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Please read this chapter in conjunction with -

**JSNA Chapters:**

[Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Index](#)

[Warrington JSNA Mental Health Chapter](#)

[Warrington JSNA Unemployment and Worklessness Chapter](#)

[Warrington JSNA Children and Young People - Substance Misuse Chapter](#)

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## Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011 - Youth Offending Chapter



The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) considers a wide range of factors that affect the health and wellbeing of the people of Warrington. The objective of the JSNA is to involve partner organisations, such as the local NHS, local authorities, Police, Fire and third sector organisations in order to provide a top level, holistic view of current and future need within the borough. The JSNA is used to agree key priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of all our communities at the same time as reducing health inequalities.

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Overview

Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team (YOT) works with young people to both prevent and reduce offending in the communities. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory obligation on all local authorities to set up a multi-agency service to work with young people at risk of offending or already in the youth justice system. The agencies included in the YOT are:

- Police
- Probation
- Children's Social Care (including Education)
- Health

The YOT also works alongside local partners including:

- Connexions
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Substance Misuse Services
- Voluntary & Third Sector Agencies

YOT prevention work focuses upon young people aged 8 to 18 years and YOT statutory work, which comes through the courts, focuses upon young people aged 10 to 18 years.

The Ministry of Justice have indicated that there are three areas of focus within the Youth Justice arena:

- Reduction in reoffending rates
- Reduction in first time entrants to the Youth Justice System
- Reduction in the use of custody

Locally, the YOT has agreed to monitor two further indicators relating to:

- Suitable employment, training & education
- Suitable accommodation

In addition to the indicators above, the YOT has recently been inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in the area of Children in Care. The YOT was one of six to be chosen for this inspection and the report was published in December 2012. The YOT is leading on a multi-agency response to the recommendations for the YOT and other partner agencies. The recommendations within the report will be part of the YOT Management Plan for 2013.

## Key Issues and Gaps

Accommodation provision for 16-18 year olds at risk of custody or upon release from custody is a historical issue for the YOT. The provision is sometimes unable to provide accommodation on an emergency basis for this group of challenging young people. In these circumstances, difficulties can arise when the court is considering remanding the young person to custody and the YOT is trying to find suitable emergency accommodation for the young person. Similarly, these young people can have behavioural issues that current accommodation provision finds difficult to manage within their current structures. Therefore, this can lead to young people being asked to leave accommodation provision, which can then lead to further offences being committed by that young people as they lack stability in their situation. Losing accommodation provision can also affect the young person's chances of sustaining suitable education, training and employment.

Finding post-16 young offenders appropriate education, training and employment provision which they can be supported to maintain.

Both the above issues have been identified because young people in these categories have multiple presenting issues which can jeopardise the provision of education, training and employment and suitable accommodation. For example, young people can still be denied appropriate housing due to assessments of "intentionally homeless".

## Summary of Recommendations for Commissioning

Development and investment in appropriate, supportive accommodation for young offenders is needed. A review of the processes that surround making a young person intentionally homeless is also recommended. This issue could become particularly relevant as a result of the government's recent green paper, *Breaking the Cycle*. This has suggested that the cost for remands into custody will transfer to Local Authorities. There are also concerns that, at some point in the future, this may extend to sentenced young offenders as well.

Develop the incentive for education/training providers to work with young offenders, especially in regard to ensuring realistic outcomes for these young people.

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## 1) Who's At Risk and Why

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has developed a range of risk factors that could lead to a young person becoming involved with the Youth Justice System. The factors that could lead to a young person offending are as follows:

- Family breakdown
- Substance misuse (young person and/or family members)
- Unemployment
- Parental siblings that offend
- Deprived local economy
- Poor health and/or mental health issues within the family
- Truancy from school and/or poor educational attainment
- Children in the care system

A number of these factors may be present in the young person's life or one factor may be prevalent.

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## 2) The Level of Need in the Population

The YOT works across Halton & Warrington and the levels of offending and reoffending are recorded and measured across the two Boroughs. Therefore, the YOT is unable to separate the offending figures. However, we are able to use comparable data with our Youth Justice family. In order to measure the levels of offending and reoffending, a cohort of young people which are subject to YOT supervision during the period January to March are identified. These young people are then tracked over a 12 month period to see the number of offences that they committed.

Table 1, taken from YOT data submitted to the Youth Justice Board, shows the number of offences committed per young person based upon the cohort that was identified from January to March 2010.

**Table 1. Average Number of Offences Committed per Young Offender, Halton & Warrington and Comparable Regions (Jan-March, 2010)**

YOT	Average no. of offences per person
Halton & Warrington	0.94
Doncaster	0.91
Sefton	1.02
Stockton-on-Tees	1.23
St. Helens	1.16
Wirral	1.17
Wigan	1.08
Bury	1.02
Rotherham	1.22
Walsall	0.85

*(Source: Youth Justice Board)*

The YOTs in the table have been identified by the Youth Justice Board, based upon population and demographic information from the 2001 census, as part the Youth Justice family. This was especially relevant ten years ago when performance of all YOTs was measured using league tables, so that each YOT could provide a comparable analysis to the other YOTs in their family/region. The table above shows that Halton & Warrington is the third best performing YOT, in terms of offences committed. The average from all the YOTs is 1.05, meaning that Halton & Warrington perform better than the average reoffending rate of its family members. Unfortunately, the YOT is unable to analyse this performance in terms of local or national trends over the past 5 years. This is due to the fact that the performance data is based upon counting rules produced by the Youth Justice Board which have changed over this time period. Therefore, comparative analysis in this specific area, in terms of trends, is unable to be completed.

Youth Justice Board figures show that Halton & Warrington's performance of 0.94 is better than both the regional (1.19) and national (1.08) averages.

The profile of young offenders across Halton and Warrington in terms of age, gender and offences for 2011 are detailed in Table 2. In order to prevent identity disclosure, data cannot be provided by ethnicity due to the small numbers of offences committed by offenders from ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, the YOT is unable to do a comparative analysis over the years in regard to offences, due to issues around Police recording the type of offences changing on a regular basis. It is also accepted that the table does not include a comparable analysis to the general population. The YOT is restricted by both the case management system from which performance information must be manually extracted and the limited resources, in terms of performance personnel, to undertake a more in-depth piece of work. Therefore, it is accepted that this chapter only discusses a snapshot of YOT young people, but that it does give a flavour of the average age and type of offences that are committed in the areas. Over the years, YOTs have been asked to analyse offending data in terms of wards. However, this becomes a challenge when it is unclear if the information required for where the offender lives, or where the offence was committed. Again, the validity of this analysis is questionable in regard to the outcomes it would show.

**Table 2. Age, gender and offence committed for young offenders in Halton & Warrington (2011)**

Offence	No. offences by age					No. offences by gender		
	10-13yrs	14yrs	15yrs	16yrs	17yrs	Male	Female	TOTAL
Violence Against Person	33	23	29	31	26	99	43	142
Racially Aggravated Offences	6					6		6
Sexual Offence	5		20			25	0	25
Death Or Injury By Reckless Driving	0					0		0
Motoring Offences	6		15	22		43		43
Robbery	**					**		**
Domestic Burglary	5		14			19		19
Non-Domestic Burglary	8		6			14	0	14
Vehicle Theft	8					8	0	8
Theft & Handling	13	20	23	37	48	130	11	141
Fraud & Forgery	**					**		**
Arson	6					6	0	6
Criminal Damage	12	10	10	23	16	60	11	71
Drugs Offence	18		14		19	51		51
Public Order	5	9	9	19	15	43	14	57
Other	5		9			14		14
Breach of Conditional Discharge	7					7		7
Breach Of Statutory Order	3	11	2	3	9	28		28
Breach of Bail	15					15		15
TOTAL	76	96	105	182	194	558	95	653

*Note: Cells are merged where necessary in order to suppress instances of small numbers and prevent identity disclosure.*

*\*\* Data has been suppressed*

The YOT would like to draw particular attention to the area of education, training and employment for young people. In this particular area, we are able to analyse the YOT data and break it down into the separate areas of Halton and Warrington. Therefore, the following figures relate specifically to young people in Warrington. During the period January to December 2011, 61 out of 96 (63.5%) young people were in suitable education, training or employment one week prior to programme completion with the YOT. It should be noted that, in terms of post-16 years (i.e. those no longer subject to statutory education), suitable employment or training only equated to 62.4%. This performance relies upon the local economic situation and, in terms of trying to get young people into suitable employment or training, the current economic climate is proving a challenge. Overall, the percentage of young people in suitable education, training and employment for this period was 63.5%, compared to 69.2% regionally and 71.4% nationally. The YOT Management Board is aware of the challenges the YOT faces in regard to this area and the YOT continues to work closely with the Connexions service that are also represented on the YOT Management Board.

The YOT recently completed an analysis looking at young people's ability to acquire suitable accommodation, and the results are as follows:

*A snapshot of Warrington Young People subject to a YOT Order on a specific date (20.09.11)*

It is accepted that these are small numbers, but the intention is to give a flavour of the accommodation provision that YOT young people were using at this specific time.

- 34 were living with parents
- 4 were living in care homes
- 4 were in custody – 3 expected to be homeless upon release/1 returning to parents
- 3 were living in local hostel – 1 awaiting his own tenancy and the other given 28 days' notice
- 2 were 'sofa surfing' (staying with various friends and relations)
- 1 was living in temporary accommodation with a family member
- 1 was in a foster placement

The above information gives a brief outline of the type of accommodation that YOT young people are residing in. However, a more in depth analysis of the suitability of each of these placements would be required for the appropriateness of accommodation for YOT young people in Warrington to be commented upon. The YOT is aware of the problems encountered when young people need to access accommodation on an emergency basis, for example, as part of court proceedings.

The YOT is unable to provide data on the numbers of young people at risk of offending through either truancy or who have siblings that are offenders. This is because, from a prevention perspective, the YOT is unable to target young people and instead has to rely upon referrals from the Police. YOT prevention work is extremely limited in its resources and therefore will only provide interventions to young people identified by the Police.

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### 3) Current Services in Relation to Need

**3.1) YOT Prevention Services:** The YOT provides an appropriate adult service, which is underpinned by the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), when requested through Sandymoor Custody Suite. During the period April 2010 to March 2011, the YOT was required to attend 61 PACE interviews for young people from both Halton & Warrington.

Halton & Warrington YOT utilised funding from the Department of Health to establish the Divert Project, which screens all young people and children who are arrested. This is one of six national pilot projects which aim to rapidly assess and, where appropriate, divert young people from the Youth Justice System. The project is delivered jointly between the YOT and Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), with the partnership of Cheshire Police. The young person is referred to the project, which, after assessment, will signpost on to other agencies, as appropriate. There is then an agreement with the Police about whether the young person should be diverted and no further action taken, whether they will receive a Police Reprimand or Final Warning, or whether the young person will be dealt with through the Court System.

The Youth Inclusion and Support Panel ceased to operate on 31 March 2011, due to lack of funding. This led to concerns in regard to how the YOT would continue to deliver Final Warning assessments and interventions, Divert Project interventions, and other prevention work. Through a commissioning arrangement in Halton, the YOT was able to work with both the Local Authority and Cheshire Fire and Rescue to set up a 12 month prevention programme. Therefore, in Halton, the previously mentioned assessments and interventions are delivered through the Prevention Team, which also incorporates referrals from the Integrated Working Support Team.

In Warrington, Cheshire Police, Halton & Warrington YOT, Children's Social Care through the Youth Service and Community Safety have developed what is now the mainstreamed Step In Project. The project has recently been delivering interventions to those young people who receive a Police Reprimand and this is being monitored in terms of capacity of the project. In terms of delivering Final Warning interventions and Divert Project interventions, the YOT realigned a member of staff who previously worked with statutory cases to develop this preventative area of work. Again, capacity has to be continually monitored.

The YOT is currently in the process of developing its Restorative Justice interventions. Restorative Justice is a term used to describe a process which involved the victims of crime influencing the type of punishment/intervention that the offending will receive. For example, the victim may request that the young offender works on a community project, writes a letter of apology or meet the victim in a mediation session. At the present time, the YOT is undertaking a *train the trainer* event in restorative justice and this will ensure that all case managers are skilled in delivering these interventions. The YOT can then continue to improve its services to victims. This training will also be offered to the prevention elements of the YOT so that Restorative Justice techniques can be used instead of processing young people through the Youth Justice System.

**3.2) YOT Court Services:** The YOT provides a service to two courts, Halton Youth Court and Warrington Youth Court, and will attend Warrington and Chester Crown Court as required. This includes preparing reports to assist the court in sentencing a young person, offering bail supervision packages for young people so that they are not remanded to custody and addressing the court in regard to the various services and interventions that the YOT can offer. The YOT also has a role in explaining the court processes to the young person and their parents/carers.

When a young person is remanded to custody or receives a custodial sentence, the YOT will recommend where the young person should go to and whether it should be a Young Offenders Institute, a Secure Training Centre or a Secure Children's Home. These decisions are based upon the young person's vulnerability, their age and their previous involvement with the Criminal Justice System.

**3.3) YOT Statutory Services:** The YOT is structured in line with Youth Justice Board's Scaled Approach model, which is a way of working that reflects the intensity of Halton & Warrington YOT's work with young people to assess their likelihood of reoffending and their risk of serious harm to others. The YOT has three teams, the Assessment and Court Services Team, the Early Intervention Team (which works with young people who are assessed as low to medium risk) and the Intensive Team (which works with young people who are assessed as medium to high risk). The YOT assesses risk in three ways, the level of risk the young person poses in terms of serious harm to the public, the level of risk the young poses in terms of re-offending and the level of risk the young person poses in terms of their own vulnerability.

The court can sentence a young person to a number of disposals according to the seriousness of their offending and their offending history. These can range from Reparation Orders (projects in the community), Youth Rehabilitation Orders (that can have various requirements attached) and custodial sentences, where the minimum term is 4 months.

An assessment is completed on each child and young person at the start of each intervention/sentence. This identifies the level of risk in terms of reoffending, harm to the public and their vulnerability. All assessments are countersigned by a manager, even if the assessment is low risk. Cases assessed as high risk are referred to a risk management structure overseen by the Deputy Head of Service / Head of Service, according to the Halton & Warrington YOT Risk Management Policy.

For Children in Care (CiC) cases, the YOT will be part of the care plan and will attend reviews, **care planning meetings, conferences and pathway reviews, as appropriate.** For any young person who is known to Children's Social Care, either within the local boroughs or from another Local Authority. The YOT will hold a Welfare Planning Meeting. The meeting is chaired by an Operational Manager and discusses the young person's risk in terms of their vulnerability and how this should be managed. All young people regarded as high risk for vulnerability issues are referred through the Halton & Warrington YOT risk register overseen by the Deputy Head of Service/Head of Service, with themes being reported to the YOT Management Board.

**3.4) YOT Interventions:** Halton & Warrington YOT has secured specific funding over the years to provide various interventions, including community projects, for example the Community Space Challenge Project, the Summer Arts Project, the Friday Night Project, as well as various reparation projects, including graffiti removal. The YOT is also involved in developing cross-cultural and inter-generational programmes, which includes working with older people and those with a disability to provide entertainment evenings as part of a reparation project for YOT young people.

Halton & Warrington YOT is linked into Family Pathfinder, Warrington Step In Project, Halton Family Intervention Project (FIP) and both Parenting Co-ordinators to deliver holistic services to young people and their families. YOT workers will advocate for young people in a variety of settings, for example, transport to job interviews and training events, accommodation interviews, conflict resolution/restorative justice, helping parents and teaching young people life

skills, especially when they live independently. In terms of prolific offenders, the YOT is involved in the Integrated Offender Management Scheme (IOM) with Cheshire Police and Cheshire Probation Service.

The YOT delivers offence-specific interventions and programmes on both a group-work and one-to-one basis. These include Teen-Talk, violent offenders programme, anger management programme, general offending behaviour programme, and a sexual health group-work programme. Through working with partner agencies, other programmes include drug and alcohol awareness sessions, arson, knife crime, and specific domestic violence programmes.

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## 4) Projected Service Use and Outcomes in 3-5 Years and 5-10 Years

The trend around youth offending, in some respect, will not change. Over the past 10 years, 5% of young offenders commit 90% of all crime nationally.

Through the introduction of projects such as the Integrated Offender Manager Scheme (Navigate), the rate and frequency of reoffending has reduced. However, the level or seriousness of offences at this stage cannot be analysed, as the scheme needs to be in operation for a longer time period.

In regards to YOT prevention services, there has been a decrease in funding, meaning that the main prevention provision, which was the Youth Inclusion & Support Programme, has not been in existence since April 2011. Therefore, with the continued decrease in funding, it is difficult to predict which projects will still be available over the next 5 years. It is clear, though, that the prevention programmes and the Divert Project have impacted on the rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system. This is something that will be continued to be monitored over the next 5 years.

As with all youth offending outcomes, projections depend upon the agenda of the government at the time.

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## 5) Evidence of What Works

The YOT is accountable to both the Local Authority and its statutory partners and the Youth Justice Board who are all contributory funding partners. The Youth Justice Board is situated within the Ministry of Justice and is the main funding partner. Since its implementation in 1998, the YJB has developed codes of practice for all YOTs across England and Wales. The continuity of funding from the YJB is based upon adherence to the National Standards and the performance of the YOT, as guided by the YJB's case management guidance. Over the years, the YJB has applied McGuire's "What Works Principals" through guidance in the published documents entitled *Key Elements of Effective Practice*.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) will be issuing revised National Standards in April 2012 for consultation and feedback over a six month period. National Standards are the minimum set of requirements that the YOT must have in place in order to meet its legal obligations. All YOTs are required to practice in accordance with the YJB case management guidance, which was issued in 2009. The YOT is an early adopter for the new YJB YOT Self-Assessment Tool and the YOT will also be developing its own standards in regard to the quality of case management.

The YOT continues to deliver interventions based upon the scaled approach, which is a risk led system that prioritises resources and interventions towards young people who are assessed as high risk.

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## 6) (Target) Population/Service User Views

The Youth Offending Team send out a Client Feedback Questionnaire to both the young person and their parent/carer (if applicable) for each case that has been completed successfully. During the period January to December 2011, 20 responses were received. All the young people surveyed said that they got on 'well' or 'very well' with their YOT/prevention worker. They all indicated that their worker understood them and treated them fairly and with respect. When asked about their hopes for the future, almost all the respondents felt hopeful that they would stay out of trouble and about their future chances in life. The majority of respondents felt that their life was "better" or "much better" since attending the YOT.

In July 2011, Halton & Warrington YOT, in conjunction with Cheshire Youth Offending Service, devised a short questionnaire for the Youth Court Bench to complete. The aim of the questionnaire is to assist the YOT to improve the quality of the reports it produces for the court.

From July 2011 to March 2012, 27 questionnaires were issued and 8 have been returned.

Of the seven questions asked, the responses from the eight returned forms mainly scored "excellent" or "good". Two questions generated a "poor" response from one of the returned forms and those particular questions were in relation to victim issues and risk management issues. However, the overall feedback from the Magistrates questionnaires was extremely good. Comments from the questionnaires are as follows:

- Comprehensive report providing a good basis for sentencing
- Recommendations made in the report were accepted
- Could have been more concise
- The report didn't mention substance misuse
- Please do not use acronyms
- Very good aid for sentencing
- Very well written report
- The report proposal did not fully consider the seriousness of the offence

Each of these comments and the overall analysis has been discussed at the YOT Practice and Performance Management Meeting in order for the necessary changes in practice to be agreed and implemented.

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## 7) Unmet Needs and Service Gaps

As mentioned previously, the key critical elements are the current gap in service around the appropriate provision of education, training and employment, and accommodation for young offenders.

As has been referred to above, there are difficulties in regard to targeting young people who truant from school or those who have siblings who offend.

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## 8) Recommendations for Commissioning

Development and investment in appropriate, supportive accommodation for young offenders is needed. A review of the processes that surround making a young person 'intentionally homeless' would also be recommended, especially bearing in mind the government proposal of transferring the cost of remand into custody to Local Authorities.

Development of incentives for education/training providers to work with young offenders is needed, especially in regard to ensuring realistic outcomes for these young people.

Development and investment in the healthy schools and broader prevention agenda is important, to ensure young people receive appropriate messages and information in regard to involvement in the criminal justice system.

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## 9) Recommendations for Needs Assessment Work

As mentioned above, the YOT will be completing the YJB Self-Assessment Tool over the next 12 months and will be developing its own standards. Recommendation for the self-assessment will be included in the YOT Management Plan.

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## References

[Youth Justice Board National Standards Guidance](#)

[Youth Justice Board Case Management Guidance](#)

Relevant Criminal Justice Legislation and Acts

Relevant Child Care Legislation and Acts

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