a strong action orientation and focus on concrete and specific, visible and achievable deliverables. Negotiating relationships and creating plans is important, but moving on from these to action is what will achieve the groups' goals. In order to do this, there must a clear link for participants between the actions that have been chosen and the outcomes they are working for.

The process is likely to include a formal action plan which clearly states the rationale which links the outcomes sought to the actions chosen.

Outcomes are monitored and evaluated

Monitoring and reporting processes are important, but the requirements should be focused on information that is really necessary and be no more than they need to be.

There is no single best method for evaluating inter-sectoral approaches. The evaluation strategy chosen should be acceptable to all those participating in the initiative; and the scale and nature of the evaluation should match the initiative rather than overwhelm it. Evaluation can include formative or process evaluations, or those measuring intermediate outcomes such as changes in knowledge, attitude, behaviour, structures and processes. Evaluations

examining final outcomes such as changes in health outcomes are uncommon in New Zealand, possibly because of the cost involved[40].

3.6   High and Complex Needs Intersectoral Unit

In 2006, the High and Complex Needs Intersectoral Unit commissioned a paper, *Success factors, barriers and practical strategies for enhancing intersectoral collaboration*, as the first part of a larger project to develop good practice guidelines for collaboration. The report endeavours to clarify some of the terms used to describe inter-sectoral collaborations and describes some social sector collaborations in New Zealand before concentrating on the characteristics which support and those which impede effective inter-sectoral initiatives. Finally, this report discusses methodologies and techniques for evaluating collaborations and offers practical strategies for enhancing collaborations.

In this review of the literature, Atkinson identified a range of factors supporting inter-sectoral collaboration designed to meet high and complex needs. Her findings were very much in line with those of Maskill and Hodges reported above, and she also found that inter-sectoral collaboration is supported if it is consistent with evidence-based good practice and is recognised in the performance management systems of participating agencies. In addition, personal and organisational commitment provides powerful support for inter-sectoral initiatives.

Atkinson noted the impact of 'collaboration fatigue' which emerges when the returns are not sufficient to offset the investment of time and resources required, and agencies' capacity to sustain collaborative activity diminishes[41].

3.7   Government agencies working with NGOs

Maynard and Wood's 2002 paper described the development process that led to 'Te Rito', the Government's strategy for preventing, reducing and addressing family violence. Their paper outlines the challenges met as government and non-government representatives collaborated in the development process and it discusses how the challenges were overcome.

Resource, time and practical constraints

While government agencies are usually better resourced than NGOs, government agencies' work programmes are heavy, timeframes are often unrealistic and officials are usually responsible for managing multiple projects at one time. These factors can significantly affect the resources invested for ensuring a good process and may influence the nature and extent of community input.

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[40]   Maskill C and Hodges I (2005) New Zealand intersectoral initiatives for improving the health of local communities, 2005: An updated literature review examining the ingredients for success. Ministry of Health. http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/Publications-New+Zealand+Intersectoral+Initiatives+for+Improving+the+Health+of+Local+Communities+2005

[41]   Atkinson M (2006) Success factors, barriers and practical strategies for enhancing intersectoral collaboration. A literature review for the High and Complex Needs Intersectoral Unit.

Political dynamics

Political sensitivities and requirements around consultation and decision making can limit officials' abilities to fully communicate or circulate particular papers to NGOs. In addition, the policy process can be lengthy, and even when decisions have been made, it can take some time to work through operational details required for implementation. All of these can cause considerable frustration for NGOs and communities whose needs require immediate action.

Overcoming a history of distrust

Relationships between government and communities can be strained at times and the need for clear objectives and transparent processes when working together is paramount. Conflicts of interest must be identified and discussed, and a shared understanding developed about the extent to which NGOs can participate in decision-making.

Reconciling diverse perspectives

Where diverse perspectives exist, consensus on a common vision, high level goals and principles can facilitate agreement on more detailed goals and strategies.

Maynard and Wood discuss some of the factors that affect NGOs' and other community groups' participation in collaborations with government. In summary, these are:

- an intense loyalty to the sector of society whose interests they promote, and difficulty broadening their focus to take an overview of needs and approaches

- finding government consultation processes and timeframes not always conducive to them giving their views

- believing they are often consulted on details when major decisions have already been made

- having little understanding of the process of analysis that underpins policy development

- an awareness of the cost to their organisation of participation in collaborations with government (Maynard and Wood, 2002)[42].

3.8   An evaluation of the Hamilton Youth Offending Team

At the conclusion of her thesis describing action research with the Hamilton Youth Offending Team, Atkinson identified the factors that led to the success of this initiative. In her view, two things were critical to the success of the Hamilton Team – the role she herself played in co-ordinating and overseeing the development of the team, and the strong buy-in and commitment from the agencies involved.

Having someone to direct and manage the process, to provide both a strategic overview and technical assistance, was found by all members to be of enormous value in helping the Team achieve what it did. Atkinson questions the viability of the expectation – on which Youth

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[42]   Maynard K and Wood B, Tātou Tātou – working together: a model for government/non-government collaboration. Social Policy Journal of New Zealand. 18 June 2002.

Offending Teams were created – that group members would carry out the tasks required on top of their other workloads.

The second key success factor which comes through Atkinson's research is the development of team-oriented relationships with the Hamilton Youth Offending Team. In her view this was the result of the 'bottom-up' approach of the Hamilton Team, in which participants were involved right from the beginning, establishing the direction and the agenda for action.

Atkinson makes a number of recommendations regarding how government can contribute to effective collaboration in the youth justice sector. They are:

- resources, particularly technical assistance, need to be provided

- the readiness of key stakeholders to collaborate should be assessed

- partnerships take time to develop and can be undermined by insecure or short-term funding

- the limited capacity of many community partners to collaborate must be recognised and their contributions supported

- systemic barriers to collaboration exist and must be addressed

- government agencies are increasingly being required to collaborate, their capacity to do so is limited and support for collaboration should be built more effectively into departmental structures (Atkinson 2006)[43].

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[43] Atkinson M (2006) *Interagency collaboration in youth justice: creating change through action research*. PhD Thesis. University of Waikato.

4.   INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

There is an extensive international literature on inter-agency collaboration. This section of the report briefly discusses the most useful of the international papers retrieved for this review.

From a background in child protection work in the UK, and an extensive review of the literature, Horwath and Morrison distilled the most important ingredients affecting successful collaboration as:

- Predisposing factors – the history of inter-agency relationships, existing formal and informal networks, and the 'health' of each agency

- Mandate – political support, a shared need and shared goals which link to each agency's core business, collaboration embedded in agencies' strategic plans, and the capacity to collaborate

- Membership and leadership – appropriate membership, acknowledgement of different priorities given to the collaboration by members, an appropriate level of representation, service user involvement

- Shared goals – having committed to joint working the partners must agree on shared goals

- Strategic planning – essential to translate shared goals into achievable outcomes

- Accountability – the need to define the collective responsibility for which members will be held accountable

- Systems, structures, processes and practical issues

- Effective communication (Horwarth and Morrison 2007)[44].

On the other side of the Atlantic, Foster-Fishman and her colleagues synthesised over 80 references to develop their four 'critical levels of collaborative capacity' upon which successful inter-agency engagement rests.

The first is member capacity which is made up of:

- core knowledge and skills in working collaboratively

- core attitudes and motivations to collaboration itself and to the target issues

- organisational backing for participation.

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[44]   Horwath and Morrison. Collaboration, integration and change in children's services: Critical issues and key ingredients. *Child Abuse and Neglect* (31) 2007 55-69.
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V7N-4MS9JYW-1&_user=10&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2007&_rdoc=7&_fmt=full&_orig=browse&_srch=doc-info(%23toc%235847%232007%23999689998%23642742%23FLA%23display%23Volume)&_cdi=5847&_sort=d&_docanchor=&_ct=11&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=ae2b4ea4750a44de6e44e2c2f858a9ee

The next is relational capacity, which encompasses:

- development of a positive working climate
- development of a shared vision
- participatory decision making and shared power
- acknowledgement of diversity
- positive external relationships.

The third level of critical capacity is organisational capacity. This includes:

- effective leadership
- formalised procedures
- effective communication systems
- sufficient resources.

The final level the authors call programmatic capacity which requires:

- focused objectives
- realistic goals
- activities related to goals
- activities which are 'culturally competent in design' (Foster-Fishman et al 2001a)[45].

In Australia, Gardiner systematically analysed research into models of co-ordination and integration of service delivery in preventing domestic violence to come up with her hierarchy of factors that contribute to successful collaborations. By recording the number of times a factor was mentioned in the studies which met her criteria, Gardiner determined that in priority order, the factors which most contribute to successful inter-agency engagement are:

- mutual respect, understanding and trust, shared norms and values
- membership comprising an appropriate cross-section of service providers and consumers
- open and frequent communication and sharing of information
- sufficient ongoing financial support
- a skilled convenor or co-ordinator with organisational and interpersonal skills
- members share a sense of ownership and have a stake in process and outcomes
- multiple levels of decision making (Gardiner, 2000)[46].

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[45] Foster-Fishman PG, Berkowitz SL, Lounsbury SJ and Allen NA, Building collaborative capacity in community coalitions: A review and integrative framework. American Journal of Community Psychology 29(2) 2001.

[46] Gardiner J. (2001) Literature review on models of co-ordination and integration of service delivery. Domestic Violence Council of Western Australia.

4.1   Public Administration Review

The Public Administration Review of December 2006 was a special issue with the theme of collaborative public management.

Three papers from this issue are particularly relevant to this evaluation in that they discuss the sorts of issues that must be considered by public sector stakeholders at the centre of a wider collaboration with the community.

Agranoff, a Professor of Public Affairs, responded to the current enthusiasm for public management networks with a paper outlining lessons for public managers. Among Agranoff's lessons are these:

- Remember that the network is not the only vehicle of collaborative management – they share a place alongside many other forms of inter-agency agreements, contracts, grants and information sharing mechanisms.

- Managers continue to do the bulk of their work within the hierarchy of their organisations, and relationships across agencies will overlay the hierarchy rather than replace it.

- Recognise where networks differ from organisations, and what they have in common. Networks are different in that participants are usually of equal status, most actions are decided by consensus and there are usually few sanctions for withdrawal, but they are similar in that they require some form of organisation, operating rules, routines etc.

- Collaborative agreements require a different process. Networks tend to reach agreements rather than make decisions. Frequently the agreements reached need to be carried back into member agencies to be turned into the decisions from which action will eventuate.

- The most distinctive feature of public sector networks is knowledge management. Knowledge management brings together both 'explicit knowledge', that which is generally known and readily communicated, and 'tacit knowledge', to be found embedded in individual perceptions and experiences.

- Networks have costs as well as benefits. Cost of various kinds result from collaboration and must be acknowledged.

- Networks alter the boundaries of the state in only the most marginal ways and do not appear to be replacing public bureaucracies (Agranoff, 2006)[47].

Bryson and others, writing of cross-sectoral collaboration in the same issue, describe a model of collaboration formation with six stages, each of which must be managed appropriately. The six stages are:

- Forging initial agreements. While informal agreements about the purpose and composition of a collaboration can work, formal agreements have the advantage of supporting accountability. Negotiating a formal agreement is likely to reveal differences that might otherwise impede progress.

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[47]   Agranoff R. Inside collaborative networks: Ten lessons for public sector managers. *Public Administration Review.* Dec 2006 Special issue.

- Building leadership. There are many leadership roles in collaborations. Two key roles are sponsors and champions. Sponsors are individuals with authority, prestige and access to resources they can use on behalf of the collaboration even if they are not involved in the everyday work. Champions are people who focus on keeping the work of the collaboration moving.

- Building legitimacy. Collaborations and networks need to establish legitimacy with both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders need to feel that the collaboration has the ability to make a difference if they are to commit their energy to it; and external stakeholders need to be able to recognise it as a legitimate entity with which they can interact.

- Building trust. Collaborations build trust by sharing information and knowledge, demonstrating good intentions, competency, and follow-through. Trust building must be ongoing throughout the life of a collaboration as membership changes.

- Managing conflict. Conflict emerges from partners' different aims, expectations, and views about strategies; and from real or perceived attempts to increase control over the collaboration's work or outcomes. Power imbalances must be recognised and addressed.

- Planning. Collaborations succeed or fail on the quality of their planning. Ideally, plans must both be formal enough to assure activities will be put in place to reach outcomes, and yet responsive enough to embrace new opportunities that emerge as the collaboration matures.

Relevant to this evaluation is that Bryson and colleagues also concluded from their reading of the literature that service-delivery partnerships are easier to sustain than those aimed at a system level which are more likely to encounter tough questions around the problem and effective solutions (Bryson et al, 2006)[48].

Maguire takes issue with the prevailing thought that collaborations must have a shared power structure with a flat self-organising network whereas organisations commonly have a hierarchical one. He suggests that the presence of a lead organisation, acting as system controller or facilitator can be a critical element in a successful collaboration by reducing the complexity of self-governance and enhancing the legitimacy of a network. He argues that centralisation can facilitate both integration and co-ordination which decentralised networks have a difficult time accomplishing because of the large number of organisations and linkages involved (Maguire, 2006)[49].

4.2   Community collaborations

Allen's research into community co-ordinating councils has been selected for this review as the 'co-ordinating councils' in her study were established to promote a co-ordinated community response to the complex social issue of domestic violence and therefore have a

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[48]   Bryson JM, Crosby BC and Middleton Stone M. The design and implementation of cross sector collaborations: propositions from the literature. *Public Administration Review* Dec 2006. Special issue.
[49]   Maguire M. Collaborative public management: assessing what we know and how we know it. *Public Administration Review* Dec 2006. Special issue.

purpose not dissimilar to Youth Offending Teams, formed to provide a co-ordinated community response to youth offending.

The 43 councils in Allen's research 'provide a potential venue through which stakeholders from a broad cross-section of the community can interact, inform each others' policies and practices and engage in collective efforts to promote community-wide change.'

Allen's research used statistical modeling to distil the factors that were associated with members' perceptions of the effectiveness of the councils. Her study found that an inclusive climate was central to councils effectively accomplishing their goals. In particular, successful councils had effective leadership that was organised and skilled at encouraging the voices and input of all stakeholders, a shared mission and shared power in decision making. The second characteristic that marked out successful councils was the degree to which they secured the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders. Breadth of active membership was a consistent predictor of all indicators of councils' effectiveness. It was the active membership, rather than the nominal membership which made the difference (Allen, 2005)[50].

4.3   Inter-agency co-operation in crime prevention

While not so recent, the UK's Police Research Unit's work on crime prevention and inter-agency co-operation is one of only a few references that focus specifically on the contribution of inter-agency co-operation to reducing crime.

This report starts by saying:

> *While interagency relations in the crime prevention field can be both positive and productive, our research suggests that they are also highly complicated, seldom static and influenced by a variety of institutional, individual and local/historical factors. Interagency relations can also take a variety of forms which cannot readily be described in terms of either co-operation or partnership, and even relations which can be regarded as 'co-operative' can themselves vary considerably.* (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994)

The report canvasses the question of the composition of such groups before concluding that the membership of multi-agency groups should be broad enough to facilitate the work, but not so broad that discussion and decision making are unnecessarily slowed, and individuals lose interest feeling they are unable to make a contribution. The report identified six types of participant in inter-agency crime prevention initiatives:

- prime movers – take on a large share of the workload and pursue resources for the collaborative effort

- supportive passengers – offer vocal support but little in the way of material or staff support

- sleeping partners – attend meetings but offer little vocal support or real assistance

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[50]   Allen N. A multi-level analysis of community co-ordinating councils. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol 35 (1/2) March 2005.

- obstructors – made their opposition to the initiative clear

- agency 'spies' – participate in order to monitor the activities of other agencies

- proselytisers – participate in order to promote their own group or agency.

The report found that supportive passengers and sleeping partners made up by far the largest proportions of the groups in their study.

With particular reference to the Police, the report notes that internal factors within member agencies can have a significant effect on the functioning of inter-agency relations, and that tension can be created when members are unable to 'bring their agencies with them' into the work (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994)[51].

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[51] Liddle MA and Gelsthorpe LR (1994) Crime prevention and inter-agency cooperation. Police Research Unit Crime Prevention Unit Series. Paper 53.

5. FACTORS SUPPORTING INTER-AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

This section synthesises the research reported in sections 3 and 4 to identify the key factors supporting inter-agency engagement. In broadly chronological order these are: a clear mandate and shared goals; predisposing factors which support collaboration; leadership from the top down and the bottom up; participants who have the capacity to engage; relationships and processes which are negotiated; actions agreed, planned and implemented; and outcomes are monitored and evaluated.

5.1 A clear mandate and shared goals

Clear agreement on the need for inter-agency engagement and a shared understanding of what successful outcomes will look like are essential. Participating agencies need to be able to see how they will achieve more in their work together than they can accomplish separately, and how the goals of each agency will be advanced through the collaboration.

The shared need and shared goals which link to each agency's core business must be articulated and promoted within each participating agency as well as in the collaboration itself. Without this, it is difficult for inter-agency engagement to have legitimacy as core business and to be given the status, priority and support necessary for it to succeed.

Agencies and individuals will approach joint endeavours with different understanding of what inter-sectoral work will involve, and it is important that alongside a clear mandate there is some initial discussion and negotiation to clarify common purposes and shared values.

5.2 Predisposing factors are favourable

Predisposing factors affecting inter-agency engagement include agencies' history in working together and the extent of formal and informal networks already in place. Where agencies have previously worked together successfully the likelihood of collaboration succeeding is greatly increased. Where service delivery structures and geographical boundaries are aligned inter-agency engagement faces fewer barriers.

A strong non-government sector, community funding for joint initiatives, political support and an appropriate legislative environment are all favourable predisposing factors for collaboration.

5.3 Top down and bottom up

For collaboration between government agencies and community groups to succeed, a combination of political and central government (top-down) support providing a clear mandate and supportive framework, and local level needs analysis and action (bottom-up) is required. When both of these are present the chances for effective action to meet local needs is maximised.

'Top down' support for collaborative endeavour needs to be evident at a number of levels. High level leadership and oversight should see a commitment to collaboration expressed in departmental strategy documents, through common outcome statements and in

accountability requirements. At a policy level, protocols to support inter-agency collaboration must be in place. Joint planning for and cross-sector consultation on work programmes increase the likelihood that inter-agency initiatives will be included. At a project level the roles and responsibilities of each agency must be clarified, a project plan developed and an oversight group in place.

However, collaboration to address local issues must also be responsive to the needs and solutions identified by the community, and means developed whereby community agencies can meaningfully participate within their resource constraints.

5.4   The capacity to engage

The outcome of inter-agency engagement is strongly influenced by the capacity of participant organisations to contribute to the process. Capacity is required in several areas including agency backing for participation, leadership capacity to ensure the collaborative endeavour achieves its purpose, knowledge and skill in working collaboratively, resourcing capacity, the ability to develop systems and processes to achieve objectives. The capacity for government agencies to make decisions at a local level can be crucial to the success of locally-based inter-agency collaborations.

The capacity of the community to participate can be highly variable. While involving community and volunteer groups, and other 'grassroots' members of the community is a desirable and in many cases vital goal, developing meaningful ways for NGOs to contribute can be hampered by lack of capacity within those organisations.

5.5   Relationships and processes are negotiated

When a shared purpose has been agreed and a commitment to inter-agency collaboration has been made, the nature of the work and the relationships between participants must be clarified.

Collaborations require a positive working climate within which diverse participants are included and encouraged to participate. The structures and processes which allow this to happen need to be negotiated and agreed. Consensus must be reached on such things as membership, leadership and participant responsibilities, frequency of meetings, decision making, information sharing, outcome measures and feedback mechanisms to participant agencies.

Co-ordinating structures and decision making processes should be those which are as simple as possible, aligned to existing mechanisms and enable the work to be done.

5.6   Actions are agreed, planned and implemented

Collaborations with a strong focus on concrete and specific actions which clearly link back to the groups' goals are more likely to succeed. Negotiating relationships and processes, sharing information and sector networking can be useful, but taking action is what will achieve the groups' goals. Successful initiatives and activities, clearly linked to the outcomes a group is working for will provide participant agencies and individuals with much encouragement and do the most to foster the collaborative endeavour.

A formal action plan which shows the rationale linking activities to outcomes can be helpful to ensure that initiatives promoted by inter-agency collaborations address the agreed purposes of the collaboration. The action plan would outline which agencies were responsible for the initiative as well as reporting mechanisms back to the group.

5.7   Outcomes are monitored and evaluated

Monitoring and reporting processes should be meaningful without being onerous. Until inter-agency engagements are accountable for outcomes, they rely largely on the goodwill and commitment of the individuals involved. Collaborations can be strengthened when they are accountable for outcomes both to the group itself and within partner organisations.

Evaluation of inter-agency engagement is challenging but must be attempted. The scale and nature of the evaluation method should be appropriate to the engagement.

5.8   Success factors for different phases

Three of the papers retrieved for this reviewed found that some success factors were more powerful than others at different stages in the life of inter-agency engagement. (Gray; Ehrhardt; and Bryson et al.)

Gray[52] and Ehrhardt[53] both take the view that our understanding can be advanced by recognising the developmental phases through which a collaboration moves, and considering the requirements that will enable an initiative to move through each developmental phase. (Gray 1985; Ehrhardt 2000)

The table on the following page, developed from the work of Ehrhardt and Gray, indicates which of the factors that support inter-agency engagement are most important during the development, implementation and the sustainability of a collaboration.

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[52]   Gray B. Conditions facilitating interorganisation collaboration. Human Relations, Vol18 (10) October 1985.

[53]   Ehrhardt P, (2000) Models of community-government partnerships and their effectiveness in achieving welfare goals: a review of the literature. Ministry of Social Policy. Wellington.

Development	Implementation	Sustainability
Membership appropriate to goals and activities → →	→ →	→ → → → → →
Shared goals → → → → → → → → → →	→ →	→ → → → → →
Needs assessed and agreed → → → → → →	→ →	→ → → → → →
Belief in and commitment to collaboration → → →	→ →	→ → → → → →
An effective convener with a clear job description →	→ →	→ → → → → →
Sufficient resourcing → → → → → → →	→ →	→ → → → → →
	Transparent and participative decision making	→ → → →
	Activities clearly linked to outcomes → →	→ → → →
	Collaboration achieves an intermediate goal	→ → → →
	Power imbalances addressed → →	→ → → → →
	Community partners supported to play a full role → →	→ →
	Efficient, accountable and transparent administrative structures	
		Commitment to ongoing funding
		Clear roles and accountabilities
		Flexibility to adapt to emerging needs
		Support from external policy environment
		Activities informed by review and evaluation
		All partners see benefit

6. THE EVALUATION OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS – CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

6.1 Phased development

Virtually all the references retrieved for this review discuss the time taken to develop effective collaboration. It is not something that can be achieved immediately, even when there is shared understanding of the needs to be addressed and the outcomes sought.

Gray, Ehrhardt and Bryson all find value in conceptualising collaboration as a developmental process within which they identify prerequisites for success at different stages rather than as a hierarchy of factors, some of which have more influence than others. Atkinson found this useful in her evaluation of the Hamilton Youth Offending Team noting that the key challenge of the establishment phase was to ensure a common understanding of purpose and approach. In the implementation phase, issues around member capacity were particularly relevant, and as initiatives began to get underway timeframes led to impatience which became a critical threat to sustaining participants' ongoing commitment.

6.2 Collaboration between government agencies

Youth Offending Teams were conceived as having a central partnership between the four key social sector government agencies, with others being drawn in as appropriate. This being so, the principles developed by the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General, along with the work completed for the Review of the Centre, could provide guidance for the evaluation in assessing the capacity of the government agencies at the centre of Youth Offending Teams to collaborate.

The table on the following page, developed from these sources, indicates what government agencies must attend to if they are to maximise the potential of inter-agency collaboration.

Requirements on Government agencies for effective collaboration
Strategic level
a single lead agency
a forum of agency heads to lead, role model, co-ordinate and oversee collaboration
formal working groups established to drive policy development, service delivery, planning and reporting, research and evaluation and responsiveness to Māori
common outcome statements matched to agencies' own goals and objectives
increase the ability for organisations at a local level to act on opportunities to collaborate and work across boundaries
recognise and address inconsistent service boundaries and the fragmentation of government agencies and funding pools
accommodate regional perspectives
accountability for agreed outcomes
collective performance measures in place
Policy level
protocols to govern respective roles of the agencies
an agreed policy development process
adopt realistic time frames
Planning
formal processes in place to allow agencies to plan as a sector
agencies should consult on their draft policy work programme
Project level
roles and responsibilities of each agency established
a project oversight group in place
contribution to consultation and collaboration form part of the performance measures of senior managers
a project plan developed which includes an information technology plan addressing shared information needs
Working relationships
agreements and understandings in place about how agencies will work together
collaboration to be built on existing relationships and activities to avoid duplication.

6.3   Working with community stakeholders

Youth Offending Teams have collaboration between the four key government agencies at the centre but also involve other local youth justice stakeholders. The literature indicates that one of the tensions inherent in many inter-agency engagements which involve both government and community members is the imbalance of power and capacity between members.

The Review of the Centre suggests that once government organisations are working effectively together, including local stakeholders such as iwi/Māori, local government, community and voluntary organisation can enhance collaborations. However, government agencies need to build sustainable relationships with the community and voluntary sector carefully, by sharing information, consulting in a meaningful way and through negotiating processes and accountabilities. Iwi and Māori groups are particularly important to youth justice collaborations, and their involvement in the collaboration should reflect the four key agencies' relationships with local Māori.

Accepting that many community and voluntary groups can be strong supporters but may have limited resources and capacity is crucial to building effective collaboration with them. Their ability for active participation, the importance of which came through in the work of both Allen, and Liddle and Gelsthorpe, may be limited. If an inter-agency engagement is going to initiate activities it may be that the government agencies at the centre have to take responsibility for seeing that these happen.

Maynard and Wood suggest that much of the tension that can emerge in government and NGO collaboration comes from the contrasting scale and focus of the different parties. Government agencies have many issues to address whereas community agencies frequently have a single focus; government bureaucracies are large and processes take time, community agencies are small and looking for more immediate solutions; government agencies have protocols around consultation and the dissemination of information which can be perceived as lacking transparency and a resistance to sharing information. In order to maximise the potential of collaboration, these and other differences need to be recognised and openly addressed.

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Evaluation of Youth Offending Teams

Key Informant Information Sheet

The Ministry of Justice is currently conducting an evaluation of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). The evaluation will identify examples of best practice and opportunities for future development of Youth Offending Teams, and useful guidelines on how to improve the efficiency and appropriateness of the teams' functioning.

The evaluation consists of a number of different approaches, one of which is interviews with key informants. Through the interviews we wish to gain an in-depth understanding of how the teams operate, the issues faced and how their operation could be improved in the future.

We will be interviewing people from different YOTs and the findings will be incorporated into a report with the results from other evaluation approaches (which include a literature review and a self-completion survey of all YOT members).

You have been identified as someone who would be able to provide us with an insight about Youth Offending Teams and we would appreciate you taking the time to be interviewed. We expect the interview will take around an hour.

Participation is voluntary. You don't have to take part if you don't want to. You don't have to answer all of the questions. You can also stop the interview at any time.

If you agree to take part in the study:

- We will ask you about your views on issues regarding Youth Offending Teams and any suggestions you may have for improving their efficiency or appropriateness.

- You can decide whether or not your interview can be taped and whether or not we quote your comments in the report.

- All the information you provide is confidential to the research team. The papers will be stored securely and destroyed after two years.

- Neither you nor your comments will be able to be identified.

- The findings are likely to be published later this year in a report. Your information will be combined with information from other interviewees. To ensure that nobody will be able to identify you from your responses, we will not use your name or any descriptor that enables you to be identified. A summary of the report findings will also be available.

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Interview ID: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
Tāhū o te Ture

Evaluation of Youth Offending Teams
Key Informant Consent Form

- I have read and understood the information sheet provided about this study, and/or

- the interviewer explained to me the purpose of the research.

- I understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary.

- I have the right to not answer any question I don't like or to stop the interview and withdraw my answers, at any stage of the interview, without having to explain why.

- I understand that what I say will be kept confidential by the researchers and will only be used for research purposes. My name will not be used in any research reports and nothing will be published that might identify me.

- I understand that if I have any further questions I can contact one of the researchers listed on the information sheet

- I agree to the interview being audio recorded   YES / NO

- I agree to some of my comments or statements being quoted in the report, provided that I cannot be identified   YES / NO

- I would like to receive an edited copy of my interview transcript   YES / NO

- I would like to receive a summary of the key findings from this study   YES / NO

  If you would like a copy of interview transcript and/or a summary of the key findings, please record your address below.

  _____

  _____

  _____

Declaration:

I, _____ agree to be interviewed for this evaluation.

Signed: _____(Participant)   Date: ___/___/___

Signed: _____(Researcher)   Date: ___/___/___

Evaluation of Youth Offending Teams
Interview Guide for Key Informant Interviews

Version 3: 21st March 2007

Note: timings are indicative only and reflect the priority that will be given to various sections. In particular, it will be ensured that the section 'The future' will be given sufficient time in the interview.

Objective – identify examples of good practice and opportunities for development, and useful guidelines on how to improve the efficiency and appropriateness of functioning, so that the teams can be more effective in the long term.

Introduction and informed consent (3 mins)
Explain project – run through Key Informant Information Sheet and Consent Form.
Ensure a response is recorded for each item on Consent Form sheet.

Respondent's opinion is important so that we have a full understanding of YOTs from the members' point of view.

Does the respondent have any questions about the evaluation or the interview?

Background (2 mins)
Number of years of involvement with YOTs, roles undertaken within YOTs, whether involved/been involved in other YOTs.

Agency represented, role within agency.

Purpose/understanding of YOTs (5 mins)

What do you think is the aim or purpose of Youth Offending Teams? What are they meant to do?

Probe: if Youth Offending Strategy not mentioned, probe for understanding of how YOTs fit into the Strategy.

Achievements of the YOT (10 mins)
Thinking now specifically about your YOT, is it working well?
Probe: What do you consider to be the achievements or success of your YOT? How useful/valuable are these achievements?
Note: relationship achievements as well as project achievements.
Probe for perceived value of specific initiatives versus co-ordination and collaboration role of YOT and effect on positive functioning of YOT.

What is going well for your team?
Probe: Please think about a time when you felt the YOT was working well, and tell me what it was that you think helped your YOT to work well.

What needs to be improved?
Probe: What do you think are the issues that affect how well your team operates?

How has the functioning of your YOT changed over the time you have been a member?
Probe – what caused these changes?

Does your YOT have a work programme? Have there been specific projects or initiatives and how successful have they been?
Probe on whether have Action Plan and if so, whether it is used.

What value do the YOT meetings have?
Probe – are they involved in other Youth Justice inter-agency group meetings, what is the overlap etc.

Participation in the team (10 mins)

What do you think is your role and your agency's role within the team?

Are the right people attending the team meetings – from all agencies?
Probe: is the **level** of representation at the appropriate level – from all agencies?
Note and probe on issues of high turn over of members and also lack of attendance

How important is the role of the chair for the YOT?
What is the process for deciding who should be chair? Is this an effective method? How often does the chair change?
Probe – issues of leadership and the difference one person can make to a team.
Probe – awareness of recommendation that chair should be Police or CYF.
Probe – workload of chair

Is your role as a YOT member valued within your organisation?
Probe: How does your involvement with the YOT fit into your workload? Is involvement with the YOT one of your performance indicators?

Support available to and required by YOTs (10 mins)
What support do you know of that is currently available to YOTs to help them function more effectively?
Probe – do they have a secretariat
Probe – have their parent agencies funded/supported initiatives?
Probe – where could you go to for funding or other support?

Can you think of any support that is not currently available that would help YOTs function more effectively?

Ask if not covered above:

Ministry of Justice: What do you see as the Ministry of Justice's current role in relation to YOTs? What level of support do they offer? What works well and what can be improved? What do you think the Ministry of Justice could do to provide more support to YOTs?

Probe: Role of Ministry of Justice for funding of initiatives, any mention of funding for capacity building etc.

Paid co-ordinator: Would a paid co-ordinator be useful to the YOT? What exactly would they be expected to do/ what would be their role?

Youth Justice Leadership Group:
Current understanding of YJLG: purpose of YJLG, members/representation, relationship between the YJLG and YOTs – what is it supposed to be and how does it work in practice, whether had any contact with members of YJLG.

What do you think the YJLG should do in relation to YOTs, what assistance should they provide (probe if unclear: do they currently provide it)?

The future (15 mins)

What can be done to ensure **your** team works more effectively? What factors would encourage more effective performance?
Probe: of these things you have mentioned, which are the one or two most important factors?

And what can be done to ensure YOTs **generally** work more effectively? What factors would encourage more effective performance?
Probe: of these things you have mentioned, which are the one or two most important factors?

If not mentioned:
And now thinking specifically about getting different agencies working effectively together, what can you think of that would make this work as well as possible?
Probe: Is there anything that could be done/systems put in place to assist inter-agency work?

Finally, **(5 mins)** is there anything we haven't covered that you'd like to tell me about Youth Offending Teams?

End
Once we have spoken to a number of people from different teams throughout the country, we are going to prepare a questionnaire that will go to all current members of Youth Offending Teams. The questions we ask will be based on what we have learnt during these key informant interviews. When you receive the survey we would appreciate it if you answer it even though you have done this interview as there will be some topics or suggestions that we have not covered in today's interview.

Check that responses on Consent Form are recorded. Reassure respondent that responses are confidential.

Thank you very much for your time

Youth Offending Team Evaluation – Survey of all YOT Members Questionnaire Framework

Draft 3, 2 May 2007

In order to achieve an acceptable response rate it is important that the survey takes no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The majority of questions need to be pre-coded with a maximum of 2 or 3 questions open-ended and requiring coding.

Note: Specify in explanation that the four core youth justice agencies, also known as the four core agencies, are Police, Child, Youth and Family, Education and Health

Note also that responses will not be reported at individual YOT level – this will encourage open and honest feedback. Identification of YOT is required to allow for higher level analysis.

Demographics/descriptors

- Location of YOT they are a member of

NOTE: if member of more than one YOT, YOT-specific questions will be asked for the YOT they are most involved with

- Agency/organisation representing

- If representing core government agency: whether representing management and/or practitioner level (descriptions of management and practitioner will be provided for each agency using job titles)

- Whether or not have budgetary responsibility

- Total years of involvement with YOT

- Whether currently the chair

- Whether ever been the chair

- Level of attendance over last year (scale: every meeting/most meetings/about half the meetings/ fewer than half the meetings)

Structure of YOT – What is it? What do they want it to be?

- How often does the YOT meet? How often would you like it to meet? (more often than monthly/ once a month/ once every two months/ less often than once every two months).

- Please indicate which agencies and organisations are currently members of your YOT (please only include members, not any agencies or organisations who you may invite to give or attend certain meetings or presentations, or are involved with specific initiatives): (Indicate Y/N whether or not each is a member)

    o   Police

    o   Child, Youth and Family

- o   Education

- o   Health

- o   Other national or central government agencies

- o   Local government agencies including councils

- o   Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific Peoples' representation)

- o   Māori/iwi representation

- o   Māori service provider

- o   Pacific Peoples' representation

- Please indicate which agencies and organisation you would like to have as members of your YOT (same list presented)

For **each** non-core agency **NOT** listed as a member above:
- Is the agency/organisation consulted when required
- Is the agency/organisation involved in specific initiatives when required

For **each** non-core agency **NOT** listed as a member above and **NOT** consulted/involved:
- Would you like to have the agency/organisation consulted
- Would you like to have the agency/organisation involved in specific initiatives

- For each core agency, is there always/usually/sometimes/seldom/never representation at a)manager and b)practitioner level?
- Is there sufficient decision making power on the YOT (would this be most useful in total or by each core agency?)

Perceived barriers
Open ended question – to be coded at analysis stage
- What are the key barriers to the successful functioning of your YOT?

Effectiveness of the YOT
- How effective do you believe your YOT is at the following:

Using scale: Very effective, quite effective, not that effective, not at all effective, do not do/not applicable, don't know

- Collaboration between all the agencies on the YOT

- Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies

- Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and community groups (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific Peoples' groups)

- Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and Māori/iwi groups

- Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and Pacific Peoples' groups

- Identifying gaps in services available to young offenders in the local area

- Identifying gaps in services available to 'at risk' youth in the local area

- Making things happen faster

- Improving outcomes for young people and their whānau

- Implementation of projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending

- Improving case management

- Improving dissemination and flow of information about youth offending

- Making day-to-day work easier

- Overall effectiveness of YOT

Value/achievements/inter-agency involvement etc
Agreement or disagreement with a series of statements (Strongly agree/slightly agree/neither agree nor disagree/slightly disagree/strongly disagree/DK)
Note: statements will be presented in a different order – similar statements will not be presented together

- I get more from my involvement in the YOT than the effort I put in

- I believe my YOT serves a very useful purpose

- I believe YOTs in general serve a very useful purpose

- YOTs have achieved projects or initiatives that would not have been achieved without the YOT

- YOTS have facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have been achieved without the YOT

- I meet with the same people at YOT meetings that I see at other meetings

- YOTs serve a different purpose to other inter-agency groups that I belong to

- We discuss different issues at YOT meetings than we discuss at other inter-agency meetings

- YOTs have encouraged communication and networking that would not have occurred without the YOT

- The structure of YOTs is appropriate for its purpose

- My manager supports and encourages my involvement in the YOT

- My agency values my involvement in the YOT

- The success of a YOT depends on the people who are involved in the YOT at the particular time

- The YOT's processes are more important in sustaining the YOT than the membership at any particular time

- The four core agencies all contribute appropriately to the YOT

- The role of the YOT is clear to all participants

- The YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers

- There is agreement within the YOT as to which young people we are working with in terms of their age

- There is agreement within the YOT as to which young people we are working with in terms of their level of offending or potential offending

- Non-government and community organisations add value to the YOT

- Non-government and community organisations have an important role to play on YOTs

Value provided by and received by agencies

- How valuable, in your opinion, is the input each of agencies and groups provides or puts in to your YOT: (Very valuable/quite valuable /not that valuable /not at all valuable /do not participate/DK)

  o Police
  o Child, Youth and Family
  o Education
  o Health
  o Other national or central government agencies
  o Local government agencies including councils
  o Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific Peoples' representation)
  o Māori/iwi representation
  o Māori service provider
  o Pacific Peoples' representation

- And how valuable, in your opinion, is what each of the agencies or groups gets out of their involvement in your YOT: (Very valuable/quite valuable /not that valuable /not at all valuable /do not participate/DK)

  o Police
  o Child, Youth and Family
  o Education
  o Health
  o Other national or central government agencies
  o Local government agencies including councils
  o Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific Peoples' representation)
  o Māori/iwi representation
  o Māori service provider
  o Pacific Peoples' representation

Requirements for success of a YOT

Rating of importance of the following for the success of a YOT (Very important/quite important/not that important/not at all important/DK):

- Having a set work programme or action plan

- Knowing that you will get funding for projects

- Having a paid co-ordinator

- Receiving support from the Ministry of Justice

- Getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group

- Having consistency of attendance at the meetings

- Having a person or people who are motivated to drive the YOT

- Having a motivated chairperson

Overall success

Overall perceptions of how successful are (Very successful/quite successful/not that successful/not at all successful):
- YOT(s) you are a member of, and
- YOTs overall.

NOTE: Statistical analyses will be undertaken to investigate the variables that drive perceptions of success

Overall

Open ended question – to be coded at analysis stage

- Recommendations/changes for the future:
  - Practical/small changes
  - Big picture

Youth Offending Team Evaluation – Survey of all YOT Members Questionnaire

11 May 2007

Introduction:

This is a short survey that asks about your views on Youth Offending Teams. It is your opportunity to have your say on YOTs and we would appreciate you taking the time to let us know what you think.

The Ministry of Justice is undertaking an evaluation of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). YOTs have been operating for over four years and it is time for an evaluation to provide information about how they are working and to develop useful guidelines on how to improve the efficiency and appropriateness of how they function. This evaluation will help inform the future direction of Youth Offending Teams.

There are a number of parts to the evaluation. We have already visited some YOTs and have identified a range of views about YOTs, and we have used this information to develop this survey. This survey aims to find out how many YOT members agree or disagree with the opinions we have discovered through the interviews.

This survey is going to all current YOT members and we would really appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey as the more people who respond the more sure we can be about our findings.

- *It should only take you 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.*

- *Your responses are completely confidential – your contact details are kept in a separate data file to your responses and they will not be matched at any point.*

- *Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, however this is your opportunity to have your say about YOTs and we would very much appreciate you taking the time to complete it.*

- *Responses will not be reported for an individual YOT.*

Definition:
When in the survey we use the term 'the four core youth justice agencies' we are referring to Police, CYF (Child, Youth and Family), Education and Health.

Demographics and descriptors

Q1a   *First of all, please indicate which of the following YOTs you are a member of. If you are a member of more than one YOT, please indicate all the YOTs you are a member of.*

(Multi code)

If more than one YOT selected in Q1a:

Q1b   *Some of the questions in this survey will ask about your YOT. When you are answering these questions we would like you to think about the YOT you last attended a meeting for. Which YOT is that?*

(Single code)

	Q1a (multi)	Q1b (single)
Kaikohe	1	1
Whangarei	2	2
North Shore	3	3
Waitakere	4	4
Auckland City	5	5
Counties Manukau – Manurewa	6	6
Counties Manukau East	7	7
Counties Manukau West	8	8
Papakura/Pukekohe	9	9
Hamilton	10	10
Tauranga	11	11
Rotorua	12	12
Whakatane	13	13
Hawkes Bay (Napier/Hastings)	14	14
Tokoroa	15	15
Taupo	16	16
Gisborne	17	17
Taranaki (New Plymouth)	18	18
Wanganui	19	19
Manawatū (Palmerston North)	20	20
Horowhenua (Levin)	21	21
Wairarapa (Masterton)	22	22
Hutt Valley	23	23
Porirua/Kapiti	24	24
Wellington	25	25
Nelson	26	26
Marlborough (Blenheim)	27	27
Christchurch & North Canterbury	28	28
South and Mid Canterbury (Timaru)	29	29
West Coast	30	30
Otago (Dunedin)	31	31
Southland (Invercargill)	32	32

Q2   *Which agency or organisation do you represent on the YOT?*

(Note: allow multi-code)

Police	1
Child, Youth and Family	2
Education	3
Health	4
National or central government agencies other than the four core youth justice agencies	5
Local government agencies including councils	6
Māori/iwi representation	7
Māori service provider	8
Pacific community representation	9
Pacific service provider	10
Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori /iwi and Pacific representation)	11
Other (please state)	12

If Q2 = 1–4:

Q3   *Do you represent management or practitioner level on the YOT, or both management and practitioner? Please see below for examples of management and practitioner levels for your agency.*

Management level representation	1
Practitioner level representation	2
Both management and practitioner level representation	3

Examples to be presented on screen:

	Q2=1 (Police)	Q2=2 (CYF)	Q2=3 (Education)	Q2=4 (Health)
Manager	Youth Services Senior Sergeant, Area Commander, Policing Development Manager	Service Delivery Unit Manager, Youth Justice Manager	Regional Manager; Area Manager, Service Leader	Clinical/Service Manager, Team Manager, Clinical Director, Clinical Nurse Manager, Child and Youth Portfolio Manager, Clinical/Service Leader, Locality Manager CAMHS, Regional Manager, CAMHS, Team Co-ordinator, Team Leader
Practitioner	Youth Aid Officer, Youth Development Officer, Iwi Liasion Officer, Youth Aid Sergeant, Youth Services Sergeant	Youth Justice Co-ordinator	Special Education Advisor; Psychologist; Special Education Facilitator; Development Officer, Senior	Clinical Psychologist, Psychologist, Social Worker, Nurse, Psychiatrist, Family Therapist, Child Therapist/psychotherapist or Play

			Advisor	Therapist, Alcohol & Other Drug Counsellor/Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Cultural Worker/Co-ordinator, Paediatrician, Counsellor, Speech/Language Therapist, Mental Health Support Worker

If Q2 = 1–4:

Q4   *Do you have budgetary responsibility within your organisation?*

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

Q5   *How many years in total have you been involved with YOTs?*

Less than 1 year	1
Between 1 and 2 years	2
Between 2 and 3 years	3
Between 3 and 4 years	4
Between 4 and 5 years	5
Over 5 years	6

Q6   *Are you currently the chair of your YOT?*

Yes	1
No	2

Q7   *Have you ever been a YOT chair?*

Yes	1
No	2

Q8   *And thinking back over the last year, which of these best describes how many YOT meetings you have attended.*

Every meeting	1
Most meetings	2
About half the meetings	3
Fewer than half the meetings	4

The structure of the YOT: What is it? What do you want it to be?

Q9a *Generally how often does your YOT meet? If you meet monthly other than over the Christmas break please record this as monthly.*

Q9b *How often would you like it to meet?*

	Q9a	Q9b
More often than once a month	1	1
Once a month	2	2
Once every two months	3	3
Less often than once every two months	4	4

Q10a *Please indicate all the agencies and organisations which are currently members of your YOT.*
(Please do not include any agencies or organisations who you may invite to give or attend certain meetings or presentations, or are involved with specific initiatives, but who are not members.)

Q10b *And please indicate all the agencies and organisations you would like to have as members of your YOT.*

WAPI script note – present full list, whether or not they are currently member

	a – currently member			b – would like as member		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
1. Police	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Child, Youth and Family	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Education	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Health	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. National or central government agencies other than the four core youth justice agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Local government agencies including councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Māori/iwi representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Māori service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Pacific community representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Pacific service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Other (please state)	1			4	5	6

If Q10a = 2 or 3, for each of codes 5 to 11 (ie non-core agency):

Q11a   *Is (agency/organisation) consulted when required?*

Q11b   *Is (agency/organisation) involved in specific initiatives when required?*

	11a – consulted when required			11b – involved in specific initiatives when required		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
5. National or central government agencies other than the four core youth justice agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Local government agencies including councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Māori/iwi representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Māori service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Pacific community representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Pacific service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	1	2	3	4	5	6

If Q11a = 2 or 3, for each of codes 5 to 11:

Q12a   *Would you like to have (agency/organisation) consulted when required?*

If Q11b = 2 or 3, for each of codes 5 to 11:

Q12b   *Would you like to have (agency/organisation) involved in specific initiatives when required?*

	12a – like to have consulted when required			12b – like to have involved in specific initiatives when required		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
5. National or central government agencies other than the four core youth justice agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Local government agencies including councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Māori/iwi representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Māori service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Pacific community representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Pacific service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q13   *Please indicate how often there is representation from each of the core agencies at your YOT meetings, at both manager and practitioner level. Is there always, usually, sometimes, seldom or never representation from (…)*

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	DK
Police – manager level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Police – practitioner level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child, Youth and Family – manager level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child, Youth and Family – practitioner level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Education – manager level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Education – practitioner level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Health – manager level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Health – practitioner level	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q14a   *And, in your opinion, is there sufficient decision making power on the YOT from (agency)?*

	Yes	No	DK
1. Police	1	2	3
2. Child, Youth and Family	1	2	3
3. Education	1	2	3
4. Health	1	2	3

Q14b   *And overall, do you think there is sufficient decision making power from the four core youth justice agencies on your YOT?*

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

Barriers to successful functioning

Q15   *What do you believe are the main barriers, if any, to the successful functioning of your YOT?*

_____

_____

_____

There are no barriers
Don't know

Effectiveness of your YOT

Q16   *Please rate how effective you believe **your YOT** is at the following things. Please use the scale: very effective, quite effective, not that effective, not at all effective, or indicate that your YOT does not do that activity and it does not apply.*

If you are a member of more than one YOT, please remember to answer these questions for the YOT you last attended a meeting for.

NOTE: Statements to be randomised (rather than rotated)

	Very effective	Quite effective	Not that effective	Not at all effective	Do not do/ does not apply	Don't know
Collaboration between all the members of the YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies on the YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and community groups (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific groups) whether or not they are members of the YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and Māori/iwi groups in the local community	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaboration between the four core youth justice government agencies and Pacific groups in the local community	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identifying gaps in services available to young offenders in the local area	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identifying gaps in services available to 'at risk' youth in the local area	1	2	3	4	5	6
Making projects or initiatives happen sooner than they would have otherwise	1	2	3	4	5	6
Improving outcomes for young people and their whānau	1	2	3	4	5	6
Implementation of projects or initiatives with the intention of preventing or reducing youth offending and/or re-offending	1	2	3	4	5	6
Improving case management	1	2	3	4	5	6
Improving dissemination and flow of information about youth offending	1	2	3	4	5	6
Making day-to-day work easier	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q17 *And overall, how effective do you believe your YOT is?*

Very effective	1
Quite effective	2
Not that effective	3
Not at all effective	4
Don't know	5

Attitudes and opinions

Q18 *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements that have been made about YOTs. Please rate whether you strongly agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.*

*If the statement does not ask about **your** YOT, please give your opinion about YOTs in general, based on anything you may have heard about other YOTs, as well as your own YOT.*

NOTE: Statements to be randomised (rather than rotated)

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I get more from my involvement in my YOT than the effort I put in	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe my YOT serves a very useful purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe YOTs in general serve a very useful purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
YOTs in general have achieved projects or initiatives that would not have been achieved without them	1	2	3	4	5	6
YOTS have facilitated inter-agency collaboration that would not have been achieved without the YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
I meet with the same people at my YOT meetings that I see at other meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
My YOT serves a different purpose to other inter-agency groups that I belong to	1	2	3	4	5	6
We discuss different issues at my YOT meetings than we discuss at other inter-agency meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
YOTs have encouraged communication and networking that would not have occurred without the YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6

The structure of YOTs is appropriate for its purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager supports and encourages my involvement in my YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
My agency values my involvement in my YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
The success of my YOT depends on the people who are involved in the YOT at the particular time	1	2	3	4	5	6
The success of my YOT depends on its processes rather than the membership at any particular time	1	2	3	4	5	6
The four core agencies all contribute appropriately to my YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
The role of the YOT is clear to all participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
My YOT effectively serves the geographic area it covers	1	2	3	4	5	6
There is agreement within my YOT as to which age group of young people we are working with	1	2	3	4	5	6
There is agreement within my YOT as to which young people we are working with in terms of their level of offending or potential offending	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-government and community organisations add value to my YOT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-government and community organisations have an important role to play on YOTs	1	2	3	4	5	6

Value of input and involvement in your YOT

Q19 *Please indicate how valuable, in your opinion, is the input each of these agencies and groups <u>provides, or puts in to</u>, your YOT. Please rate for each agency or group whether you think their input is very valuable, quite valuable, not that valuable or not at all valuable.*

	Very valuable	Quite valuable	Not that valuable	Not at all valuable	They do not partici-pate	Don't know
Police	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child, Youth and Family	1	2	3	4	5	6
Education	1	2	3	4	5	6
Health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other national or central government agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local government agencies including councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
Māori/iwi representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Māori service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pacific community representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pacific service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q20 *Please indicate how valuable, in your opinion, is what each of these agencies and groups <u>gets out of</u> their involvement in your YOT. Please rate for each agency or group whether you think what they get out of their involvement is very valuable, quite valuable, not that valuable or not at all valuable to them.*

	Very valuable	Quite valuable	Not that valuable	Not at all valuable	They do not partici-pate	Don't know
Police	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child, Youth and Family	1	2	3	4	5	6
Education	1	2	3	4	5	6
Health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other national or central government agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local government agencies including councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
Māori/iwi representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Māori service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pacific community representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pacific service provider	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-government organisation agencies (excluding Māori/iwi and Pacific representation)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Requirements for success of a YOT

Q21 *Please indicate how important you think each of the following are for the success of a YOT. Please rate whether you think they are very important, quite important, not that important or not at all important for the success of a YOT.*

NOTE: Statements to be randomised (rather than rotated)

	Very important	Quite important	Not that important	Not at all important	Don't know
Having a set work programme or action plan	1	2	3	4	5
Knowing that you will get funding for projects	1	2	3	4	5
Having a paid co-ordinator	1	2	3	4	5
Receiving support from the Ministry of Justice	1	2	3	4	5
Getting direction and support from the Youth Justice Leadership Group	1	2	3	4	5
Having consistency of attendance at the meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Having a person or people who are motivated to drive the YOT	1	2	3	4	5
Having a motivated chairperson	1	2	3	4	5

Overall success

Q22 *Overall, how successful do you think your YOT is? Please only rate the YOT you are a member of (or, if you are a member of more than one YOT, the YOT you last attended a meeting for).*

Very successful	1
Quite successful	2
Not that successful	3
Not at all successful	4
Don't know	5

Q23 *And overall, how successful do you believe YOTs in general are?*

Very successful	1
Quite successful	2
Not that successful	3
Not at all successful	4
Don't know	5

Overall

Q24   *And finally, can you please think about what changes you think should be made so that YOTs work more effectively. Please think about your recommendations in terms of both practical or small changes to their operation and also changes that are more significant in terms of the structure or functioning of YOTs.*

Q24a   *First of all, what are the small or practical operational changes that you would suggest should be made to encourage YOTS to operate more effectively?*

_____

_____

_____

Q24b   *And what are the more significant or 'big picture' changes that you would suggest should be made to encourage YOTs to operate more effectively?*

_____

_____

_____

End

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey and to give us your opinion on Youth Offending Teams, it is very much appreciated.

YOT - WAPI SURVEY
E-mail and survey intro page

E-mail:

Dear (first name)

This is a short survey that asks about your views on Youth Offending Teams. It is your opportunity to have your say on YOTs and we would appreciate you taking the time to let us know what you think.

The Ministry of Justice is undertaking an evaluation of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). YOTs have been operating for over four years and it is time for an evaluation to provide information about how they are working and to develop useful guidelines on how to improve the efficiency and appropriateness of how they function. This evaluation will help inform the future direction of Youth Offending Teams.

The Ministry of Justice has commissioned Consumer Link to host the survey, and to provide the Ministry with the data.

We would really appreciate your response before June 6th.

This is a survey of current members of Youth Offending Teams, so please confirm whether you are a current member of a Youth Offending Team or not.

Yes, current member – next screen

Not a current member – close "thank you for your interest in this survey, but we want to survey only current members"

Kind regards
Rosemary Cals
Survey Project Manager
CONSUMER LINK

Survey intro page

There are a number of parts to the evaluation. We have already visited some YOTs and have identified a range of views about YOTs, and we have used this information to develop this survey. This survey aims to find out how many YOT members agree or disagree with the opinions we have discovered through the interviews.

This survey is going to all current YOT members and we would really appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey as the more people who respond the more sure we can be about our findings.

- *It should only take you 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.*

- *Your responses are completely confidential – your contact details are kept in a separate data file to your responses and they will not be matched at any point.*

- *Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, however this is your opportunity to have your say about YOTs and we would very much appreciate you taking the time to complete it.*

- *Responses will not be reported for an individual YOT.*

Once you are ready to start the survey, please use the arrow below.

- Every page of the survey will have an arrow at the bottom to allow you to move forward once you have completed that page

- You will find that you cannot return to a previous page

- If you need to leave the survey before the end, you can return to the point at which you left the survey by returning to the original e-mail message and clicking 'yes, current member' again

- If you have any queries about the survey operation, please contact Rosemary Cals at Consumer Link (rosemary.cals@consumerlink.co.nz) or ph 0508 787839 (freephone).

APPENDIX 9:   FIRST SURVEY REMINDER

Reminder – Friday 1 June

E-mail subject: Youth Offending Team survey

Dear <%~Name%>,

We recently sent you an invite to take part in a survey about Youth Offending Teams that we are conducting on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

We would really like to include your opinions in this research. It is your opportunity to have your say on YOTs and we would appreciate you taking the time to let us know what you think.

The survey should take only 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

If you have already taken part in this survey please disregard this e-mail.

This survey must be completed by Wednesday the 6th of June.

This is a survey of current members of Youth Offending Teams, so please confirm whether you are a current member of a Youth Offending Team or not.

Yes, current member – next screen

Not a current member – close "thank you for your interest in this survey, but we want to survey only current members"

Kind Regards

Rosemary Cals
Survey Project Manager
Consumer Link
e-mail: rosemary.cals@consumerlink.co.nz

APPENDIX 10:   SECOND SURVEY REMINDER

Youth Offending Team Survey
2nd Reminder – Wednesday 6th June (later in the day please –
3pm-ish)

E-mail subject: Youth Offending Team survey – final opportunity

Dear (Name),

We recently sent you an invite to take part in a survey about Youth Offending Teams that we are conducting on behalf of the Ministry of Justice. We had asked you to complete the survey by the end of today, but because of the long weekend some people have asked if they can have a bit more time to complete the survey.

We have extended the deadline to the end of this **Friday the 8th of June**.

We would really like to include your opinions in this research. It is your opportunity to have your say on YOTs and we would appreciate you taking the time to let us know what you think. The survey should take only 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

If you have already taken part in this survey please disregard this e-mail.

This is a survey of current members of Youth Offending Teams, so please confirm whether you are a current member of a Youth Offending Team or not.

Yes, current member – next screen

Not a current member – close "thank you for your interest in this survey, but we want to survey only current members"

Kind Regards

Rosemary Cals
Survey Project Manager
Consumer Link
e-mail: rosemary.cals@consumerlink.co.nz

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
Tāhū o te Ture

Evaluation of Youth Offending Teams
Focus Group Discussion Consent Form

The purpose of this focus group discussion is to gain an understanding of:

- the Youth Justice Leadership Group's expectations of YOTs;

- how effective the YJLG consider YOTs to be;

- what YJLG consider are YOT's strengths and weaknesses;

- what can be done to improve YOTs' performance in the future; and

- the relationship between YOTs and the YJLG.

The focus group will be held on Tuesday the 12th of June from 11.00 to 12.30 in the 10th floor meeting room of Charles Fergusson Building.

Normally, as evaluators, we would promise confidentiality to focus group participants. However, as you all know each other and have on-going working relationships, this is more difficult. We therefore wanted to ensure everyone has the same understanding of the level of confidentiality that we can promise.

You are participating in the focus group as a representative of your agency; therefore, your views will be considered to be your agency's position. If, on consideration, you wish to withdraw a comment, please let me know by Tuesday the 19th of June and I will make sure it is not considered to be part of the responses from the focus group.

We would like to audio tape the discussion. Please let me know by the end of Monday the 11th if you are not happy for this to occur. We may wish to quote verbatim comments in the report. We would not state who made the comment, however it is possible that others may be able to identify you. We will offer you the opportunity to view any of your comments that we wish to quote. You have the right to withdraw permission for quoting any comments you make.

Please read the following, and record your agreement, or otherwise, with the questions on the following page.

- I understand that my participation in this focus group is voluntary.

- I have the right to not answer any question I don't like or to withdraw from the focus group and/or withdraw my answers, at any stage, without having to explain why.

- I understand that what I say will be kept confidential by the researchers and will only be used for research purposes. My name will not be used in any research reports, however I understand that it might be possible for others to identify me.

- The report will state which agencies from the YJLG participated in the focus group, but the analysis will not link views to specific agencies. Rather the views of the group will be reported, and comment may be made whether there was general agreement or divergence of views within the YJLG on specific topics.

- I understand that if I have any further questions I can contact Anne Harland on (04) 494 9898 or anne.harland@justice.govt.nz

Please record your response to the following:

- I agree to the focus group being audio recorded   YES / NO

- I agree to some of my comments or statements being quoted verbatim in the report, provided that my name is not put to the comment   YES / NO

- I would like to check any verbatim comments that may be quoted in the report on the understanding I can withdraw the comment if I so wish   YES / NO

- I would like to receive a summary of the key findings from this study   YES / NO

If you would like a copy of the summary of the key findings, please record your address below.

_____

_____

_____

Declaration:

I, (name):_____ agree to participate in the focus group.

Signed: _____   Date: ___/___/___

Evaluation of Youth Offending Teams
YJLG focus group discussion

12 June 2007

Introduction and informed consent

Collect completed consent forms, ensuring a response is recorded for each item.

Check that everyone agrees to being taped.

Apologies from Education.

Explain that we are looking for their opinions about YOTs and that although we have some information areas to cover, the discussion will follow their comments.

State three main parts to the discussion:

- Their opinion of strengths and weaknesses of YOTs and barriers (against their expectations of what they should be doing). Overall how effective they consider YOTs to be.
- What can be done to enhance YOTs performance in the future.
- The relationship between YOTs and the YJLG – what it is now and what they want it to be.

Does anyone have any questions about the focus group or how it will be reported?

Strengths and weaknesses, barriers and overall how effective are YOTs:

- **Obtain from group and record on large paper**/whiteboard what they consider are YOT's strengths and weaknesses and what are the barriers experienced by YOTs?

Note: the responses to this question will lead much of the following discussion.

- Why are some YOTs more successful than other YOTs?

- Is the **structure** of YOTs appropriate:
  - Manager and practitioner
  - 4 core agencies – Police, CYF, Health and Education
  - What involvement with local community groups is best?
  - Local level decision as to what is needed – is this appropriate?
  - Ministry of Justice support – what is needed, what is provided?

- Is the **purpose/aim** of YOTs appropriate? Is there still a need for inter-agency collaboration meetings? Doubling up on other meetings or unique?

- Check the relative **value of specific initiatives** for the YOT versus coordination and communication.

- What have they/their agency **told their staff** about who should be on the YOT, level of commitment required, whether part of performance agreement.

- Check any comment about **chair or other motivated person** being critical to success.

What can be done to enhance future performance:

- Refer back to weaknesses and barriers and identify **solutions**. Record on large paper.

- If not raised – whether need for **paid co-ordinator**? Specific role/tasks?

- Need for **work programme, action plan** or other specific measures imposed? (for example compulsory return of minutes)

Relationship between YOTs and YJLG

- What do they see as their role with regard to YOTs?

- How well is it working in practice?

- How should it be working?

- What level of contact do they have – is this appropriate?

- Is the membership of the YJLG appropriate for its role?

- What changes do they think would be beneficial, what should be the future relationship?