Title  
Too Little, Too Late? Parenting Orders as a Form of Crime Prevention

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TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?
Parenting Orders as a form of Crime Prevention

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A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Youth Justice

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ABSTRACT

The development of Youth Justice in the UK since the early 1990s has been informed by the belief that the family plays a key role in youth offending. In 1998 the parenting order was introduced, based on the assumption that interventions to improve parenting will have a positive effect upon offending. The availability of the order was extended in 2005, reflecting the view that parents who do not undertake parenting support are being wilfully negligent of their responsibilities and must be made to take the help offered. In this thesis the assumptions justifying the parenting order and its extensions are questioned. Evidence suggests that although parenting is influential, it is one of many factors associated with the onset of or desistence from offending. Furthermore, as this thesis highlights, parents likely to receive parenting orders are often experiencing several personal and environmental 'stressors', creating high levels of need. These situational pressures and high level of need, this thesis argues, are likely to make it difficult for them to be effective in their role, or to gain long term benefit from attending a parenting programme. Furthermore, many parents have histories of unsuccessfully seeking assistance from 'helping agencies', refuting the assumption of wilful neglect. This thesis considers the advantages and limitations of parenting work as a form of crime prevention and specifically looks at the use of the parenting order. An argument is presented for a wider, more holistic approach to parenting work than that offered by the parenting order as a form of crime prevention and for providing assistance to families earlier.
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted as fulfilment of the degree of Professional Doctorate in Youth Justice at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Roberta Vlugter

Date: 6/7/2010
1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, the Government has argued for and implemented initiatives to change behaviour (Lewis, 2007) particularly the behaviour of young people who offend and their families. Although government has shown some appreciation for the stresses and strains experienced by parents and for the fact that parenting is harder for those who are poor (Buchanan, 2000), over time policies have tended to expand the legal responsibilities of the parents of young offenders and of young people identified as 'at risk' of offending. Pitts (2003a:48) argues that government policies have tended to shift from the idea of “youth crime as a product of poverty, social inequality or psychological disadvantage” to an emphasis on individual and family responsibility. This is exemplified by the parenting orders, first introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The parenting order holds parents responsible for their child's behaviour and their own parenting with the focus of the intervention placed on the parent's relationship with and supervision of their child. The order requires the parent to attend counselling or guidance sessions on a weekly basis for three months; it can include additional requirements, such as ensuring their child attends school, for a period of up to twelve months. It is made against the parents(s) of a child that has been convicted of an offence; been made subject of an antisocial behaviour order, a sex offender order or a child safety order; and parents who have been convicted of failing to ensure their child attends school.

In the 1990s academics and policy makers devoted considerable attention to the 'risk factors' associated with youth crime, in particular the risk factors associated with the individual offenders (Pitts and Bateman, 2005). The justification for the parenting order according to the White Paper 'No More Excuses' (Home Office, 1997a) is that parental supervision is the most
significant 'factor' associated with youth offending and that the order will help parents to control the behaviour of their children. Since the conception of the parenting order it has received wide criticism from criminologists, who specifically threw doubt on the effectiveness of punishing (poor) parents as a means to reduce offending. Critically, “the war on crime became a war on parents” (Gelsthorpe, 1999). Goldson and Jamieson (2002) argue that the approach of New Labour of ensuring parents meet their 'moral obligations' through legal sanctions has a 'distinctly punitive edge'. They suggest that parents receiving a parenting order are likely to experience a multiplicity of problems and some may previously have unsuccessfully sought assistance from 'helping agencies' (Goldson and Jamieson, 2002; Goldson 2000). Despite these criticisms, the availability of the parenting order has been expanded further with the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 extending its provisions, the Criminal Justice Act 2003 amending parenting orders to increase their flexibility and with the Police and Justice Act 2006 enabling a wider range of agencies to seek parenting contracts and orders in cases of antisocial behaviour. Between April 2000 and September 2005 a total of 5,988 parenting orders were made in England and Wales with an increase of 38 per cent from 2004/5 on the previous twelve month period (Walters and Woodward, 2007). Since then the numbers appear to have increased at a slower rate, with a nine percent increase in 2007/8 from the previous year, with a total of 1,649 parenting orders issued (YJB, 2009). Despite lack of support for the parenting order and the view that it is 'out of keeping with many of those working in the field', continued use is envisaged (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008:476). The achievement of a reduction of young people entering the youth justice system over the previous three year period has in part been contributed to the support delivered to parents in Youth Offending Teams (YJB, 2009) and the Youth Crime Action Plan (2008) encourages the use of Parenting Orders as a form of 'non-negotiable challenge and support' to tackle the 'root causes' of youth crime (Home Office, 2008).

The choice of topic for this research was inspired by personal experience as a case manager and as a parenting practitioner in a Youth Offending Team. I
came into the role of Parenting Coordinator when the position was newly established in 2006. The position required the development of procedures and practices. Specific models for working with parents of young people who offend were not available. It was expected that such models would be investigated and adapted for local use following the development of the Parenting Coordinator role. The Youth Justice Board guidance in regard to Parenting Contracts and Orders (Ministry of Justice et al, 2007), along with the Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEPs) in ‘Parenting’ (YJB, 2007c) were the primary sources of information and direction. One of the aims of this research was to provide better insight in the effectiveness of the parenting orders and their importance in the practice of Youth Offending Teams and the role of the Parenting Coordinator. This thesis questions some of the assumptions underlying the parenting order and the role of the practitioner working with parents in a Youth Offending Team. One of these assumptions is that parents and their parenting style are a primary influencing factor as to why young people offend and that support offered to parents can positively influence their children’s offending behaviour.

Although youth crime and also the role of parents in the life of young people has been researched extensively, little research has been undertaken into the use, effectiveness or outcomes of parenting orders. In the next chapter I discuss the findings of relevant research and scholarship concerning the relationship between parenting and youth offending and the efficacy of interventions which target the parents of young people who offend. The following chapter outlines some initial conclusions and proposes a number of research questions. These are then explored through various qualitative and quantitative methods, relying primarily on a case-file study of 150 cases taken from a London Youth Offending Team. This sample includes cases where parents were subject to a parenting order and cases where parents undertook voluntary support. Comparison and analysis of these cases, considers both the level of need presented and the impact of parenting work on the parents and the young people. In conclusion, suggestions for practice are offered.
2. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

This literature review considers the efficacy of parenting work as an intervention tool to address a young person's offending. The historical, political and theoretical context of the development of parenting work within youth offending teams is examined in detail. This analysis is linked with an examination of criminological accounts of the aetiology of youth offending and the factors associated with desistance from offending. Evidence that identified parents and parenting style as the primary influence upon youth offending is contrasted with arguments that give primacy to structural and social factors, such as poverty and neighbourhood deprivation. The review then considers the function of parenting work within youth justice and the experiences of parents involved with Youth Offending Teams and parenting programmes. The evidence presented in this literature review informs the research questions to be investigated in later sections of this thesis.

I. THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

I.i. 1854 – 1980s

Arthur (2005) provides a summary of the legislation that has been enforcing parental responsibility in regard to juvenile offenders since the 19th Century, starting with the Youthful Offenders Act 1854. While early legislation tended to concentrate on educating and 'reforming' children who were considered to be 'deviant' or beyond parental control, later measures shifted parental responsibilities into criminal legislation. Thus the problems of 'irregular' families and youth crime became "more or less synonymous" (Pitts, 2000:5). When the
1908 Children Act, which established the principle of dealing with juvenile and adult offenders separately, was introduced by Herbert Samuel. He argued that "parents were to be made more responsible for the wrong-doing of their children" (Gelsthorpe, 1999:222). The Children and Young Person's Act 1933 was, however, the first to empower courts to require parents to pay the fines of a young person convicted of an offence. Despite criticism from both those giving the sentences and from workers within the justice system, this did not prevent further similar legislation being implemented less than a decade later (Haines and Drakeford, 1998). The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 also established that magistrates were to have regard to the 'welfare of the child', and the post-war 'welfare state' continued well into the 1960s (Gelsthorpe, 1999). Pitts (2003a) provides a detailed outline of the shifts in ideology in youth justice legislation over the last few decades. The 1960s are described as a period of 'welfarism', where there was a perceived need for robust state intervention to improve the personal and social circumstances of young offenders. During this time the Government took on a paternalistic role towards the parents of young offenders. For example, the 1963 Children and Young Persons Act required local authorities to seek out and advise parents of children who appeared to be at risk of becoming delinquent (West, 1967) and aimed at encouraging the development of parental responsibility through the provision of family advice centres, located in high crime areas (Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000). However, by the early 1970s social welfare provision was being cut back leading to the gradual erosion of such provision. The change in government to the Conservatives in 1970 saw young offenders being viewed as personally responsible for their actions, committing offences due to desires 'exacerbated by the welfare state rather than from social inequality' and with parents being seen to have failed to discipline and inspire 'basic values' in their children (Gelsthorpe, 1999). Pitts (2003a) illustrates that the 1970s was a period of 'progressive minimalism', which strove to divert young people from a potentially stigmatizing formal involvement in the justice system. Interventions seemed to dominate within the two extremes of the justice spectrum, with police cautions and custodial sentences rising dramatically between mid-1960 and the mid-
1970s (Pitts, 2005). From the mid-1970s there was a broad consensus growing among criminologists, government and ‘helping professions’ that ‘nothing works’ in regard to the effectiveness of rehabilitative interventions (Bateman and Pitts, 2005). The preservation of ‘due process of the law’ was given priority, which ensured young offenders were held accountable for their actions without a welfare based intervention (Pitts, 2005). During this time family responsibility was enacted through parents being made to, literally, pay for the actions of their children (Gelsthorpe, 1999).

l.ii. The 1980s - 2000

Due to the rising costs of the justice system, particularly with the overcrowding of custodial institutions, the 1980s saw a continuation of the ‘progressive minimalism’ approach with a justice-orientated model of incarcerating only the most serious offenders and implementing cost effective management and surveillance in the lives of ‘lesser criminals’ (Pitts, 2005). The Conservative Government’s strategy of ‘delinquency management’ saw the launch of the Intermediate Treatment initiative in 1983 aimed to develop alternatives to custody (Pitts, 2003a). During this time multi-agency diversion panels were established and young people could receive repeated informal interventions if they and their parents agreed to participate in programmes (Pitts, 2005). The interventions could include programmes aimed at ‘family relationships’ but it appears that the abandonment of the welfare approach also meant that issues of parenting were kept outside of the justice-led interventions.

From the late 1980s, however, there was a reversal in the Government’s approach whereby the previous resignation that ‘nothing works’ became a quest for ‘what works’ (Bateman and Pitts, 2005). Record rises in crime rates and public concern in regard to youth crime saw a shift toward ‘penal populism’ (Pitts, 2005). In moving away from the ‘permissive period’ of the 1960s, both Labour and Conservative governments popularised the image of “wilfully
negligent parents colluding with or even encouraging misbehaviour" (Muncie, 2004:239). The 1990s saw the introduction of 'corporate correctionalism' within the 'new youth justice' era (Pitts, 2003a). Family policy was placed within youth justice legislation, which became increasingly punitive with the focus on the 'deeds' rather than the 'needs' of young offenders and their parents (Pitts, 2003a). For example, a significant aspect of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 was section 58, which "sought to punish parents" (Henricson, 2001) with the parental 'bind over'. Parents could be 'bound over' by the court to exercise control over an offending child and where failure to meet the terms could result in a £1,000 fine. Although previous legislation could make parents pay the fines of their children, this was the first time parents could be held directly responsible for their 'failure to control their children's behaviour'. The rationale for the bind over was set out by the then Home Office Minister, John Patten who described the families of young offenders as families who "could cope but simply chose not to [and who] have failed not through misfortune or misjudgement, but through wilful neglect by parents of their responsibilities" (In Hansard, vol 149, col 767, cited in Haines and Drakeford, 1998:151; Arthur, 2005:235; Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008:472).

Several criminologists highlight that in the 1990s and specifically following the murder of two-year-old James Bulger by two truanting 10 year olds in 1993, the Youth Justice system took a 'decisively retributive turn' where 'guilt, responsibility and punishment' resurfaced in the legal discourse (Muncie and Goldson, 2006:36). The case sparked much public and political cry in regard to the moral state of society and wide spread discussions in regard to how children and young people should be processed by the law, placing issues of parental care and control at the forefront. The judge presiding over the Bulger case "made a plea for a public debate on parenting" (Gelsthorpe, 1999). The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act extended the bind over provision giving courts the power to bind over parents to ensure their child's compliance with a community sentence (Muncie, 2004) and introduced "increasingly coercive powers to intervene in the lives of parents of young offenders" (Haines and
Drakeford, 1998:152). This was a significant change in emphasis on responsibility because not only were parents responsible to ensure their children stayed out of trouble but also in theory to enforce their punishment.

During the 1990s New Labour took up the baton of law and order, attacking previous government measures and promising to be ‘tough on crime, tough on causes of crime’ (Pitts, 2005; Muncie, 2004; Goldson, 1999). They placed “criminality among the under 10s, the capacity of the youth justice system to deal with it, and the role of government in supporting the family to nip it in the bud, at the heart of its ‘law and order’ strategy” (Pitts 2003a:14). Although New Labour’s mantra indicated an acknowledgement that crime ‘does not occur in a vacuum’, in reality, the process of being tough on the causes of crime created a set of ‘perverse incentives’ (Downes, 1998) based on notions of ‘rights’ and ‘responsibilities’ (Newburn, 1998). During this time the Conservatives were also placing an emphasis on tackling and explaining youth crime and the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee commissioned a study to inquire into “issues affecting juvenile offenders and the particular problems of persistent offenders”. The results were published in a report titled *Youth and Crime* (Graham and Bowling, 1995). Because the study has had significant influence on policies, it will be useful to look at its conclusions in some detail.

The *Youth and Crime* study comprised a cross-sectional survey of approximately 2,500 young people. The young people were asked about a number of identified ‘risk and protective factors’ in their lives: social class, family background, family size, family structure and relationships, parental supervision, sibling involvement with the police, school experience and association with delinquent peers. The authors noted that children exposed to multiple ‘adverse factors’ seemed to be disproportionately more likely to end up as serious or persistent offenders. They initially concluded that social class had no significant bearing upon the onset of offending but because this was at variance with research which looked at young people convicted of an offence (compared to self-report studies) they re-analysed the data and found that when controlling
for all but the most serious offences, social class was a significant factor. They concluded however that the three strongest correlates of the onset of offending for both males and females is contact with delinquent peers, truancy from school and low parental supervision. The authors highlight that it was not possible to discern whether offending was a cause or an effect of truancy and delinquent peer association as they were closely related. When considering other possible explanations for these factors as separate outcomes in themselves, the authors found that a poor parent-child relationship was significantly linked with truancy and delinquent peer association. Although they note that poor parent-child relationships may in fact be a result of the young person offending they do not go further to consider if the young person’s truancy and negative peer associations could also lead to a ‘bad relationship’ with a parent. There is also no clarification as to which parent the child identifies as having a ‘bad relationship’ with and in reality it may not be the primary carer in the home in the cases of single-parent or step-parent families, where the link between poor relationships and later delinquency or truancy was found to be strongest. Graham and Bowling still concluded that “the quality of family relationships is identified as pivotal to why young people start to commit offences” (p85) and recommended that interventions aimed at preventing criminality should involve strategies which improve the quality of relationships within families and the capacity of parents to effectively supervise their children.

The conclusions of this report were reflected in papers produced by both the Conservative and New Labour parties. Furthermore, in 1996, a paper was published by the Audit Commission, looking into the costs and effectiveness of the youth justice system, titled Misspent Youth (Home Office, 1996). This report was “heavily influenced” by the Youth and Crime Study and the recommendations were of “great importance in influencing the eventual shape of the new government’s legislation” (Newburn, 1998:205). The Commission criticised the youth justice system and reported that “resources need to shift from processing young offenders to dealing with their behaviour” (Home Office, 1996:96). The commission criticised the lack of resources spent on preventing
young people getting in to trouble (Pitts, 2003a). The findings of this report and the 'risk factors' it outlined in regard to youth crime were similar to those outlined in New Labour’s report *Tackling the Causes of Crime*, unsurprising since they both refer to findings of the same longitudinal study (Pitts, 2003a). This study is discussed later in this thesis. New Labour had published a series of papers while in opposition, culminating in 1996 with *Tackling the Causes of Crime* and a further paper titled *Parenting* (Jones, 2002). The latter claimed a link between ‘the character of parental supervision’ and later delinquency (Haines and Drakeford, 1998).

The conclusions of Graham and Bowling’s *Youth and Crime* study and the recommendations of the Audit Commission’s Report *Misspent Youth* were reproduced in the White Paper *No More Excuses* (Home Office, 1997a), published soon after New Labour was elected and which preceded the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Although Henricson (2001) states that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 took a ‘more supportive approach’ when it introduced the parenting order (sections 8-10), Muncie (1999:241) argues that it is a “logical continuation of ... Conservative initiatives to criminalize what is considered to be ‘inadequate parenting’”. A paper published prior to *No More Excuses* was the Home Office consultation paper *Tackling Youth Crime* (1997b). This claimed that the underlying aim of the parenting order was to make ‘parents who wilfully neglected their responsibilities answerable to the court’ (para 32). It is further argued that although it was the Conservatives who first presented the idea of the parenting order in 1997 it was “the authoritarian brand of behaviour management favoured by Tony Blair as Prime Minister” that enforced the counselling or guidance element of the order (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008). Parents can be made subject to a parenting order for a period of three to twelve months, requiring them to undertake guidance or counselling sessions with the intention of them addressing their child’s offending behaviour. Although the Order is made without a recorded conviction, if the parenting order is breached, the parent(s) could be prosecuted and sentenced in the adult court and made
liable to a fine (up to £1,000), a curfew order or probation order. If they fail to pay the fine they could face further sentencing, including custody.

The White Paper *No More Excuses* (1997a) suggests that government and practitioners had previously been excusing offenders (Pitts 2005) and had showed too much leniency towards parents (Haines and Drakeford, 1998:238). The paper begins by stating that “there is no easy link of cause and effect between the factors associated with youth crime and actual offending” but later contradicts itself by claiming that “we know a great deal about the factors which are associated with youth crime”. Referring to Graham and Bowling (1995) the paper lists eight key factors. These multiple factors are reduced to ‘two important influences’, namely persistent school truancy and association with other offenders (Home Office, 1997a). The paper acknowledges that “crime does not happen in a social vacuum. It is correlated with social disadvantage and poverty” but concludes that “the single most important factor in explaining criminality is the quality of a young person’s home life, including parental supervision” (p5). This was the justification for the parenting order and seems an unexpected finger-pointing at the parents, in view of earlier statements. As Muncie and Goldson (2006:40) argue, “the social contexts of offending are bypassed”. The issues of disadvantage and poverty, how they impact on ‘effective parenting’ and the government’s role in addressing these are supplanted by the responsibility of the individual and family to address youth crime. The government’s role is reduced to enforcing this responsibility (Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000; Pitts, 2005; Muncie, 2004; Goldson, 1999). In the 2000s New Labour continued to extend the powers of courts to make parents ‘answerable’ to them.

**I.iii. The 2000s**

In 2001 a new offence of ‘aggravated truancy’ was created carrying a fine or a three month prison sentence for parents who seemed to condone truancy (Muncie, 2004). The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows for issuing of fixed
penalty notices to parents of offenders between ten to sixteen years and increases circumstances in which a parenting order can be made, including ‘stand-alone’ orders, where there is no requirement for a young person to have been convicted of an offence. The Act also allowed for residential based programmes, where families move to supervised areas, to be part of a parenting order. The preceding White Paper ‘Respect and Responsibility’ (Home Office 2003, p5) placed heavy emphasis on families and family life as both a cause and a solution to youth offending.

In 2005 New Labour launched their ‘respect agenda’ and increased the availability of parenting orders and the “parenting theme gathered further pace with the establishment in the Home Office of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit” (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008:475). In a speech about the ‘respect agenda’ in January 2006, then Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that a clear focus of tackling antisocial behaviour would be on those “small number of families who are out of control and in crises” (Blair, 2006). Support would be offered to these families but it would come with a ‘tough message’, in that “if parents of children who are involved in antisocial behaviour refuse to take up the offer of help, then parenting orders will be made available to a wider range of agencies”. Apparently this offer was refused because the Police and Justice Act 2006 extended availability of parenting orders to schools and other Local Authority agencies. Local Authorities can argue for a parenting order if a young person is involved in antisocial behaviour or truanting and the parents are refusing to engage in voluntary support. Although the ‘respect agenda’ identifies schools and teachers as influential factors in young people’s lives, poor attendance or behaviour is blamed on the ‘deeper problems at home’. The ‘agenda’ holds parents accountable for the child’s behaviour in the classroom as well as for providing the supervision of an excluded child (a child whose behaviour is no longer manageable by the school) for the first five days of exclusion. The help and support available to parents appears to be focused on addressing parenting skills. There was also a proposal to extend the schemes in Bristol and Dundee to require families of truant or antisocial children to move out of their homes and
live in supervised areas for a period of time. The primary focus appears to be on
the regulation of 'out of control' behaviour, rather than on addressing the
possible underlying causes of the behaviour, such as poverty and social
disadvantage. The Home Office briefing paper Action for Parents (November
2006) appears to turn the issue on its head by suggesting that behaviour is the
cause of poverty, rather than the other way round: "children with behaviour
problems are at high risk of future poverty and disadvantage". The briefing
paper also appears to indicate, with an interesting use of the polysemous word
'poor', that the responsibility of the behaviour problems as well as the poverty
lies with the parents: "put simply, poor parenting creates poor child outcomes
and is one of the main reasons why children in poor households grow up poor
themselves" (p5).

The messages of responsibility and accountability have continued in both New
Labour and Conservative discourse. The Conservative party have been
encouraging the ideal of family life, proclaiming that it offers a 'panacea to
crime' and that parents should be shamed into receiving help if they are not
meeting their obligations (Bennett, 2008). The Social Exclusion Task Force
launched the 'Think Family' agenda in June 2007. Encouragingly, adult and
children's services are expected to no longer work in isolation and to support
their clients in a holistic approach, considering the needs of families rather than
individuals (Cabinet Office, 2008). The support offered continues to be filtered
with messages of parental responsibility and accountability. The 'Think Family'
agenda has resulted in initiatives that have extended the provision of parenting
programmes within the UK and projects that focus on the most problematic
families persistently perpetuating antisocial behaviour and whereby contracts of
behaviour and enforcement measures will be used to 'engage' and 'turn around'
families. The Youth Crime Action Plan (Home Office, 2008) reflects similar
messages and although it highlights the need for accessible information for
parents and the use of early intervention through the Sure Start Children's
Centres, there is a clear promotion of the use of parenting orders as a form of
‘non-negotiable challenge and support’ to tackle the ‘root causes’ of youth crime (Home Office, 2008).

The messages from the ‘Think Family’ and ‘Respect’ agendas reflect a long history of legislation blaming parents for their child’s behaviour. The ‘deeds’ rather than the ‘needs’ of young people and their families is the focus of interventions. Following the ‘permissive’ era of the 1960s the political landscape became risk focused and punitive. Although New Labour took up the baton for tackling youth crime in the 1990s, this was a continuation of populist politics strongly grounded in the Conservative manifesto. This can be seen in the almost competing responses of Government to public fears that the ‘social and moral fabric of British society is collapsing’ when Thatcher’s 1980s call for a ‘return to Victorian values’ was followed by John Major’s campaign of ‘back to basics’ and a focus on family values before Tony Blair’s call in the 1990s for a public ‘awakening’ against the potential of ‘moral chaos’ (Scranton, 1997).

The framework of ‘getting tough’ on crime has involved an avowed commitment by New Labour to search for evidence to establish the specific causes of crime. The evidence presented in Home Office publications identifies poor parenting as a primary cause of youth offending and has therefore resulted in parents being one of the primary targets for crime prevention initiatives. New Labour’s promise to be ‘tough on crime and tough on causes of crime’ seems to have turned into a policy to be tough on parents, under the initiative of addressing a perceived ‘moral deficit’ within (poor) communities. Although there is some acknowledgement by New Labour that the families who will be the target of initiatives are often experiencing chaotic and critical situations, the responsibility for addressing these issues are still placed with the individuals concerned and the government’s role in supporting any change is through the use of enforcement to ensure parents meet their perceived moral obligations. Although Clarke (2006) places New Labour’s approach within a discourse of ‘social integration’ in which the state’s role is to support individual opportunity, the justification for many initiatives, particularly the parenting order, can be linked to
the arguments of the underclass debate and ideas of communitarianism. New Labour seemed to be reflecting the "zero tolerance" approach in vogue in the US at the time (Newburn, 1998; Pitts 2003a). Amitai Etzioni, a major protagonist of communitarianism, focused on the moral responsibility of individuals and is a notable influence on New Labour's politics (Powell, 2000) whereby "dislocated parents become targets of the new risk agenda where their needs are secondary to their responsibilities" (Walters and Woodward, 2007:6). Drakeford and McCarthy (2000) argue that parents have in fact become a 'popular scapegoat' in the 'fight against crime'. Even though the evidence presented by New Labour in support of the parenting order also outlines other factors which may influence a young person committing a crime, these issues have been afforded only a cursory mention. The government's continued emphasis on parents and individuals being held responsible for their moral obligations masks the wider "structural causes of crime" (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994:982). Poor parenting is placed within the context of social exclusion but is seen to require discipline rather than viewed as a "product of multiple social disadvantage" (Newburn, 1998:209). Therefore, a deeper investigation into the theoretical context of blaming parents is required. What is the evidence actually saying in regard to the factors that influence youth crime?

II. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The debate surrounding the 'root causes' of offending appears to have become a 'chicken and egg' argument with parents or parenting on one hand and environmental or social factors on the other. There is a large body of evidence which supports the view that parenting is a primary influential factor in the onset of youth offending. There is however extensive evidence which suggests that wider social influences (poverty and neighbourhood deprivation) are independent and primary causal factors in themselves, which impact on the potential for effective parenting, which is seen as one of many intervening
variables in the onset of youth offending. This section will therefore consider this evidence in more detail.

II.i. Parenting as the primary factor in explaining youth crime

The ideas of reducing responsibility to individuals and of targeting families can be identified in early childhood development theories. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, although not intended to be used as a 'deficit' model of responsibility, places the child in the centre with the family as the primary influence on the child's development. Surrounding the family, depicted through expanding circles, are the other factors (for example extended family, school, community members, as well as cultural factors) which are deemed to influence the child, although to a lesser degree and often via the family. The theory is that a child's development is best nurtured within a strong family, held up by the community and then the state. From a supportive focus the state is considered to be responsible for ensuring that communities are well resourced to support families to fulfil their role. From a deficit focus the target becomes the individual as the initial source of concern and the responsibility for dealing with this lies first with the family.

Farrington (2007) highlights developmental theories that specifically explain how poor parenting could be linked with youth offending (control, strain, social learning and attachment theories). Smith (2004) notes that attachment (as well as social learning) theory is one of the best explanations for why poor child-rearing methods link to later delinquency. The parenting programmes supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), through the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder, all derive from social learning theories (Lindsay et al, 2008) as well as several other programmes supported by the government (Utting et al, 2007). According to social learning theory, children learn or repeat behaviour (through imitation, modelling and reinforcement) that will give them what they want in the shortest possible way and this could include
the use of abusive or illegal behaviour, which is likely to continue depending on whether the parent reinforces negative or rewards positive behaviour (Hay et al., 2006). It is believed that criminal behaviour is learnt through the socialisation process (Davies et al., 2005) and effective or ineffective parental control can be discerned by studying patterns of interactions (Smith, 2004).

West (1967) conducted a review of primarily psychological and psychoanalytical research, which seemed to indicate that, although there may be ‘inborn’ characteristics within individuals toward criminal behaviour, the most important aspects of the ‘criminal character’ are acquired or emphasized through early upbringing. He refers to studies which indicate that other environmental factors may increase the risk of delinquency in children from the age of seven but that the primary causes appear to stem from the parent’s relationship with the child. Twenty years later, in 1986, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber published their review of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies in which children had been followed up over a number of years to study the later effects of earlier parenting styles. They concluded that several aspects of parenting have an influence on youth offending and outlined four specific ‘paradigms’: neglect, conflict, family disruption and parents’ deviant behaviours and attitudes. Almost twenty years later and Smith (2004) notes that although many studies have been made since “an updated review would come to similar conclusions” (p5). Smith reports on findings from the Edinburgh Study in Youth Transitions and Crime. This study involved more than 4000 school children who were asked to complete questionnaires on an annual basis from when they were twelve. Information about parenting and family functioning was obtained each year from the young people themselves and a survey of one parent (the main caregiver) was carried out when the young people were fifteen. Smith firmly states that “this analysis provides robust evidence that parenting styles have an influence on the later development of delinquent behaviour” (p7) and concluded that there is a “causal arrow” linking the parents’ behaviour directly with the extent to which a child may become delinquent. The simple correlations showed that parental monitoring and the extent to which a child shared information about their
whereabouts were the dimensions most strongly related to delinquency. He notes that this required a willingness on the child to disclose. Tilton-Weaver and Marshall (2008) also state that parental monitoring of adolescent’s behaviour will be reliant on the adolescent’s disclosure of information, which may be influenced by their perception of any possible negative consequences. In Smith’s study the factors most closely associated with higher delinquency were parent/child conflict and parental punishment and those associated with lower delinquency were parental consistency, negotiation to resolve conflict and time spent in joint activities. Smith reports that effective parents, from a position of strength, are “relaxed enough to allow frequently renewed discussion and negotiation about the rules” (p19). Smith does however consider environmental factors which impact on the ability of the parents to be in a ‘position of strength’. Put simply: “we must expect that it will be much more difficult to become an effective parent if there is a lack of time, energy, money, living space, books, shops and stimulating play facilities” (Smith, 2004:6).

Farrington (2007) reviewed a number of longitudinal studies which consider the individual and family risk factors associated with youth offending. He groups the family risk factors into five categories (criminal and antisocial parents; large family size; child-rearing methods; abuse and disrupted families). The most significant of these are having a convicted parent and poor parental supervision. Farrington refers to various UK and international studies and although the review involved publications from ‘the last 20 years’ the vast majority in relation to family risk factors date prior to 1996 and he acknowledges that he draws primarily on the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development.

II.ii. The Cambridge Study

The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development involved a sample of 411 working-class boys, aged 8 in 1961, selected from six inner South London primary schools. All but twelve of the boys were ‘Caucasian’. They were
surveyed approximately every two years until ages 32 and 46, to examine which of them had developed a ‘delinquent way of life’ and why some had continued a ‘life of crime’ into adulthood.

The study has been influential in regard to the development of current youth justice practice. New Labour’s youth policy stems from the Cambridge Study (Pitts, 2000; Pitts 2003a:53, Armstrong, 2004). According to Muncie and Goldson (2006) the study has been a major influence in New Labour’s ‘obsession with risk’ and became part of the ‘credo’ of New Labour’s youth governance. It has received wide criticism in regard to its findings and implementation within policy (Webster et al, 2006; Armstrong 2004; Muncie, 1999; Pitts, 2003a; Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000). Two primary criticisms of the study, as with similar longitudinal studies, are that the factors linked to young people who persistently offend have become heralded as causes of offending and secondly, that it fails to capture the broader context in which offending takes place.

Farrington (1994) states that the Cambridge Study showed that most predictors for ‘chronic’ offenders could be identified when the child was eight to ten years old. However, Farrington (1996) reports that the study showed that there are perhaps ‘thousands’ of factors that point to an increased risk of future criminal involvement in young people and that many risk factors tend to be inter-related, making it necessary to examine which are independent causal factors and which are symptoms of offending. In a later publication Farrington (2007) then claims that according to the Cambridge Study "it was generally true that each of six categories of variables (impulsivity, intelligence, parenting, antisocial family, socio-economic deprivation, and child antisocial behaviour) predicted offending independently of each other category" (p619). Furthermore, one of the ‘best predictors’ of a young person committing a crime is said to be having a convicted or antisocial parent.
The Youth Justice Board’s assessment tool ‘Asset’ was developed from the Cambridge Study (Case, 2007). Baker (2005) states that despite criticism about the managerial approach and risk of de-professionalising practitioners through the use of a lengthy tick-box scoring tool, ‘Asset’ is viewed by the Youth Justice Board as having a “positive impact on the process of working with young people who offend” (p108). The tool, which is used to assess the extent to which various factors within a young person’s life are related to their risk of reoffending, has been adapted into a similar scoring based assessment tool ‘Onset’, which is used for prevention based services to assess young people who may be at risk of offending in the future. Webster et al (2006) report that although some research shows the ‘Asset’ to be reliable and valid as a prediction device, their own research makes them sceptical about whether current assessment tools used within youth justice are either reliable or valid. Muncie (2009) argues that such assessments, based on aggregate studies that only inform of the factors linked to offending, may not only ‘miss’ valuable data but are also in danger of identifying ‘false positives’. These may be individuals who were never on a path to offending or who are identified as requiring much higher intervention than is necessary. Keenan (2001) also argues that practitioners need to be careful about identifying ‘atypical’ behaviour as a risk factor, for example, preschool children who may naturally exhibit aggressive behaviour during that age.

Thornberry (2005) reports on findings from the Rochester Youth Development Study, which involved 647 young males. He discusses how an individual characteristic, such as poor temperament, would not on its own highlight risk. He reports that “those who start earlier are likely to offend longer” but “offending patterns do not emerge in a uniform pattern” (p160). Presenting the interactional theory, he argues that different factors and the degree to which they are ‘interwoven’ will have an influence on when children start to display antisocial or offending behaviour. He warns that “onset is not destiny”. West (1982), Farrington’s original co-researcher on the Cambridge Study, states that because the Cambridge study looked at a wide range of factors they were able
to ascertain that delinquency most often arises from an accumulation of different pressures rather than from any single salient cause. He acknowledges that less than half of those who had a combination of three out of five prevalent risk factors became offenders (p30). Farrington (2003) has also reported that the Cambridge Study presented with a high proportion of false positives, in fact sixty three percent. The data was however often presented with an 'odds ratio' method, whereby a young person presenting with particular factors may be twice as likely, for example, to offend compared to those without those factors present. Keenan (2001) argues that using the odds ratio method can provide deceiving results. She refers to a study that concluded a three-to-one odds ratio of offending due to high temperament but this was based on thirty percent within a high temperamental group becoming offenders compared to ten percent within a non-temperamental group, thereby ignoring that seventy percent of the high temperamental group never went on to offend. Farrington (2007) acknowledges that although retrospective prediction that considers the percentage of persistent offenders who presented as high-risk children is typically good, the predictions are poor when looking at the percentage of high-risk children who later become persistent offenders. He argues that the focus of prevention strategies should be placed on identifying protective factors and features of individual resilience since many children at risk do go on to have successful lives. Webster et al (2006) also identify that many young people with high risk factors never offend. The risk-factor research has lead to claims that the factors linked to offending are the causes of offending (Haines and Case, 2008). Armstrong (2004) argues that the research does not capture the complexity of what a 'risk factor' is and concludes that "at best, the risk factor research has been able to account for a statistically significant proportion of the variance in respect of the antecedents correlating with offending" (p106).

The actual aspects of parenting that are purported to be the most prevalent in regard to youth offending are not clear. The literature has highlighted factors ranging from attachment, role modelling, reinforcement of behaviour, ineffective control, harsh parenting, poor parent-child relationship, parent's criminal or
'deviant' behaviours and attitudes, neglect or abuse, family structure, family
disruption and poor parental supervision. France and Utting (2005) outline a
variety of factors linked with offending (with family problems ‘ranging’ from low
income to poor supervision and discipline) and discuss the difficulties
associated with research and application of ‘protective factors’ within prevention
initiatives. They give an example of how having a large family may be seen as a
risk due to the practical implications of providing for and supervising more
children but large families can also create a nurturing and supportive
environment. Haines and Case (2008) further highlight how factors should not
be viewed in a linear, single directional manner and point out that protective
factors are not necessarily the opposite end of the spectrum of an identified risk
factor. Clarke (2006) argues that ‘good parenting’ is fundamentally about quality
of relationships, not a question of technique that can be modified to achieve
different outcomes against a child, who should also not be viewed as a ‘passive
product’. Kerr and Stattin (2003) conducted a study questioning the direction of
cause and effect in regard to parental monitoring and youth delinquency. This
study was conducted with young people aged between fourteen and sixteen
years. They strongly argue that the evidence shows that parental monitoring is
influenced by the adolescent’s delinquency rather than the other way round.
They also found that the parent’s reactions to and relationship with their child
would be negatively influenced by the child’s behaviour. Therefore, the factors
of parenting and family life, which are already broadly categorised, may be
closely associated with delinquency but this does not imply that they are the
cause of it.

Pitts (2003a) also raises doubt in regard to the contemporary relevance of the
Cambridge Study because almost all of the boys in the study were ‘White’ and
‘British’. He refers to a study of Black and White young people who ended up in
custody that found that the antecedents, particularly of family background and
school experiences, were ‘very different’ in the two groups (p85). In considering
the influence of parenting style and the application of discipline, Lansford et al
(2004) conclude from their study with African American and European American
families that “there are ethnic differences in long-term effects of physical discipline on externalizing behaviour problems” (p810). It appears that how a child internalises the normative status and context in which discipline is used is related to how they may later externalise aggressive behaviour. The mediating factor is whether or not children interpret the discipline as signs of hostility or rejection (Deater-Deckard et al, 2005). This interpretation could therefore be influenced by differences in cultural norms. Lansford et al (2004) report that when African American parents use physical discipline as a planned parent strategy, acceptable to their cultural group (rather than reacting with impulsive anger) their children have lower externalizing problems but also acknowledge that this could be due to a similar personality characteristic in both the parent and child in regard to self-control and level of impulsiveness. Deater-Deckard and colleagues (2005) conclude that although ‘harsh parenting’ is one of many factors that have been seen to predict violence and delinquency, the use of physical punishment, different to physical abuse, is not associated with aggressive behaviour problems among African Americans as it is with European Americans. Therefore, any assessments of risk and their subsequent interventions require a broader framework in which to consider the influence of parenting styles and family lifestyle.

A further criticism of risk-based research, and specifically of the Cambridge Study, is that the broader context in which offending takes place has been ignored (Muncie, 1999; Pitts, 2003a; Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000; Haines and Case, 2008). The Cambridge Study has been influential in focusing the attention of youth crime initiatives on the conditions associated with a child’s immediate circumstances, particularly the family environment, rather than the structural characteristics of society itself (Armstrong, 2004). Although the neighbourhood ‘risk factor’ is included in the ‘Asset’, Webster et al (2006) argue that it “hardly addresses neighbourhood influence in any meaningful way” (p19). This criticism of the cursory inclusion of the wider, structural factors within risk assessments reflects arguments against the Cambridge Study as a whole. Pitts (2003a) refers to a study published by John Hagan in 1993 in which Hagan
considers the original data of the Cambridge Study. Hagan concludes that the evidence supports the view that initial social disadvantage is "cumulatively compounded and amplified, 'embedded', through the interaction with peers, other adults and defining agencies" (Pitts, 2003a:83). When examining the possible explanations given for the family risk factors presented by Farrington (2007), the broader context becomes apparent. When looking at large family size for example, it is acknowledged that the issue of overcrowding, rather than the size of the family, may in fact be the primary factor. When looking at 'disrupted families', Farrington suggests that it might not be the broken home which is 'criminogenic' but the parental conflict which often causes it. Finally, when considering explanations for his argument that 'crime runs in the family' he suggests that it may be due to 'intergenerational continuities in exposure to multiple risk factors' whereby "each successive generation may be entrapped in poverty, disrupted families, single and/or teenage parenting, and living in the most deprived neighbourhoods" (p614).

II.iii. The wider context: Poverty and neighbourhood influences

Arthur (2005), who reviewed more than a dozen pieces of research reaching over a twenty-five year period, states that "every study of the personal and social experiences of known juvenile offenders reveals that almost all of them have endured various kinds of abuse, neglect, deprivation and misfortune" (p237) and goes on to state that poverty was generally seen as the "persistent feature in the lives of young offenders" (p239). The significant impact of poverty upon family 'risk factors' are also highlighted by Hay et al (2006:346). Thornberry (2005) argues that the family environment and 'inept parenting', are influential to early onset of antisocial behaviour when interwoven with 'severe structural adversity', identified as "chronic poverty, welfare dependence, residence in areas of concentrated poverty" (p167). Graham (1998) notes that although poverty has not been found to be directly related to rises in crime "it
would appear that the effects of poverty on crime are mediated through their impact on family functioning” (p101). However, if we look at the work of Dick Hobbs (1995) for example we find that the criminality in some neighbourhoods is omnipresent and institutionalised, not a property of particular families but of an illicit back-up economy developed by communities living in a situation of persistent economic uncertainty.

Several authors note the particular significance of how the stress caused by poverty, unemployment or neighbourhood deprivation can undermine how effectively parents are able to fulfil their parental role (Arthur, 2005; Henricson, 2001; Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000; Smith, 2004; Pitts, 2003a; Ghate and Ramella, 2002; Thornberry 2005). Wilson (1987) found that “lack of parental supervision is unquestionably the most relevant factor facilitating delinquency” (p291) but also that ‘lax’ supervision is significantly more prevalent in families living in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. She emphasizes that parental ‘laxness’ in this setting is not a deliberate choice. Parker (1974) also argues that parents of inner city children are not always in a position to offer their children an alternative to playing unsupervised and that as a result the influence of parents over their children’s behaviour ceases to have any effect. Large family size and overcrowding are two issues seen to lead to unsupervised play outside the home. The Rt Hon Duncan Smith (2007) refers to research which notes that “children from deprived backgrounds who avoided a criminal record had tended to enjoy good parental care and supervision” (p9) but only if they did not live in an over-crowded home. Although the relationship and bond between the parent and young person is highlighted as a significant factor with regard to how effectively the parent is able to supervise their teenager (Graham and Bowling, 1995; Henricson, 2001; Smith, 2004) the material circumstances of the family appears to be a more crucial issue (Wilson, 1987; Margo et al, 2006; Smith, 2004). Thornberry (2005) concludes that “poor parents often do not have the resources to provide alternative activities that could keep their adolescent children away from problematic influences” (p170).
Graham (1998) states that “the life chances of young people are critically affected by where they live” (p101). Pitts & Bateman (2005) refer to a study of 15,000 young people in Philadelphia which found that in certain well-resourced, high socio-economic status neighbourhoods, all predictions of future chronic delinquency based on a risk factor assessment failed to materialise. Conversely, Webster et al (2006) found that within the deprived neighbourhoods that they studied, several young people presented with multiple ‘risk factors’ but never offended. They report that the presence of wider social networks that may afford more opportunities for employment or desistence from loyal ‘negative’ networks are however reduced within deprived neighbourhoods (Webster et al, 2006). Wikström and Loeber (2000) found that although a neighbourhood’s low socioeconomic context had no greater direct impact on the early onset of serious offending it did have a direct impact on the late onset of offending for those young people who scored high on protective factors. Thornberry (2005) states that peer influences are dominant in the onset of offending by adolescents and structural adversity (including living in deprived areas) is particularly linked to offending of young people who may previously have been ‘buffered’ by strong social bonds (p170).

The changing shape of youth crime within poor areas is seeing children as young as seven or eight on the fringes of gangs, often to run errands or to carry or hide drugs and weapons (Pitts, 2008). Pitts demonstrates however that the emergence of gangs is not associated with family risk factors but with the economic and social changes that impact certain deprived neighbourhoods. For gang-involved young people, the personal and familial risk factors that are ‘conventionally associated with youth offending’ are not as prevalent (Pitts, 2008). Pitts (2003a) reported that “a growing body of evidence suggests that the routine adversity of life in high-crime neighbourhoods may of itself be sufficient to overwhelm the best efforts of the most competent parents to protect their children from involvement in crime and criminal victimisation” (p82). This supports Malcolm Gladwell’s (2000) argument that a child is possibly better off being raised in a troubled family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family
in a troubled neighbourhood (Pitts 2003b; Pitts and Bateman, 2005; Pitts 2008). In their study of deprived neighbourhoods, Fitzgerald et al (2003) asked young people what they would do as a parent to stop them from offending. Several of the young people stated that moving out of the area would be the only real answer. A distinguishing feature of a deprived neighbourhood is that young people involved in offending are afforded fewer opportunities to ‘grow out of it’ and ‘locked in a state of perpetual adolescence’ they continue to offend into their twenties and beyond (Pitts and Bateman, 2005:17; Pitts, 2008; see also McAuley, 2007). If parenting is not an influencing factor when placed within a context of poverty, high crime or deprived neighbourhoods, how do these young people ‘grow out of it’?

II.iv. How do they ‘grow out of it’?

Farrington (1994 and 2007) proposes that the antisocial child tends to become the antisocial teenager, who tends to become the antisocial adult. Graham (1998b) states that evidence suggests that young males in particular continue to offend into adulthood. Goldson (1997) however, highlights research findings which show that most youth crime is non-serious and opportunistic and that most ‘grow out of crime’. Sampson and Laub’s (2003) longitudinal study found that crime declines with age sooner or later for all ‘offender groups’. Thornberry (2005) also reports that “offending is relatively commonplace ... and relatively few offenders will have extensive criminal careers” (p159). Pitts (2003b) presents an argument for a change in focus, seeing young people who offend not as an ‘abnormal minority’ but as ‘our children’ who offend as a normal part of growing up, requiring instead a focus on all the factors (personal, familial, economic, social, cultural and administrative) that influence a ‘criminal career’. This is particularly important because even if we accept the evidence of ‘risk factors’, these involve a wide range of issues. The broad concepts of ‘family need’ and ‘poor parenting’ may be subdivided in various issues of which it is difficult to determine which particular aspect has precedence.
Since a parenting order is made after a young person offends, the justification is presumably that if parenting is influential in the onset of offending it will be influential in the desistence from offending. Graham and Bowling (1995) considered the factors which influenced desistence and found that “family and school variables which explain the onset of offending do not adequately explain desistence” (Graham and Bowling, 1995:124) and noted that the influence of parenting is reduced once a young person offends. The authors found that the most influential factors of desistence were completing education and living with a partner (for females) and continuing to live at home with parents, performing well at school and not having delinquent peers (for males). McAra and McVie (2007), reporting on findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transition and Crime, state that young people are more likely to desist from offending when they are not formally processed through the youth justice system and argue for a ‘maximum diversion approach’ (p338). They highlight that the majority of factors that propel young people further into ‘the system’ are unchangeable (such as family structure, gender, social deprivation and being known to the police in earlier years). Thornberry (2005) reports that change in life circumstances, regardless of age or age of onset, are more likely to initiate desistance but that structural adversity will have an influence on how likely these changes are to occur. He argues that the ‘extreme deficits’ needed for early onset offending, often linked with persistent offending, are usually factors that are ‘stable’ and more difficult to change (p172). Therefore, the choices and opportunities to avoid or negotiate out of crime are reduced.

II.v. The combination of factors constraining individual choice

Despite earlier emphasis on the primacy of family and individual factors on offending, even Farrington (2007) concedes that there are several factors that influence an individual’s potential to be antisocial and which could turn this
potential into an antisocial act. As noted earlier, he identified six categories of variables that predicted offending independently of each other: impulsivity, intelligence, parenting, antisocial family, socio-economic deprivation, and child antisocial behaviour (p619). His emphasis is on individual decision making processes and perception of the available alternative options, the situation they are in and the opportunities presented to them. His conclusions may still focus on individual responsibility but Farrington identifies the parent, parenting style or family dynamics as some of many preliminary influences (alongside unemployment, school failure, high crime neighbourhood, delinquent peers etc), which may increase the ‘antisocial potential’ between and within individuals by influencing their social skills, capabilities, lifestyle choices etc. Farrington has developed his findings into an ‘integrated cognitive antisocial potential’ theory.

A similar theory is presented by Wikström and Butterworth (2006) with regard to an individual’s propensity to commit a crime. The parents and other factors are not seen to have a direct causal influence and are described as ‘causes of causes’. Similarly Boeck et al (2006) consider the context influencing an individual’s choices and opportunities. They state that a person’s social capital, not to be seen as a risk or resilience factor, is the context in which young people make decisions about risk and navigate their way into and out of crime pathways. Armstrong (2004) also discusses how criminological studies of risk largely ignore the ‘negotiated processes’ involved in how young people may be involved in or remove themselves from risk-taking within their social worlds.

Webster et al (2006) concluded in their report of young people within deprived neighbourhoods that unpredictable critical moments and life events could lead people both into and out of crime. They rejected parental supervision and frequent truancy as potential ‘risk factors’ but rather found that the nature and quality of social relationships that young people form, perhaps during periods of truancy, are more significant. Boeck et al (2006) note that bonding, as distinct from bridging, social capital influences a young person’s outlook on life, shaping their aspirations. Many young offenders present with a fatalistic view about the possibility of social mobility. In some circles this situation may be regarded as ‘realism’. Without the resources associated with bridging social capital many are
ill equipped to leave their high risk lifestyles. Parents, who will have similarly limited access to bridging social capital, may therefore be identified as one of the many ingredients influencing or empowering a young person’s level of opportunity. Thornberry (2005) confirms that “structural adversity increases parental stress and reduces social capital” (p167). Lewis (2007), in considering current policy direction in ‘governing behaviour change’, emphasizes that personal capability, practical resources, peer groups and other external circumstances (media, culture, private sector and legislation) will impact the varying ability for young people to change their behaviour.

In summary, although the research shows that parents do have an impact on their child’s early development and wellbeing, evidence suggests that they are one of many factors linked to the likelihood of their child later offending. Environmental factors are significant to an individual’s development and level of opportunity, particularly when considering the ‘root cause’ of offending and what influences a young person ‘growing’ into or out of crime. The actual act of committing a crime can involve a variety of variables and how far a parent can realistically influence the choices that their child makes decreases as the child gets older and will also be affected by the type of relationship they have with their child. The literature highlights that supervision and monitoring of a child’s behaviour is one fundamental factor in reducing the chances of them being involved in risky behaviour but the strength of the parent-child relationship is crucial. Conversely, research has shown that the child’s behaviour may be influencing the parent’s response and the close correlation of poor parental monitoring or parent-child conflict may not necessarily equate to evidence of a causal link to delinquency. Furthermore, the child’s internalised interpretation of a parent’s discipline or parenting style could influence how they later externalise behaviour.

Evidence suggests that it is the compounding effect of several interwoven factors, impacting on the young person’s perception of themselves, their situation and their choices that appears to be most significant as to whether
they offend. The ability to respond well to critical unpredictable life events also appears to have a strong bearing on whether an individual is drawn to or avoids committing an offence. More significantly, even with high protective factors present in the individual, neighbourhood deprivation is a vital factor. The ability of the parent to supervise their child and to foster a positive relationship is influenced by external stressors and the more deprivation experienced by a family the more difficult it is to be an effective parent. Evidence shows that consideration needs to be given to the factors that influence parenting styles and capacity. Several authors note the particular significance of how the stress caused by poverty, unemployment or neighbourhood deprivation can undermine how effectively parents are able to fulfil their parental role. Even when individual or family factors are protective, the economic or social changes within deprived neighbourhoods are more significant in shaping the opportunities afforded to young people to avoid onset or persistence of offending. The recommendation made by Graham and Bowling (1995) to implement strategies to improve the quality of relationships within families and the capacity of parents to effectively supervise their children is valid. How this is translated into practice, whereby parents and families can be effectively supported in both of these areas, and how the parenting order is meant to work as a potential tool to aid this, needs to be considered further.

III. IN PRACTICE

This section explores the role of parenting support work as a form of crime prevention, the types of support most advocated, the use of parenting orders as an intervention, how parenting work fits within the scope of Youth Offending Teams and the experiences of parents involved with programmes.
III.i. From universal to specialist intervention

Rob Allen (2006) has reviewed youth crime prevention methods, focusing on mental health services and restorative justice models. Arthur (2007) criticizes Allen for not also considering the importance of supporting parents, through the provision of family support, parenting programmes, pre-school and after school programmes. Arthur argues that crime prevention can be addressed by Children's Services with the current legislation (Children Act 1989). Graham (1998) also discusses this option and highlights the important linkage between children's services plans and youth justice plans. This supports the argument that "youth crime prevention is a multi-agency responsibility" (Williamson, 2005:205). The Respect Action Plan (Home Office, 2007) and the Think Family Agenda (Cabinet Office, 2008) highlight expectations for both child and adult services to consider how they can support parents.

Early intervention with children and families is widely advocated (Farrington, 2007; Graham, 1998; Smith, 2004; Lloyd, 1999) because it is believed to ensure better and 'more durable' outcomes for children (Moran et al, 2004). Parents receiving intensive support through Family Interventions Projects have also said that learning parenting skills is more effective when children are "younger and when behaviour was less entrenched" (Nixon and Parr, 2009). Offering community programmes which are seen to be sympathetic and not blaming is generally considered the most effective approach (Haines and Drakeford, 1998) with parents being more open to help and advice during particular transitional periods (Buchanan, 2000). Both universal interventions, which offer prevention elements with the whole community and targeted interventions, which are aimed at more ‘at risk’ individuals or populations are considered to ‘work’ (Moran et al, 2004). A programme considered to be the ‘jewel’ in New Labour’s ‘crown’ in regard to evidence based early intervention is the Sure Start programme (Tunstill et al, 2005). Sure Start emerged in the late 1990s under a prevention agenda based on long-term evaluations of the Head Start and Perry/High Scope programmes in the US (Clarke, 2006; France and Utting,
It is designed to combat disadvantage and social exclusion, rather than crime (France and Utting, 2005). By offering universal support to families within disadvantaged neighbourhoods in a non-stigmatising way the aim of Sure Start is to "ensure that children from poor families arrive at school ready to ‘flourish’" (Clarke, 2006:709). Although successful implementation has been based on good partnership working, there is a need for long term evaluations to truly understand what has worked well (and where) but the political drive has been to expand the service even when it has diverged from the original Sure Start model (France and Utting, 2005). Because the programmes are delivered through a multi-agency approach, in response to local need and could deliver on average seventeen different services, evaluation into the effectiveness of the programme as a whole has proven difficult but it has proved popular with parents and brought benefits to many (Clarke, 2006). The provision of Children's Centres with teams of outreach workers to work with 'at risk' families continues to be advocated by government and is noted as a successful programme in the Think Family agenda (Cabinet Office, 2008).

Henricson (2001) advocates programmes aimed at 'parenting teenagers' as a means of crime prevention, possibly of greatest benefit to those parents where there is a later onset of the child's offending. Even when parents do not perceive a problem with their parenting they are likely to seek assistance for addressing concerns with their child's behaviour (Ghate and Hazel, 2002; Ghate and Ramella, 2002). Kerr and Stattin (2003) discuss how levels of parental warmth and monitoring reduce over time in response to adolescent delinquency, usually linked to the youth's behaviour in the home. Rather than concluding that parents are powerless to influence their adolescents they advocate for parents to be supported earlier on to develop democratic and respectful means of family interaction and discussion. Graham (1998) has suggested that parenting training courses may have a positive impact on the parents' ability to respond to their children more constructively, while Lloyd (1999) adds that if such courses are behaviourally orientated they may contribute to improving the behaviour of pre-adolescent children. McAra (2006)
argues, however, that unless the environmental context is favourable, attempts to teach parenting skills are likely to fail. Those experiencing adverse circumstances may be limited in their ability to benefit from even the most high quality programmes (Lloyd, 1999; Smith, 2004).

Parenting groups can offer an avenue of peer support for parents, especially if experiencing similar difficulties (Holdaway et al, 2001), but some parents will require one-to-one interventions and home visiting before they are ready to attend a group (Moran et al, 2004). Parents are often aware that there are no 'quick fixes' to the problems that they are experiencing (Nixon and Parr, 2009; Holdaway et al, 2001). Ghate et al (2008) also maintain that parents of 'at risk' young people often “present some of the greatest challenges that support agencies and their staff ever face” (p12). These parents may require a flexible approach, ad hoc parenting programmes that are entirely responsive to new users' needs and that could change according to the staff delivering the service, but such an approach has so far not proved more effective (Ghate et al, 2008).

The more effective programmes appear to be those that have a strong theoretical base, are clear about their intentions and outcomes, consider practical elements of implementation and allow for multiple referral routes (Moran et al, 2004). Conversely, Lindsay et al (2008) state that the notion of programme fidelity, often stipulated by the programme developers as important to outcomes, requires ‘serious thought given the fact that similar outcomes are produced by very different programmes’ (p159). The quality of staff appears to be a key element of success for any programme (Holdaway et al, 2001; Ghate and Ramella, 2002; Moran et al 2004) and the level of trust a parent feels in those working with them could be more influential than the programme itself (Crowley, 2001; Buchanan, 2000). Holdaway et al (2001), reporting on an evaluation of parenting orders, highlight the importance of good assessments as “vital for the success of programmes” (p103). Lindfield and Cusick (2001) go further and promote the use of a positive assessment process as fundamental to engaging and delivering services that meet parents’ needs. Ideally a range of support options appropriate to needs, not just parenting courses, should be
provided within a co-ordinated system of care for children and families (Lindsay et al, 2008).

As noted previously, the factors associated with 'poor parenting' and negative family environment are broadly defined and various, therefore requiring different forms of intervention to address them. Several authors support the use of multi-component programmes that utilise different techniques and that address a variety of influential factors (Sullivan, 2006; Farrington, 2007; Smith, 2004; Losel and Beelmann, 2003; Henricson, 2001; Moran et al, 2004). For example multi-systemic therapy (MST), which is aimed at working with persistent young offenders, their families and the members of the wider community involved with the family, using an intensive programme based primarily in the home. MST has demonstrated positive long term outcomes for children (Utting et al, 2007). Perhaps in an attempt to provide such a system of support, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, under the Think Family agenda, has provided funding to all local authorities to implement Family Intervention Projects that work with a small number of families presenting with complex and multiple problems. The initiative is still supported through the use of contracts and sanctions but the idea is to work with the whole family over a long period of time and co-ordinate the multiple services likely to be working with various individuals within the family. Nixon and Parr (2009) conducted a review of the project, considering the effectiveness of parenting skills training as a form of intervention. Their conclusions summarise many of the arguments presented here; that there are a wide range of factors that influence the success of parenting programmes, including whether contextual factors negate the impact of the programme, the seriousness of the behaviour concerned and the extent to which guidance is delivered in a sensitive and responsive manner. They also report that for some families the project’s intervention was seen as “unnecessary, intrusive and unwelcome” (p49) and that the level of coercion, compared to voluntary engagement of the family, will also influence the effectiveness of parenting skills programmes.
Ill.ii. The Parenting Order as an intervention tool

Holdaway et al (2001), in their review of the establishment of Youth Offending Teams, looked at the use and effectiveness of parenting orders, collecting data on 279 parenting orders. They conclude that the order ensured parents attended and completed programmes and that parents reported positively on changes in the way they act and in the programme's potential to deal with aspects of truancy and offending. The use of parenting orders to ensure parents attend programmes is however questionable considering that the evidence provided to support the order was largely based on the success of ‘voluntary’ parenting support (Buchanan, 2000; Holt, 2009). Burney and Gelsthorpe (2008) also point out the flaw in the Government's argument for making accessing support compulsory when it was presented in a ‘soft-pedalled’ fashion by the then Home Secretary as something that will help and support those ‘who are genuinely trying to control their children’s unacceptable behaviour’ (p474). Although support for parents is universally agreed as a need, the ‘punitive edge’ of New Labour’s policies in punishing parents for their children's behaviour has been widely criticised by criminologists and some have even questioned whether the parenting order is at variance with international law and human rights (Stone, 2003; Arthur 2005; Muncie and Goldson, 2006). Coercion onto parenting classes through court orders is questionable as a means of addressing the parenting ‘risk factors’ associated with youth offending (Newburn, 1998). Furthermore, it is questionable whether the ‘draconian sanctions’ which punish parents who fail to benefit from support actually promote better outcomes for their children (Moran et al, 2004:10).

The messages from the Respect Action Plan and Think Family agenda strongly argue for the use of ‘non-negotiable support’, whereby if people do not take the help offered they will be made to take it. Yet, it is proposed that many parents who are likely to receive a parenting order have previously sought assistance without success, strongly refuting the idea of ‘wilful neglect’ (Pitts 1999; Pitts 2003a; Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000; Goldson and Jamieson, 2002).
Furthermore, it is argued that appropriate help was not or could not be provided by what is described as under-resourced and overworked agencies with increasing case loads and raised thresholds for case allocation (see Jones, 2001). When interviewed about the use of parenting orders with Anti-social Behaviour Orders, magistrates and district judges “tended to accept that most parents had made considerable efforts to impose boundaries on their children” (Solanki et al, 2006). Holdaway et al (2001) also report that "a number of parents [who received orders] commented that they had been seeking help with parenting for a number of years" (p106). Goldson and Jamieson (2002) refer to a study published by Barry Goldson in 1998 in which 49 ‘high end’ juvenile offenders were interviewed and almost all the young people said that their parents had done all they could to divert them from offending. Furthermore, many of the parents interviewed explained that they had sought assistance and help from social services but nothing was forthcoming (Goldson, 2000; Goldson and Jamieson, 2002). In a study completed by Fitzgerald et al (2003), professionals expressed concern about the key agencies involved with many families in deprived neighbourhoods and all the parents they interviewed had in the past “asked in vain for help for their children (and also themselves)” (p44). Manchester Youth Offending Team (YOT) commissioned the Youth Justice Trust (2004) to carry out research to look at what help was offered or had been offered in the past to ‘hard to reach’ parents in their area. Twenty parents were interviewed and the report concluded that the families interviewed were facing multiple problems but when parents asked for help at an early stage it was “either not available, they were ignored, or what was on offer was not helpful” (p20), with one parent saying that it amounted to ‘lots of messing about at the edges’. Research conducted with parents living in ‘poor environments’ also showed that parents were acutely aware of the fine line between ‘help’ and ‘interference’ and an important issue when seeking support was that they need to be the ones to decide when, where, how and from whom they receive it (Ghate and Hazel, 2002). Ghate and Hazel’s research also showed that many of the parents interviewed who were already receiving services felt that they were actually not being supported.
Despite the effectiveness of intensive programmes, they do not fit within the scope of parenting orders, which stipulate the use of a three month programme involving no more than once-a-week guidance or counselling sessions (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008). The Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 allows for residential Parenting Order programmes to be implemented but it appears that few local authorities have established this level of intervention. Several authors argue that the focus of most programmes remain on short-term micro interventions to address complex situations (Haines and Case, 2008; Webster et al, 2006; Clarke, 2006). Lindfield and Cusick (2001) state that the intention of the parenting order is that it should only be made if “desirable in the interests of preventing repetition of a young person’s behaviour” (p77) and that an order should not be made if other factors are seen to be influencing the young person’s behaviour. Holdaway et al (2001) report from their evaluation that the risks presented by young people whose parents received orders was highest in regard to truancy. For those who received a parenting order with their child’s criminal proceedings, poor parental supervision was just as high a concern as offending peers, with poor parent-child relationship placed as the fifth highest concern. They note that although domestic violence featured in one in five of these cases there was minimal recorded assessment of parent problems or how these might impact on the order or how the programmes should help parents with their parenting (p100).

Several argue that rather than fulfilling the aim of reducing youth crime the order may in fact exacerbate the difficulties of the chaotic and complex situation experienced by many of the young people and their parents likely to receive a parenting order (Drakeford and McCarthy, 2000; Jones 2002; Goldson and Jamieson, 2002; Muncie, 2004; Arthur, 2005; Walters and Woodward, 2007). Drakeford and McCarthy (2000:108) argue that “in terms of improving the socio-economic and structural factors which put pressure on parents the order offers no solution” and that parenting orders are “stigmatizing those who already feel on the margins” (p111). Longstaff (2004), in considering the reasons for the relatively low use of parenting orders and disparity between local authorities in
the application of the order, found that although magistrates shared similar hopes in regard to parenting interventions they also feared that the very problems needing to be addressed might make the intervention ineffective. The order has been criticised for being idealistic and for increasing the risk of driving parents, especially mothers, further into social exclusion (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008). Buchanan (2000) highlights the stigma and guilt associated with asking for help, whilst Muncie and Goldson (2006) point out that for most people to gain access to services children and families must be seen to have ‘failed’ or be ‘failing’. When parents are coerced into receiving support through a parenting order they will often resist engagement, viewing the order as ‘unfair’ and ‘unjust’, and focus efforts on removing negative assumptions of blame and of being identified as a ‘bad parent’ (Holt, 2009). Walters and Woodward (2007) point out that ‘poor parenting’ is not a defined fact in the use of parenting orders but more an implied assumption where “the behaviour of the child may determine the status of the parent” (p7). A recent study conducted by Holt (2009) involved interviews with seventeen parents who had received a parenting order as a result of their child’s conviction. The parents who had more than one child would often question the rationale for the order and the need to learn parenting skills on the basis that their other children were not causing concern.

Several of the above arguments were reflected in the evaluation of the Youth Justice Board’s parenting programme (Ghate and Ramella, 2002). The aim of this evaluation was to explore ‘what works’ in parenting support services to prevent youth offending. They evaluated 34 different projects between August 1999 and March 2002, with nearly 3,000 parents starting one of the programmes. They used data collected at the beginning and end of the programme to consider the impact on parents and young people. This final data involved 206 parents and 78 young people. They conclude that the programme had a positive impact on the parents and some level of improvement was reported in all the areas aimed to be addressed (communication, parental supervision and monitoring, handling conflict, levels of warmth and hostility,
confidence and sense of coping with parenting). These were similar for parents who attended voluntarily or under compulsion, with parents on parenting orders still reporting high satisfaction with the programme on completion. Ghate and Ramella note that the parenting order was however considered controversial and made it difficult for programme facilitators to give ‘support by compulsion’ but a greater challenge was the tremendously high level of need of the parents that attended the programmes, described as “desperately needy, often distressed and chaotic, with long histories of unsatisfactory contact with helping agencies” (p75). The majority of the parents were entering the programme at a point of crisis, often requiring practical assistance before they could participate in the course and most of the young people were subject to higher tariff orders with a recent history of reoffending. Although the authors note that there is a place for parenting orders in policy and practice, as it can help with attendance, they also point out that the long term benefits of the programmes are unknown and that they may not address the high level of need often requiring long term assistance. Finally, they were not yet sure which elements of the programmes were most effective and there was no evidence to indicate a real impact on the young person’s behaviour, although there was some tentative speculation that it may assist in ‘applying the brakes’ to what may be a ‘downward trajectory’ of the young person’s offending (Ghate and Ramella, 2002:51).

III.iii. Parenting work within Youth Offending Teams

The evidence supporting government prevention initiatives highlight that the majority of the ‘predictors’ of juvenile offending, and especially of ‘chronic’ or ‘persistent’ offenders are usually identified prior to the age of 10 years (Farrington, 1994). This is well before any involvement of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Although services are increasingly developing prevention services targeted at younger children, it appears that crime prevention funding provision is primarily aimed at youth offending teams and schools. Furthermore, the influence of parenting is reduced once a young person offends (Graham
and Bowling, 1995), which is when Youth Offending Teams start their involvement with young people. It is also important to remember that, as discussed earlier, even if the factors associated with onset in offending are accepted, these are not necessarily the same as those associated with desistence from offending. The actual point in a child or young person’s life when various factors may influence their behaviour will vary (Thornberry, 2005). The research by Thornberry also highlights that, other than a small number of cases with complex and multiple concerns usually present from a young age, Youth Offending Teams are likely to be working with a group of young people that will desist from offending in a relatively short period of time anyway.

The Youth Offending Team is, however, well placed to engage positively with parents in distress and “parenting support work with families in the youth justice system may be amongst the most valuable parenting support work that is currently provided in the UK” (Ghate et al 2008:13). Furthermore, ‘late intervention is better than none’ and support can be a benefit to parents in their own right (Moran et al, 2004). Although a controversial development, the parenting order and its expectation that parents undertake ‘guidance sessions’ to learn how to better control their child has allowed for extensive development of services for parents (Ghate et al, 2008). The ‘family support industry’ and the field of parenting has acquired a ‘cult status’ in recent years but the quality of programmes on offer is still under evaluation (Moran et al, 2004; Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008). Such support is less likely to be effective when it is coerced or given via a court order (Holt, 2009; Nixon and Parr, 2009). Research conducted by Burney and Gelsthorpe (2008) highlighted a disparity between local authorities in their application of the parenting order. They concluded that fewer orders were made in areas where there was higher engagement between the YOT and parents and more liaison between the YOT and Courts. Support for parents on a voluntary basis was considered the best approach and within the YOTs where there was a high level of engagement and liaison a parenting order would be considered a mistake that had slipped through the net (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008).
In summary, research suggests that providing support to the parents of young people who offend may fulfil an important need. Parents may benefit from receiving assistance and guidance to consider how they can best support their child to make positive choices, even after they have offended. Groups or courses aimed at parents of teenagers may be particularly helpful for those whose children have a 'later onset' of offending. There will also be parents who may be resistant to taking responsibility for or even considering that they may have a negative impact on their child's behaviour. Therefore, the parenting order may in some cases be a valid means of ensuring attendance at a programme designed to address these needs. The Youth Justice Board's evaluation suggests that the criticism that parenting orders may exacerbate the very situation they are aimed to address does not appear to have materialised. The use of parenting orders is therefore likely to continue.

Parents who have previously asked for help and not received it are likely to experience resentment and to feel unfairly blamed when subjected to a parenting order. Even if they have not previously asked for help there are likely to be feelings of resentment and blame associated with being made to address their parenting compared to those who are voluntarily seeking support and advice. Such feelings undermine the engagement in and the effectiveness of the programme.
The literature review has highlighted a number of key themes and raised several questions for further research and these are outlined below.

1. **The parenting order is attempting to ‘nip’ multiple factors ‘in the bud’ with crisis intervention**

Parenting interventions within youth justice are predicated on the assumption that the quality of parenting may have a causal or protective effect vis-à-vis their child’s offending. The young person’s home life, including parental supervision and the quality of the parent-child relationship, is singled out as the most important factor to explain youth crime. The assumption could be extended to conclude that the quality of parenting would influence the behaviour of all the children in the home. Although there is much evidence to suggest that early home life experiences and parenting styles will influence child behaviour, the situation is much more complex as a result of various interrelated conditions that lead to offending. The risk-focused research supporting the justification for the parenting order has been widely criticised, particularly due to the conflation of correlations and causes and how these have been applied in practice. Furthermore, the tendency to target young people and their parents through legislation has been criticised for sidelining the critical factors of poverty, neighbourhood disadvantage and social inequality which, as we have noted, research suggests are closely associated with youth offending. Although there is some acknowledgement by government that the families who will be the target of initiatives are often experiencing chaotic and critical situations, the
responsibility for addressing these issues (‘to nip it in the bud’) is still placed with the individuals concerned and the government’s role in supporting any change is through the use of enforcement to ensure parents meet what is perceived as their moral obligations.

Although the parents of young people ‘at risk’ are described as presenting challenges to staff due to their high level of need, evidence also suggests that these challenges and needs would be more prevalent in those cases where parents are made subject to a parenting order. The parenting order is probably ‘too little’ for the bigger needs that the parents and young people present with.

There are many arguments to suggest that parents receiving parenting orders are likely to be facing higher levels of need, with young people offending at a more persistent level but there is a dearth of research that looks at the actual circumstances of parents receiving orders. Several parents entering Youth Justice Board parenting programmes were at a point of crisis with young people on higher tariff orders and recent histories of reoffending. The evaluation of these programmes did not however differentiate between those parents on an order and those attending voluntarily.

Therefore the following questions are raised in this thesis:

1. What are the personal, family and social needs presented by young people and their parents subject to a Parenting Order?
2. Are the needs presented in cases where there is a parenting order different from those cases where parents:
   i. Undertake parenting support on a voluntary basis?
   ii. Have been referred but not engaged in support?
   iii. Have not been referred for support but have a child aged less than 16 years at the time of their court sentence?
3. What is the average level and gravity of young people’s offending prior to a Parenting Order being imposed?
4. Is the level or gravity of offending in those cases where there is a parenting order different from those cases where parents:
   i. Undertake parenting support on a voluntary basis?
   ii. Have been referred but not engaged in support?
   iii. Have not been referred for support but have a child aged less than 16 years at the time of their court sentence?

Also:

5. Are there notable differences in personal, family or social needs for those young people that have high levels of offending compared to those with low levels of offending?

And:

6. In those cases where there is more than one child over the age of 10 years living in the household:
   i. How many have more than one child offending?
   ii. Are there differences in the family or parenting needs present in those cases where there is more than one child in the same family offending compared to where only one child is offending?

II. The parenting order is justified by a perception of wilful neglect

The parenting order is based on an assumption that parents have ignored their responsibility and not sought support to address their child’s behaviour. There were several authors who argue however that many parents who are likely to receive a parenting order have previously sought assistance without success. Three of the studies conducted with parents involved with Youth Offending Teams have shown that parents had unsatisfactory histories with ‘helping
agencies'. These studies did not however specifically differentiate parents who had received a parenting order or were undertaking support voluntarily or whether they had been referred for parenting support. One study, completed as part of the evaluation of Youth Offending Teams, noted that parents who received orders reported having sought help with their parenting for several years. Furthermore, in a study about Antisocial Behaviour Orders, magistrates expressed a reluctance to make a parenting order due to the perception of parents having made ‘considerable efforts to impose boundaries on their children’. Yet, the continued use of parenting orders is envisaged as a means of ensuring that parents attend programmes.

Therefore the following questions were raised:

1. What are the reasons given by workers or the court when making a referral or order for parenting support?
2. What are the reasons given by parents for undertaking support voluntarily?
3. How many parents subject to an order were offered voluntary support prior to the order being made?
4. How many parents who attended voluntarily were told that they were at risk of a parenting order?
5. How many parents had ‘self-referred’ for parenting support?
6. What proportion of parents with children subject to an intervention with the Youth Offending Team have:
   i. Previously sought support to address their child’s behaviour?
   ii. Had prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
7. More specifically, for parents that either a) are subject to a parenting order; b) have undertaken support on a voluntary basis; c) have been referred for support but did not engage, or d) have a child under 16 years of age at the time of sentence but are not referred for support, what proportion had:
   i. Prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
   ii. Previously self-referred to Children’s Services?
   iii. A child subject to a Child Protection Plan?
iv. A child with a Mental Health diagnosis?

8. How many parents attending parenting courses on a voluntary basis have:
   i. Sought support to address their child’s behaviour?
   ii. Had prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?

9. In all cases where support had been sought:
   i. Who did they approach?
   ii. What sort of support were they seeking?
   iii. Did they receive the help they were seeking?

III. It is not known whether the parenting order actually has an impact on the young person’s behaviour.

There is little research on the impact of parenting orders, for the parents or the young people. Holdaway et al (2001) found that after initial misgivings about the order parents found the experience of the programmes positive. Ghate and Ramella (2002) also report that parents attending the programme under compulsion found the programme helpful, despite initial resistance or resentment at being made to attend. A recent study conducted by Holt (2009) reports on interviews with seventeen parents who were subject to parenting orders. Most of the parents found the order to be ‘unfair’ and ‘unjust’ with many resisting full engagement in the support or expertise offered by the programmes due to their desire to reassert that they are not actually a ‘bad parent’.

Several commentators have questioned whether the order would actually succeed in its aim of crime prevention and influence the behaviour of young people. The report by Ghate and Ramella (2002) appears to be the only UK based evaluation considering recidivism following a youth justice parenting programme. Their evaluation reported that the parents’ completion of the programme appeared to ‘apply the brakes’ to young people’s offending. They were tentative about the results and long term impact for parents attending the programme. They were also not sure which aspects of the programme were
The report does not however distinguish between parents attending the programme voluntarily and those attending on a parenting order. Therefore, the following questions were raised:

1. What is the level and gravity of young people’s offending after the end date of the parenting order?
2. Is the level or gravity of reoffending for those cases with a parenting order different to those cases where a parent has:
   i. Undertaken parenting support on a voluntary basis?
   ii. Been referred but not engaged in support?
   iii. Not been referred for support when their child was aged less than 16 years and sentenced to a court order?
3. Is there a link between the number of sessions or type of sessions that a parent attends and the reoffending rates?
4. How did parents respond to being made subject to a parenting order?
5. What did parents report about their experience of the parenting order?

IV. Parenting work within Youth Offending Teams may come too late.

The literature suggests that the factors associated with ‘chronic’ or ‘persistent’ offending are evident early in a child’s life (Farrington, 1996; Thornberry, 2005), before a child would receive intervention through a Youth Offending Team. Although the influence of parenting styles on the behaviour of young children is widely accepted, there is less agreement about how these influence the behaviour of older children or how amendments to parenting styles will influence an older child’s behaviour. Parenting is less influential after a child offends and research has also shown that the child’s delinquency is more likely to influence the parent’s reduction in warmth and monitoring, rather than the other way round. Yet parenting work within youth offending teams is also considered to provide a valuable avenue of support for parents. Ghate and
Ramella (2002) report that workers found it difficult to give “support by compulsion” but found that addressing the high levels of need presented by parents was a more significant challenge. Parents of ‘at risk’ young people present some of the ‘greatest challenges’ for staff and some parents will require one-to-one interventions and home visiting before being ready to attend a group. Burney and Gelsthorpe (2008) also argue that the parenting order is ‘out of keeping with many of those working in the field’ (p476).

Therefore, the following questions were raised in regard to the views of those working within the Youth Justice system:

a. Parenting practitioners within Youth Offending Teams:
1. Is the Parenting Order generally supported by these workers?
2. In their experience, do the needs presented by parents restrict them from undertaking group work?
3. Do they support the view that it is better to be in a poor family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a poor neighbourhood?
4. What is their view about where the parenting practitioner, funded under the Youth Crime Prevention fund, should be based?

b. Safer Neighbourhood Police or Antisocial Behaviour Teams:
1. Is the Parenting Order generally supported by these workers?
2. Do they view neighbourhood influences or parenting / family circumstances as the most influential factor in youth crime?
3. In their view, what are the best interventions for addressing what they consider to be the most influential factors leading to youth crime?
4. METHODOLOGY

This research is practice-based and has therefore been constrained to some extent by ethical issues of access to participants and data. Its main aim is to deepen knowledge and understanding, and to improve practice. The project is further limited by place and time, in that data relating to cases were obtained through a cross-sectional study from only one Youth Offending Team and only for cases activated during the period January 2005 to April 2008. The methodology is a mixture of qualitative enquiry and analysis of quantitative data. As Gray (2004) points out, a research project is no less valid for being a mixture of schools of thought and methodologies (p 31).

1. Theoretical perspective and the research design:

A quasi-experimental approach using pre-existing groups has been applied, as is the case with much organisation based research, according to Gray (2004). The quasi-experimental approach has been achieved through four sample sets of case files taken from a London Youth Offending Team. Apart from a sample of cases where parents were subject to parenting orders, three further comparator sample sets have been used in order to compare the needs and impact of intervention. These other sample sets involved cases where parents undertook voluntary parenting support, were referred but did not undertake any work and a final group of cases with young people under the age of sixteen years, living at home but the parents were not referred for support. These are taken over the same time period within the same Youth Offending Team. Rather than attempting to manipulate variables, the aim has been to observe categories of subjects from a case-file analysis involving a total of 148 cases.
This data set was augmented by questionnaires with parents attending parenting programmes and questionnaires with parenting practitioners and officers within Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

This sample is a specific case study within a single site, and therefore may be replicated within other sites but is not able to be generalised across all youth offending cases. However, as Gray (2004) argues, "just because a study does not find results that are capable of generalization does not mean they have no relevance" (p89). From a perspective-seeking approach a small case study may produce interesting findings that are valid in their own right. Although the results only give tentative answers to the questions asked in this project, they offer an original perspective on Parenting Orders as well as indicating areas for further research.

The 'gold standard' for scientific research is randomized experimental design with controls (Borman et al 2006; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992, Gray 2004). Other research designs are often seen as weaker and unable to provide causal inferences. The most flawed design is considered to be a 'non-experimental' approach with an 'intact group' (Gray 2004). This 'flawed' approach has been avoided by including four sample sets within a detailed case-file analysis. The positivist approach has influenced criminology (Jupp, 1989) with studies attempting to infer explanations and deduce independent causal inferences for crime. Although the aim in this research is to deduce answers to questions and gather explanations from the data, an empiricist approach has been applied through methodically gathering empirical data and interpreting it.

In order to draw conclusions from the data, interpretations and relationships of cause and effect must be considered. Within the case-file analysis, data about levels of offending prior to and after the parenting intervention or referral were collected. The four sample sets made it possible to consider not only the needs presented within the cases and the impact of the parenting order but also to
look at whether any of these needs and outcomes are unique to any particular group or groups. Because the data are not derived from controlled experiments, causal inference and internal validity is diminished as it is always possible that extraneous variables impacted on the outcomes. For example whether or not the young people reoffended, was not likely to be influenced by parental interventions alone, because the young people were subject to interventions themselves. The numbers are inevitably too small to generate statistical significance when looking at the range of different variables considered and therefore the findings will be indicative but should still be of value due to the original information made available in regard to this area of work.

Grounded theory can be used as a qualitative method of discovery (Corbin and Strauss (1990). It appears to be similar to the interpretive or inductive approach, often situated at the other end of the spectrum compared to positivism (Coghlan and Brannick 2005, Gray 2004). This approach involves qualitative data being gathered, for example through interviews, and then themes or trends being sought during the analysis of the data. Grounded theory requires analysis of the data from the first point of collection (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). For this thesis, themes and trends have been drawn from the literature review and these have informed knowledge and the questions for the case-file study. Although some of the data involves questionnaires or surveys conducted prior to the completion of the literature review, the analysis of data did not commence until all the questions were established. I have chosen to systematically collect the data for the case file study based on these questions and to apply the same set of questions to all the sample sets in order to compare their results based on the assumptions gleaned from the literature. Grounded theory was not a suitable research approach for this thesis because the data that form the basis of the research were derived from existing files or from structured questionnaires and no interviews were conducted. It was also considered preferable to work within a time limited, consistent and structured process.
This project also applies the “collective case study” approach, which is an instrumental case study (providing insight into an issue) extended to more than one case or example (Borman et al, 2006). Here the cases are restricted to one ‘site’. Although case studies can be attractive due to their ‘down-to-earth’ and ‘attention-holding’ nature they are not a suitable basis for generalisation (Stake 1978). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) discuss the control series design, which looks at more than one group whilst comparing the same questions, even though there will be differences within and between those groups. This allows for looking at any general trends within a larger population. This approach was applied through the method of in-depth case file analysis.

Since this research project is based on information obtained from within the researcher’s workplace, with access to restricted data and to participants who work in the same field it bears resemblance to ‘action research’. It is not the classical example of action research because the project does not seek to solve a problem previously identified within the organisation or to create structural change. However, this project does aim to deepen knowledge and understanding in order to better inform practice. Zeni (2005) discusses action research within education settings where the researcher is an ‘insider’ and responsible to the students that are being ‘documented’. She points out that action research is not quantitative, in that it does not deal with big numbers, random samples or manipulated variables but is also not qualitative to the extent that it does not involve outsiders ‘peering from the shadows into the classroom’ (p205). Coghlan and Brannick (2005) argue that action research in your own organization is a complex process and opportunistic but that the ‘insider close to the subject’ perspective can provide data that is “valid, rich and deep”. The methodology in this project involved questionnaires with practitioners within the youth justice field and with parents attending parenting groups, which were used to broaden understanding and triangulate information obtained within the case-file analysis.
II. **The Methods Applied**

II.i. **Case file analysis**

This involved gathering information from 148 cases within a London Youth Offending Team which were divided into four different sample groups. These were:

a) “Parenting Order cases” – where a Parenting Order had been made with a young person’s court order, dated between 1st January 2005 and 1st April 2008;

b) “Voluntary cases” – where parents had been referred for parenting support between the above dates and had undertaken an intervention voluntarily, as per the Youth Justice Board’s requirements that constitute a ‘voluntary intervention’ (YJB, 2007b)

c) “Non-engaged cases” – where parents had been referred within the above dates but not engaged in parenting support, as per the Youth Justice Board’s requirements of a ‘voluntary intervention’; and

d) “No-referral cases” – where young people had received an intervention between the above dates, were aged under 16 years and living at home at the start of the intervention but where no referral for parenting support was made.

The Youth Justice Board’s counting rules (YJB, 2007b) stipulate that, for 2007/8 a parenting intervention, following assessment, consists of at least one structured meeting to deliver the intervention and one follow-up session. However, parenting interventions delivered prior to April 2007 may be counted towards the measure if, following assessment, they consisted of just one structured meeting (the minimum requirement in 2006/07, YJB 2007a). For the purpose of this research the “voluntary cases” have been included if there was at least one structured meeting prior to April 2007 or at least two sessions undertaken for those cases referred after this date. Within the Voluntary group
there are five cases that undertook one structured meeting prior to April 2007, within the Non-engaged group there are two cases that have parents undertaking one session after April 2007 and within the Parenting Order group there are two cases where parents did not attend any sessions. Therefore the full sample set has also been separated into two groups of those who ‘attended something’ and those who ‘attended nothing’.

The time period was selected based on the start date of the first Parenting Order (made in early 2005) and to allow for six months between the last sentence or referral and the start of the data collection on 1st October 2008. This was to allow for a minimum six month period in which any data on reoffending since sentence or referral could be collated. The collation of data was undertaken in two phases, the first was between October and December 2008 and the second phase was completed in April 2009. This provided a minimum twelve month period since the date of sentence or referral.

The Parenting Order cases were taken from a spreadsheet that had been kept by the Youth Offending Team’s information officer in order to provide quarterly and annual statistical returns to the Youth Justice Board. This had been maintained with notes about the number of sessions and type of work undertaken. The first order was made in February 2005 and the last order, within the selected time period, was made in December 2007. All the parenting orders within the sample had ended by the time data was collated (the last ending September 2008). There were a total of twenty-one Parenting Order cases.

The cases selected for the Voluntary sample group were taken from ‘raw data’ files kept for the Youth Justice Board returns. The last case used in the sample of parents undertaking voluntary support had been referred in February 2008. Although there were further referrals and cases where parents had undertaken work prior to the start of this research, this was used as the last case sample
that was referred within the allotted time-period. There were a total of forty-three cases where parents had undertaken a voluntary intervention (as per the guidance discussed above).

The Non-engaged sample group were taken from the spreadsheet of referrals kept by the parenting worker. There were a total of thirty-nine cases in this group, although two cases involved parents having attended one parenting session following assessment (after April 2007) and a further five cases where parents had either attended the Youth Offending Team or accepted a home visit as part of an assessment.

The No-referral group was collated via a search done on the Youth Offending Team’s data base of all the community interventions that started between January 2005 and April 2008 and where the intervention ended before September 2008. This produced over 500 interventions. Some cases had more than one intervention that started in the same period; therefore the subsequent interventions were deleted to avoid duplication (seventy interventions). Final Warnings were removed due to the short intervention length of the final warning programme (128 cases). Any young people over the age of 16 years or not living at home at the start of the intervention were deleted (over 200 cases). This created a list of 104 young people living at home and aged less than 16 years at the time of sentence, 59 of these cases were already in the other sample groups. Therefore a final sample set of forty-five cases was created. See Appendix A for full break down of how this sample was created. The Ministry of Justice, Department for Children, Schools and Families and Youth Justice Board (2007) Guidance on Parenting Orders and Contracts stipulates that the court must consider making an order if the young person being sentenced is under the age of 16 years. This was therefore used as the eligibility criteria for these cases where a parent would have been more likely to be referred to parenting support.
a. Phase one: questions and categories.

To avoid the novice researcher's approach of collating as many spurious categories or questions as possible 'just in case' data may be needed later on (Gray, 2004), the selected data were linked closely with findings from literature and the research questions posed above. A detailed breakdown of the questions asked of each case within the case file analysis is available in Appendix B. In summary, the following areas were investigated: The type of intervention or support undertaken by parents who engaged, the number of sessions attended, whether parents had previously sought support from other agencies before their child's involvement with the YOT, whether the young people reoffended after the sentence or referral. Further information was also gathered in regard to the young people's ages at the time of offending and of first receiving an intervention, the number and types of offences committed (before and after the relevant start date), the needs of the young people (education, substance misuse, mental health concerns, peer influences, poor motivation), any concerns in regard to the living arrangements or family and personal relationships or neighbourhood. If the case had more than one young person over the age of 10 years living in the home then details about any siblings who were offending or subject to YISP or antisocial behaviour allegations was noted. The ethnicity of the young people and both of their parents (if known) was recorded. The gender of the young person was recorded and if it was a lone-parent household the gender of the primary carer was recorded. For two-parent households a record was taken of whether both parents had been offered or undertook support. Further information was gathered in regard to whether the young person had been accommodated or placed in custody at any time during their intervention and whether this had occurred after the parenting intervention or referral.

This information was gathered from the Youth Offending Information System (YOIS) for each of the young people (and their siblings if they had also offended and had a YOIS file). The actual process of going through the case files on
YOIS can be found in Appendix C. In summary, this involved looking at the young people’s offence details, court proceedings and primarily gathering information from the ASSET, which is the assessment tool used by Youth Offending Teams in order to assess a young person’s risk of reoffending. The Core Profile of the ASSET contains thirteen sections dealing with dynamic factors within a young person’s life. These are: Living Arrangements, Family and Personal Relationships, Statutory Education, Employment Training and Further Education, Neighbourhood, Lifestyle, Substance Use, Physical Health, Emotional / Mental Health, Perception of Self and Others, Thinking and Behaviour, Attitudes to Offending, Motivation to Change. Each of the sections contains questions requiring a ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’ answer with an ‘evidence box’ for providing more information. Each section is required to be rated (between 0 – 4) in regard to how much that section is related to the likelihood of further offending (see Baker et al, 2003).

Scores from the start and end ASSETs were taken as well as the scores of ASSETs done at the start and end of the parenting intervention (or at the time of the referral or sentence and then six months later for those cases where parents ‘did nothing’). The case diary was also viewed as these would often record conversations with parents in regard to support needs or views about referrals for support. If the parents had received a Parenting Order then their YOIS files and intervention pages would also be viewed to gather information in regard to the number of sessions undertaken and their response to receiving an Order.

b. Phase two: information from the Police National Computer

The robustness of the information collated via the Youth Offending Team data base was limited by the fact that it only held details of young people’s offending and sentencing whilst under the supervision of that Youth Offending Team. After a young person ends their intervention there is no continued monitoring
and no way of knowing if they have moved. A young person would be transferred to the Probation service if they were under a community intervention at the age of eighteen years and no further monitoring is done by the Youth Offending Team after this transfer. If a young person with prior convictions moved in to the borough these were not always recorded on the local Youth Offending Team’s data base. Likewise, if the young person moved out of the borough or became an adult, any information about further offending was not known. This lack of information made it difficult to compare cases in regard to levels and gravity of offending prior to, and following, the relevant start date (of the Parenting Order, referral or young person’s intervention). Any comparison of the young people who had particularly high or low levels of offending would be affected, particularly when seeking to compare the levels of offending against information about family or personal needs.

A request was made to the local Police for assistance in collating data on the Police National Computer that pre or post dated what had already been collated from the Youth Offending Team’s data base. The request was supported by the Youth Offending Team Service Manager and was sent to the Borough Commander via the Sergeant at the YOT. With the request, a spreadsheet with the following information was given to the Police: the research case number and full name of the young person, their date of birth and ethnicity, details of their first offence and age at the time of this offence, the notes taken during the research period in regard to the offences and sentences and the young person’s end date with the Youth Offending Team or the start date of the research (1st October 2008) if a case was still active. Approval was given to share limited information in an anonymous manner. Following a meeting to discuss the type of information sought and the rationale for seeking this information the Police Sergeant at the Youth Offending Team undertook the task of searching the Police National Computer for each of the young people, against their full details and then taking note of any cases that had additional information recorded against them. In a second meeting, in a secure office at the Youth Offending Team, the information (outlined below) was verbally fed
back against the relevant case numbers. This was recorded directly on to the anonymous spreadsheet, which does not hold the young person’s name or date of birth. The information accessed via the Police National Computer therefore updated the thematic data, whilst remaining anonymous, providing accurate and robust details for a significant number of the questions being asked within this research.

The information sought and collated was either in regard to offences that pre-dated the first known offence on the Youth Offending Team’s data base or post-dated the young person’s intervention end date. If information was recorded on the Police National Computer in regard to offences that were dated prior to the first known offence then the following details were given with that case number: the offence type, age of the young person at the time of the offence and the outcome. Two of the 148 cases had reprimands recorded against them that were not on the Youth Offending Team data base. If any new information was recorded in regard to offences committed after the young person’s end date, or any convictions with sentencing that occurred after the young person’s end date then the following information was fed back against that case number: the number of offences and their gravity; the time frame, in months, in which they were committed compared to the young person’s end date and the number of sentences. If the young person received a Penalty Notice or a custodial sentence this was also noted. If the young person had committed one of the specific offences being researched (Robbery, Assault, Shoplifting, Possession Cannabis, Public Order, Breach of Order, Possession of Offensive Weapon, Burglary or Driving) this was also noted. Fifty-six of the 148 cases had additional offences recorded against them.

The following questions were updated on the full anonymous spreadsheet: the age of the young person at the time of their first offence, the type of offence committed as their first offence, the number of offences committed prior to the start date (of the Parenting Order, referral or young person’s intervention), the gravity of their offending prior to the start date, whether they received a court
sentence for their first offence and if this was a Referral Order, whether they offended after the start date, the number of offences and whether there was a change in gravity, whether they offended after the end of the parenting work (or six months after the referral or young person's intervention), the number of offences and whether there was a change in gravity, whether they had become a PYO or spent a period of time in custody and whether they had committed any of the specific offences categorised above. At least fifteen categories were updated as a result of this additional information.

In addition to updating the spreadsheet with information from the Police National Computer, a review of the ASSETs for those cases where a new offence was recorded was completed. This included a review of those cases that had been open or current at the time of the first phase of data collection. If a new ASSET had been completed since 'phase one', the information in regard to the young person's individual or family needs were updated and the scores for the last Asset were recorded.

II.ii. Questionnaires and Surveys

When deciding upon the best qualitative methods to apply in this research, consideration was given to interviews, specifically to interview the parents of the young people involved with the local Youth Offending Team. The aim was to seek their views about their experience of the parenting order and their experience of seeking support if they had done so prior to the order being made. In considering the ethics of such an approach, specifically the risk that parents might feel obligated to undertake an interview, this was not pursued. In particular, the 'powerful' position of being the Coordinator working in the Youth Offending Team may have made parents feel coerced and perhaps uncomfortable to speak openly about their experiences. The potential for the interviews to appear unnecessarily obtrusive would not have supported the 'naturalistic inquiry' approach adopted with this research project. The possibility
of employing an independent research assistant to contact these parents and conduct the interviews was briefly considered. Even if the resources were available to pursue this avenue, ultimately, the interviews may not have provided anything additional to what was being sought through the case-file analysis. Although interviews are popular and can be useful to gain insight into a topic, they are not always the best method (Rugg and Petre, 2007) and they are "not the end of the research process" (Nunkoosing, 2005: 701). Furthermore, the issue of accurate memory recall and perception were also taken into consideration (Rugg and Petre, 2007). Looking over the cases within the case-file analysis, based on notes taken by workers at the time parents received their order or were commenting on their support needs, probably provided more useful and accurate data than asking parents months, or perhaps years, after this time. Furthermore, those parents who experienced the intervention or support with feelings of resentment or anger or helplessness may not have appreciated being interviewed and recalling these memories.

The aim to gain insight and gather qualitative data was therefore pursued through the use of questionnaires. Three sets of questionnaires were devised: one for parents attending parenting programmes, one for officers within Safer Neighbourhood Teams and one for parenting practitioners working within Youth Offending Teams. In addition to these questionnaires, a review of a questionnaire already used with parents of young people who attend the local Youth Offending Team was also undertaken. The questionnaire for parents attending programmes did include an option for parents to provide their contact details in order to participate in an interview. This option specifically requested this participation from parents who may have been subject to a parenting order or had a child offending. However, none of the parents who completed this questionnaire had received a parenting order. Therefore no interviews were conducted.
a. Questionnaire with parents attending programmes

The questionnaire was devised so that it would be suitable for any parent attending a parenting support group with a small set of questions asking parents to state whether they were currently or previously subject to a parenting order. See Appendix D. Access to parents attending parenting programmes was sought through local facilitators and the parenting practitioners who attend the quarterly forum held at the Youth Justice Board. The questionnaire was drafted and presented to the workers at one of the forums for their input. Although most workers or group facilitators were willing to hand out or send questionnaires directly to parents, there was a view that this was unlikely to produce a high response rate. Not all the parenting practitioners within Youth Offending Teams had direct contact with parents following their assessment and several signposted parents to groups. Because a ‘cold’ postal questionnaire has a typical response rate of around 10% (Rugg and Petre, 2007) it was decided that visits to parenting groups would be undertaken. After receiving permission from the parents, through the facilitator, the questionnaire would be given to parents for them to complete during the session. This would therefore ensure a much higher response rate.

Following a trial with one local parenting group a request for practitioners to approach group facilitators was emailed in July 2008. The timing perhaps impacted on the low level of responses as this fell on the start of the summer holidays, when several workers were on leave and when very few parenting programmes were being conducted. Most areas were planning to start groups again in September 2008. Although this allowed for a substantial period of planning and preparation, several workers were unable to assist due to their own work commitments. Two workers volunteered to distribute the questionnaire with parents that they worked with on a one-to-one basis and two other workers volunteered to assist with arrangements to visit parenting groups. This resulted in three parenting groups being visited and seventeen questionnaires completed. No individual responses were returned. Because
other methods were also being employed in this research the 'cajoling' of fellow practitioners was not considered appropriate (Rugg and Petre, 2007). The small sample of questionnaires still provides an insight into parents attending a parenting programme, voluntarily and most without any involvement with the Youth Offending team but who may have also previously sought support from 'helping agencies'. When attending the groups an unintended outcome was being invited to remain and observe the session. This provided an unexpected amount of 'rich, interesting and valid data' (Rugg and Petre, 2007).

b. Previous support questionnaire for parents at the YOT

As part of the initial interview process with parents whose children were attending the Youth Offending Team, they would be asked to complete a one-page questionnaire about any support that they were receiving or had previously sought. See Appendix E. The aim was to open discussion in regard to support avenues and identify possible barriers to receiving support via the Youth Offending Team. Between March 2007 and January 2009, forty parents had completed the questionnaire as part of an initial interview with the parenting support worker at the Youth Offending Team. The majority of the parents had not had any previous involvement with the Youth Offending Team. A small number were attending for a Pre-Sentence Report interview due to their child reoffending and awaiting a new sentence. The number of 'first-time parents' and 'returning parents' are not known as this question was not asked of them. The collated results do however give both qualitative and quantitative data that have been included to triangulate other data within this research project. In particular, the question of whether any parent whose child is attending the Youth Offending Team may have previously sought support can be considered.
c. Questionnaire with YOT parenting practitioners

A practitioner's forum is held every quarter at the Youth Justice Board for parenting workers based within Youth Offending Teams. Attending this forum as a practitioner and researcher provided an opportunity to hear various views held by practitioners, who were primarily based within other London local authorities. During the course of the forums practitioners were made aware of the research aims and objectives. A request had been made to be able to record statements or comments made by practitioners. This was agreed in principal on the basis that the statements would not be reported in the research as reflecting the views of all YOT parenting practitioners. Therefore a questionnaire was devised, to capture the variety of statements and to secure a view as to how much they were supported by other practitioners. See Appendix F. This questionnaire included 30 statements made by workers within the forums and then 10 statements taken from other research and literature. At a later forum held in January 2009 twenty-two workers who attended the forum were given and completed the questionnaire.

Throughout this research project part of the exploratory study involved attending conferences. At one particular conference a panel was held with the title 'Should parents be responsible for solving youth crime?' During the debate the following question was put to the panel: Where should a Parenting Coordinator, funded by the Youth Crime Prevention fund, be based? The responses to this question were as varied as the evidence in regard to causal factors of youth crime. This question, with the different responses as a multi-choice answer, was included in the questionnaire for the parenting practitioners.

d. Questionnaire with officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Team

An opportunity arose where I was asked to give a presentation to Police Officers and PSCOs about my role within the Youth Offending Team and I was
given permission to undertake a brief questionnaire with those present. This resulted in twenty-four officers completing the questionnaire. See Appendix G for a sample of the questionnaire.

III. **Ethical considerations**

In addition to obtaining permission for this project from the University Ethics Committee, I sought support and approval from the Youth Offending Team and from the Director of Children's Services. The proposal was not only discussed with the Operations Manager, Service Manager and the Director, it was written out and signed by all concerned. Gray (2004) highlights the risk of practice based researchers being tempted to 'cajole' colleagues to participate in the research project. Therefore, I ensured that the proposals detailed the aims of the research, how it would be undertaken and what information was going to be accessed and how. When seeking the Police National Computer information the request was put in writing and I awaited the response before pursuing the matter.

Asking colleagues or parents to complete the questionnaires and surveys whilst I was present at their group sessions, forums or training events allowed for a 100% response rate, compared to a likely 10% response rate for mailed questionnaires but a further ethical consideration was to ensure that participants were still volunteers and not 'conscripts' (Rugg and Petre, 2007). They were told however that they were not obliged to complete the questionnaire and could also opt for taking away the form and returning it at a later time. The parenting worker's questionnaire was conducted after attending several forums, whereby the majority of the workers were already aware of the research project. The visits to parenting groups were conducted at approximately the sixth session, to allow for the group to have settled and not be adversely affected by an interruption and also feel confident in refusing participation. The questionnaire was also first trialled with a group of parents who had completed a parenting
group locally to ensure that it was easy to follow and complete. There was no funding to allow for translation of the questionnaire but the risk of having parents who could not complete it due to English not being their first language was reduced by attending the group sessions, where an interpreter should have been present in these circumstances. The offer of completing the form with parents who may struggle with it was also given and one parent requested that she be supported to complete the form due to her learning difficulties. Although the visits to the parenting groups turned into ‘disclosed non-participant observations’ (Rugg and Petre, 2007) the invitation to remain present was made by the parents and facilitator, thereby reducing the risk of parents feeling obliged to participate in a research based observation. Although there was a risk that people would prepare how they present themselves during prescheduled visits (Yin, 2006), presenting a ‘front version’ of how a group behaves (Rugg and Petre, 2007) this risk was reduced by the invitation to stay on. The observations were non-participatory, in that the group session was conducted ‘as normal’ without interference or further questioning. Any notes taken did not include names or identifiable information.

Williamson (2007) argues that it can be difficult to maintain confidentiality when a researcher is internal to the organisation she is researching, particularly if the researcher is both investigator and a member of staff in the researched organisation, interacting with the same people. This research project has also allowed access to restricted and confidential information, which is unusual as “no social work agency should give you access to records” (Bailey et al, 1995:94). To ensure confidentiality, the case-file analysis involved a coding system (Williamson, 2007) whereby each case was given an individual unique number. The data was then stored on a spreadsheet, linked to this unique number. A separate list, password protected and stored in a private folder on the researcher’s workplace desktop, held the names and corresponding numbers. The case file analysis was also undertaken remotely from the primary workplace to reduce the risk of discussing cases with colleagues.
Johnson (2007) talks about the issue of practitioners not criticising or challenging the practice of colleagues – that in nursing and social work this is particularly prevalent. This issue arose in this project when inconsistent information was presented or when there was substantial lack of assessment or recording present. When the case-file analysis was completed a summary of the process and general observations was written up and given to the Management team of the YOT. This highlighted both strengths and weaknesses in how different staff undertook assessments. Concern about any particular staff members was raised separately within a meeting with the YOT Manager.
5. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CASE-FILE STUDY

The case-file study involved a total of 148 cases within a London Youth Offending Team. These were divided into four sample sets. The cases involve young people who were subject to an intervention with the Youth Offending Team and whose parents, between February 2005 and February 2008, were either made subject to a parenting order (21 cases), were referred and engaged in voluntary parenting support (43 cases), were referred but did not engage (39 cases) and those cases where the young person was under 16 years old at the time of their court sentence but the parent was not referred for parenting support (45 cases).

The majority of the young people in the total sample (eighty two percent) were male. This was a similar value for each of the sample sets (see Diagram 1) although there was a slightly lower proportion of females within the No-referral group (n=5 or eleven percent were female).

Diagram 1: Gender of young people in case-file study:
The ages of the young people were noted in regard to their age at the time of their first offence and their age at the time of the parenting order, parenting referral or the young person's sentence for the No-referral group. See Diagrams 2 and 3 for the average ages within each group and within the total sample set.

Diagram 2: Ages of young people at the time of their first offence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Diagram 3: Ages of young people at the time of sentence or referral for parenting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The family structure was noted in regard to whether the young person was living in a two parent household and whether this was as a 'step-parent' family or if the young person was living in a single parent household. Two thirds of the cases (n=99 or sixty-seven percent) were from households with separated parents. The majority (n=77 or fifty-two percent of the total sample) were single mothers. See Diagram 4.
Similar figures were present when looking at family structure within each of the sample sets. See above Diagram 5. The Parenting Order group did not have any young people living in a step-parent family. The Voluntary group had the highest proportion of single mothers (n=27 or sixty-three percent). The No-referral group had the highest proportion of single fathers (n=8 or eighteen percent).
Due to the high number of single parent families it may be reasonable to assume that these would be families with reduced incomes. Based on the information in the Living section of the ASSET, the total number of families, within the full sample, living in a ‘deprived household’ was sixty-one cases (forty-one percent). The Parenting Order group had the highest level of deprivation. See Diagram 6. The various needs presented in the sample sets, the definitions and use of ASSET to gather this information are discussed further in the next chapter.

Diagram 6: Levels of ‘deprivation’ in the sample sets of the case-file study:

Youth Offending Teams are required to record ethnicity on the basis of self assessment, according to the classification system used in the census. A record of each young person’s ethnicity was available. In seven cases the ethnicity of one parent (all lone-parent families) was unknown. Only one of these cases was a young person of ‘mixed’ ethnicity. The following nine categories were produced in this sample: White UK, Asian, Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Asian, Black African, White Irish, White European and Mixed White. The largest ethnicity representation (with thirty-four percent) was White UK. However, the majority of the young people in the total sample were from a BME background. See Diagram 7.
When separating the cases into the four sample sets the main differences are in regard to the number of young people in the Non-engaged group that are White UK and the number of young people in the Parenting Order group that are White Irish. Few of the Black African families were in the Parenting Order or No-referral groups. The detailed breakdown of ethnicity within each of the samples is shown in Diagram 8. A pictorial overview is attempted within Diagram 9.
The ethnicity of both parents is recorded as the same as their children, except in the cases that were recorded as ‘mixed’. There were seven cases, which were all lone-parent families, where the ethnicity of the non-primary caring parent was ‘unknown’ but only one of these seven cases had a young person of mixed race. Looking at the twenty five cases of mixed ethnicity, all of the households were lone-parent, mostly single mothers. Thirteen of the eighteen Mixed White and Black Caribbean young people were living with their mother who is White UK, one with a mother who is ‘White other’ (and their fathers are Black Caribbean). One was living with their Black Caribbean mother and one with their White UK father and two were living with their mothers who are mixed White UK and Black Caribbean (in one case the father is Black Caribbean and in the other his ethnicity was ‘unknown’). The cases with young people of Mixed White and Asian ethnicity (n=5), two were living with their White UK mothers, two with Asian fathers and one with their mother who is mixed White and Asian (the father is Asian). The two Mixed White cases involved one parent who is White UK and one who is ‘White other’ with one of each as the single parent at home.
The local Parenting Strategy (2008 – 2011) has been used to provide statistical information about the borough in which the Youth Offending Team was based. These are outlined below:

- The borough is an outer London Borough in North West London and approximately 10 miles from Central London. Covering 50 square kilometres (20 square miles), it is the twelfth largest borough (out of thirty-two) in Greater London in terms of area, but twenty-first in terms of size of population (214,000, source: Government's 2005 mid year population estimates).

- It is one of eight local authorities nationally with more residents of ethnic minority than white British people. The Government's mid 2004 population estimates show that 52% of the borough's population is of ethnic minority, the eighth highest proportion in England.

- The 2006 Vitality Profiles for the borough show 26,400 households in the borough have dependent children, which is just over a third of all households and higher than the London average of 29%.

- There are 52,500 children and young people up to 19 years of age living in the borough. Furthermore, according to the Office of National Statistic, 2006 mid year estimates, the borough has 22,543 young people aged between 10 to 17 years of age (YJB, 2009).

- Forty-one percent of pupils have English as an additional language. There are about seventy Irish Traveller families in the borough, almost all of whom are housed but many are in temporary accommodation. The borough's main refugee groups are Somali, Afghan, Tamil and speakers of Arabic. The borough has the highest level of religious diversity of any local authority in England and Wales.
- There are 4,400 lone parent households with dependent children in the borough, 5.6% of all households.

- At May 2008, 104 children were receiving a service from the Children with Disabilities Team.

- Forty-five children in the borough were born to teenage parents in 2006.

- At June 2007 there were 140 looked-after children and young people in the borough, 27 of whom were unaccompanied asylum seekers.

- 17.4% of pupils in all the borough's schools were eligible for free school meals in the January 2008 School Census. This represents 5047 pupils of a total number of 28,965 pupils in the borough.

- Between 2001 and 2003 7.4% of babies born in the borough were of low birth weight. This was higher than the average for London (6.6%) and England (6.2%).

- In March 2008 109 children were on the Child Protection Register.

The borough's Youth Justice Plan 2007-8 reports that there were 145 First Time Entrants\(^1\) to the Youth Justice System in this borough between April 2006 and March 2007 (YJB, 2007d). The Department for Children, Schools and Families Statistic Release in regard to First Time Entrants (DCSF, 2008) shows that the borough had 259 First Time Entrants, based on Police National Computer data and the postcode address of the young person.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) A first-time entrant to the criminal justice system in this release is defined as a young person receiving his or her first criminal sanction under the age of 18, where a criminal sanction is either a reprimand, a final warning (with or without intervention) or a conviction (DCSF, 2008).

\(^2\) This discrepancy in figures could be due to the reliance of Youth Offending Teams in being given data from Police, whereas the DCSF gather the data direct from the Police National Computer.
The Statistic Release shows that in the last five years the borough usually had the lowest rate of First Time Entrants, per 100,000, compared to the other thirty-two London boroughs.\(^3\)

The parenting programmes offered to parents via the Youth Offending Team were primarily delivered through one local voluntary sector provider. The Youth Offending Team commissioned the delivery of an 8 week course, three times a year, via this organisation. The facilitators of the course have remained the same since they started delivering the programme for the YOT in 2001. The programme is based on a Parentline Plus “Surviving Adolescence” course. The facilitators are also contracted on an ad-hoc basis to provide one-to-one support sessions and a ‘drop-in’ service for parents. On occasion parents would be linked to other parenting programmes if the course commissioned by the Youth Offending Team was not available at the time of referral but these were through the same organisation and also based on the same Parentline Plus model.

The programme offers parents information about adolescent development, strategies for improving relationships and communication, building self-confidence and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour in order to reduce future occurrences of the behaviour. Parents may also be referred for one-to-one mentoring sessions provided by the organisation. The mentors were often utilised for parents who spoke English as a second language because there were several mentors who could deliver sessions in the parent’s own language. All mentors were trained via an Open University NVQ course. One-to-one support was also provided by the Parenting Co-ordinator, through both home visit and office based sessions, prior to the parent’s engagement in a parenting programme. During the three year period of this case-file study all of the parents were offered or engaged in a similar ‘menu’ of programmes, whether they were on an order or attending voluntarily.

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\(^3\) The rate of first-time entrants aged 10-17 to the criminal justice system per 100,000 10-17 year olds in the population is based on Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates (DCSF, 2008).
6. ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As noted in the methodology section of this thesis, the research is based on a small sample of 148 cases in the case-file study and small numbers of completed questionnaires. The sample is too small to generate statistical significance and the findings are to be considered indicative of trends only.

I. Is the Parenting Order sufficient to address multiple factors?

   i. The personal, family and social needs presented by cases in the case file study

The first two questions within this section will be considered together:

   • What are the personal, family and social needs presented by young people and their parents subject to a Parenting Order?
   • Are the needs presented in cases where there is a parenting order different from those cases where parents:
      • Undertake parenting support on a voluntary basis?
      • Have been referred but not engaged in support?
      • Have not been referred for support but have a child aged less than 16 years at the time of their court sentence?

To answer these questions the data from the case file study will be used. There were a total of twenty-one Parenting Order cases, forty-three Voluntary cases, thirty-eight Non-engaged and forty-five No-referral cases. This gave a total
sample of 148 cases. The personal, family and social needs are explored within each set and the final figures are presented together to compare differences.

**a. Personal needs presented by the young people:**

The 'personal needs' of the young people in the cases were classified in the following five categories:

- Education needs
- Lifestyle concerns (negative peer influences)
- Substance use
- Mental health concerns
- Attitude or motivation concerns

Within the ASSET these areas are all presented as 'risk factors', however they will be discussed as personal areas of need within this thesis. Asset has several tick-box questions that are related to welfare need, circumstance and structural adversity but it is not designed to assess level of need. The scoring system should be used to assess how these needs are relevant to, and to what extent they impact on, the young person's offending.

Education needs included a broad range of concerns, for example: low attainment, dyslexia or learning difficulties, poor attendance or truancy, reports of disruptive behaviour. These needs may have been reported by the school, parent or young person themselves. In addition to 'education needs' the following areas were also considered: whether the young person had been excluded from school prior to their involvement with the Youth Offending Team and if this was known to be for fighting and whether the young person had a Statement of Education Needs. A Statement involves an assessment carried out by the school that then requires a package of support to be implemented for the child, for example, a learning mentor. Some young people presented with learning difficulties but were not subject to a Statement of Needs. Lifestyle
concerns could be closely associated with truancy or substance misuse but were not recorded as such in this research, these concerns would be noted under the other two categories. Lifestyle concerns were recorded in this research if it involved reports of negative peer influence or often staying out late or beyond curfew. Substance use was looked at in two categories: whether the young person used substances and whether substance misuse was present to an extent that required intervention, which usually involved a course of 'sessions' with the Substance Misuse Worker at the Youth Offending Team. In addition to whether mental health concerns had been raised (by the worker, young person or parents) a note was taken if the young person also had a mental health diagnosis, which included diagnosis of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. There are three separate sections within ASSET that consider the young person's thinking and attitude to their offending and their motivation to change, however for this research these are summarised into one need of 'attitude or motivation' concerns. A note was also taken of whether two or more needs or all five areas of need were identified with each case. Finally, a note was also taken if the ASSET indicated individual positive factors for the young person.

(1) Education needs:

See Table 1. Although the Parenting Order cases have a high number of young people presenting with education needs (eighty-six percent), this is not much more than the percentage of the total sample or within the different sets (between seventy-two to seventy-seven percent). However, when considering the number of young people who also had a Statement of Education Needs, whereby a package of support would be required for the young person within the school, the percentage is higher for the cases with a Parenting Order (nineteen percent compared to eleven percent within the total sample).
Furthermore, when considering the number of young people who had previously been excluded from school, the cases where a Parenting Order had been made have a much higher percentage (fifty-seven percent had previously been excluded, compared to forty-one percent within the total sample).

Table 1: Education Needs of young people in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education needs identified:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>Not referred (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person has Statement of Education Needs:</td>
<td>18 86%</td>
<td>31 72%</td>
<td>30 77%</td>
<td>33 73%</td>
<td>112 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous exclusion from school:</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>3 8%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>17 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of those previously excluded: was this for fighting or 'disruptive behaviour':</td>
<td>12 57%</td>
<td>16 37%</td>
<td>11 28%</td>
<td>22 49%</td>
<td>61 41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the final row presents percentages of the figures in the row above it.

When removing the Parenting Order cases from the total sample a similar figure is presented (thirty-nine percent of other cases had previously been excluded from school). Interestingly there is also a higher percentage of prior school exclusion for those cases where there was never a referral for parenting support (forty-nine percent had previously been excluded) and a comparatively high number of young people with a Statement of Education Needs (thirteen percent). Although the exclusion would have occurred prior to the Youth Offending Team's involvement and therefore indicated an area of need, this did not transpire into a referral for parenting support. Assuming there is a consistent rationale for why parents are referred to parenting programmes, this evidence perhaps gives an initial indication that, for these cases, the concerns presented by the young person were considered to be outside of the family or parents' remit to address, explaining why a referral had not been made. However, this
does not hold true for the cases where a Parenting Order was made. The reasons given for referrals to support are discussed later in the thesis. Therefore, returning to the other education needs presented within the cases, the most dramatic difference seems to be in those excluded from school for disruptive behaviour. Here the Parenting Order cases have considerably more young people who had been excluded as a result of being involved in fights or 'disruptive behaviour' (fifty-eight percent of exclusions compared to thirty-one to thirty-six percent of exclusions within the other sample sets). These results indicate that the parents who had received a Parenting Order had a child who was presenting with challenging behaviour in school. These parents were perhaps then more likely to be expected to deal with these behaviours and with the period(s) of exclusion from school. It could also be speculated that a young person had to be disruptive and then excluded from school and then attract attention from police before parents receive help and then only in a compulsory punitive manner. Whatever the circumstances, these concerns were present prior to the YOTs involvement, and therefore suggest a potential opportunity when the parents could have received earlier support.

(2) Lifestyle, substance misuse and mental health concerns

See Table 2. All of the Parenting Order cases had young people presenting with concerns in regard to their association with offending peers or being negatively influenced by peers. Five of the cases (twenty-four percent) reported involvement with 'gangs'. Within the other sample sets there were also high numbers of cases where negative peer influences were recorded. Within the Voluntary and Non-engaged groups eighty-eight and eighty-two percent respectively had young people associating with offending peers. The group of cases where parents had not been referred for support had a relatively smaller proportion compared to the other sample sets (sixty-two percent). The level of negative peer association presented within all the cases raises the question of how much influence the parents would be able to have on their child's
behaviour once the young people have made these associations, particularly given the importance of peer relationships as children enter adolescence.

Looking at the number of young people using substances (primarily cannabis and alcohol) there was a similar percentage within the Parenting Order, Voluntary and Non-engaged groups (between sixty-seven and seventy-two percent). Here, however, the highest percentage was within the Voluntary group. When considering the number of cases where the young person was misusing substances to the extent that an intervention was required, all three of these groups again had similar percentages (between forty-seven to fifty-two percent). The lower figures for the No-referral group in both the young person’s substance use (forty-two percent) and misuse requiring intervention (twenty-four percent) could be one explanation for why these parents were never referred for parenting support.

Table 2: Lifestyle, substance misuse and mental health concerns of young people in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle (peers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerns:</td>
<td>21 100%</td>
<td>38 88%</td>
<td>32 82%</td>
<td>28 62%</td>
<td>119 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use:</td>
<td>14 67%</td>
<td>31 72%</td>
<td>27 69%</td>
<td>19 42%</td>
<td>91 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where intervention</td>
<td>11 52%</td>
<td>20 47%</td>
<td>20 51%</td>
<td>11 24%</td>
<td>62 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>required:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health concerns:</td>
<td>10 48%</td>
<td>23 53%</td>
<td>19 49%</td>
<td>13 29%</td>
<td>65 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health diagnosis:</td>
<td>5 24%</td>
<td>9 21%</td>
<td>6 15%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>26 18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at Mental Health concerns or diagnosis, the percentages within the Parenting Order, Voluntary and Non-engaged groups are again similar, with the Voluntary group having the highest number (fifty-three percent) of the young people presenting with mental health concerns (which includes very low self-esteem). This raises the question whether concern about their child’s substance use or mental health is most likely to bring a parent to voluntary engagement in support.
The concerns presented by young people appear to be slightly more prevalent within the Parenting Order sample but are not sufficiently higher than the other groups to suggest significance. The fact that the number of young people presenting with individual needs or concerns is lower for the No-referral group may explain why there was never a referral made for these parents to receive support. The question is whether the converse is true for the groups that received a parenting support referral or a parenting order.

(3) Attitude / motivation concerns, level of need and positive factors

See Table 3. When looking at the motivation and attitude of the young people in each of the sample sets, there appears to be a possible relationship with the attitude that the parents may have been presenting themselves. This is reflected through the high percentage of young people within the Non-engaged group presenting with low motivation or poor attitude (eighty-two percent). The next highest group was the Parenting Order cases with seventy-six percent and the Voluntary group is slightly lower with sixty-seven percent. The No-referral group still presents with a high percentage (forty-nine percent) of young people with motivation or attitude concerns but this is much lower than the other groups.

Table 3: Attitude / motivation concerns, level of need and positive factors of young people in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude / motivation concerns:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more needs identified:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All five areas of need identified:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual positive factors noted:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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All of the Parenting Order cases had young people who presented with two or more needs and just over half (fifty-two percent) had all five areas of need identified. Although the other groups had relatively high numbers of young people presenting with two or more needs (ninety-one and eighty-seven respectively for the Voluntary and Non-engaged groups and seventy-three percent for the No-referral group), there was a much lower percentage in regard to the number of young people presenting with all five areas of need (thirty-seven, thirty-six and eleven percent).

The level of need presented by the young people in the Parenting Order cases confirms that the majority of the parents receiving parenting orders had to manage several challenges presented by their children, in addition to a poor attitude and low motivation within the young people to change their behaviour.

Despite the high presence of personal needs presented by the young people, there was also a high number of cases with individual positive factors noted (100 percent for the Voluntary group). Positive factors would include education, training or work that enhances confidence and self-esteem, positive and constructive things to do in their spare time, opportunities for ‘turning points’, strong stable relationship with at least one parent or other family member, receiving professional help or support, stable and secure accommodation, motivated to deal with problems in their life, some friends who are not involved in offending. Interestingly there were fewer cases presenting with positive factors within the Non-engaged group.

b. Family needs:

These were primarily taken from the Family and Personal Relationships section of the ASSET and involved the following five categories:

- Relationship problems within the family
- Inconsistent supervision or concerns in regard to parenting evidenced
- Evidence of primary carers involved in crime or substance misuse
- Negative parental attitude
- Experiences of trauma (abuse, violence or significant loss)

A note was also taken if there were any positive factors recorded in regard to the young person’s family.

The ‘relationship problems’ question within the ASSET includes any problem the young person may be experiencing in the home and therefore this was split into two categories, based on the evidence workers gave, as to whether the relationship problems were in regard to the primary carer or rather a sibling or parent not living in the home. A note was taken of any cases where significant adults fail to communicate with or show care for the young person. A note was also taken if ‘any other problem’ in regard to family or personal relationships was recorded, which may involve acrimonious separation between parents, moving between homes, the young person’s behaviour putting a strain on an otherwise positive relationship or the young person having periods of time within alternative accommodation, either in care or with extended family.

Although the ASSET looks at whether any family member is involved in crime or substance misuse, this dataset was restricted by taking note of those cases where it was the primary carer, living in the home, who was involved in crime, alcohol misuse or drug abuse.

Negative parental attitude was split into two questions in regard to the parent / carer’s support for the young person with their education, training or employment or whether the parent was unlikely to support the young person during their YOT intervention.

‘Experiences of trauma’ were split into two questions in regard to whether the young person had experienced significant loss or bereavement and whether the
young person had experienced abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect) or had witnessed Domestic Violence.

(1) Relationship problems within the family:

See Table 4. When looking at the four areas within the category of ‘relationship problems’ the cases within the Voluntary group have the highest number and percentage of concerns in most of these areas. This could indicate the motivation for parents to undertake parenting support or classes, which often have a focus on communication and building positive relationships. Interestingly the Parenting Order cases present a comparatively low level (thirty-three percent) of young people who have a poor relationship with the parent(s) in the home, whereas the Voluntary and Non-engaged groups have fifty-three and fifty-four percent respectively. Although there may have been ‘other problems’ and a high number of significant adults failing to communicate with the young person within the Parenting Order group, the relationship with the parent in the home (who received the parenting order) was, in most cases, positive.

Table 4: Relationship problems within the families of the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant adults fail to communicate or show care:</td>
<td>9 43%</td>
<td>21 49%</td>
<td>15 38%</td>
<td>7 16%</td>
<td>52 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationship with parent in home:</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>23 53%</td>
<td>21 54%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>55 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems are in regard to: sibling or non-primary carer?</td>
<td>6 29%</td>
<td>17 40%</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>36 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Other problem’ in regard to family or personal relationships:</td>
<td>12 57%</td>
<td>22 51%</td>
<td>17 44%</td>
<td>23 51%</td>
<td>74 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assuming that many of the parents who receive a Parenting Order had previously refused to undertake voluntary support, this data may in part explain
their refusal to attend parenting support if they were not experiencing relationship difficulties with their child. In reviewing some of the notes taken about the circumstances in the Parenting Order cases, a reoccurring theme is a positive relationship between the parent and young person but an acknowledgement by the parents of feeling unable to instil boundaries, being too lenient or allowing the young person to be autonomous from a young age (eleven cases). Some of these cases involved histories of domestic violence, acrimonious separation or a death within the family, which may have influenced the parent’s reluctance or inability to instil firm boundaries.

Two ASSETS within the Parenting Order cases outline the views of the young people about the tension in their relationship with the parent and the lack of boundaries in the home. These are summarised below:

- The young person describes resentment and a lack of respect for his mother due to the situations and abusive experiences he feels she made him subject to. He feels that his mother knew that her relationships were destructive for her children and overcompensated in other ways, by allowing him to get his own way and not setting appropriate boundaries when he feels he needed them. His mother has at times made some attempts to parent the young person but due to the period of time where he was left to his own devices, her attempts are ineffective.

- After release from custody the young person went to live with his father. The young person acknowledged that he feels his father will exert more control over him, something he felt his mother, despite her best intentions, was not in a position to do. He also reports that he is more likely to receive the support and structure he requires to complete his licence while residing in his father’s care.

The No-referral group present with fewer relationship problems within the family. However, fifty-one percent report ‘other problems’. When looking at the
notes of these cases, there were eleven cases that reported either an acrimonious separation between their parents, changes in step-parents or parental partners or several moves between homes. Three cases also had young people living with their grandparents for periods of time. However, in the most part, the young people and parents reported a positive relationship between themselves. This therefore probably best explains the absence of referral for parenting support. Interestingly, nine of the No-referral cases had parents reporting that their child’s behaviour or offending was beginning to place a strain on the family and their relationship, with some reporting that the young person was offending (stealing) against family members and becoming demanding or aggressive. These reports did not however seem to spur a referral for parenting support.

The data suggest that parents who have a difficult relationship with their children voluntarily seek help whereas the families who receive a parenting order seem to face very different problems. This is indicated by the fact that the parenting order families have more than half (fifty-seven percent) with ‘other problems’ in family or personal relationships. Furthermore, what is described as a ‘good relationship’ with a parent may simply mean the parent loves and cares, but not necessarily that it is a sound parent-child relationship, because the parent does not offer the child what it needs, that is to say boundaries. Here a parenting course may well offer advantages.

(2) Inconsistent supervision, parenting concerns, negative attitude and parents’ involvement in crime or substance misuse:

Unsurprisingly, all but the No-referral group have high numbers of cases where parenting needs were identified in the ASSET (eighty-seven to ninety-three percent), consistent with the referrals or court order for parenting support. There were still thirty-one percent of No-referral cases that highlighted parenting
needs within the ASSET and four of the Parenting Order cases (twenty percent) did not indicate parenting concerns. See Table 5.

When looking at the levels of inconsistent supervision in each of the groups the Parenting Order cases present with the highest level (eighty-one percent). As discussed above, despite the high number of positive relationships reported in the Parenting Order group, these appear to often coincide with parents struggling to instil consistent boundaries. See also Diagram A, which shows the proportion of cases where both inconsistent supervision and a poor relationship with the carer in the home were present.

Table 5: Supervision, attitude and involvement in crime or substance misuse of parents in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Needs noted in ASSET:</td>
<td>19 90%</td>
<td>40 93%</td>
<td>34 87%</td>
<td>14 31%</td>
<td>107 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent supervision:</td>
<td>17 81%</td>
<td>27 63%</td>
<td>26 67%</td>
<td>13 29%</td>
<td>83 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative parental attitude to education, training or employment:</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>6 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely to receive support from parent / carer during intervention:</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td>14 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of primary carers involved in crime or substance misuse:</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>13 30%</td>
<td>14 36%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>40 27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram A shows that inconsistent supervision and a poor relationship with the parent were present in six cases (twenty-nine percent) in the Parenting Order group, seventeen cases (forty percent) in the Voluntary group, sixteen cases (forty-one percent) in the Non-engaged and four cases (nine percent) in the No-referral group.
Diagram A: Percentage of cases in the case file study where both poor relationship with parent in the home and inconsistent supervision reported:

Returning to Table 5, although all of the groups present with low levels of poor parental attitude in regard to their children’s education or YOT intervention, the Parenting Order cases have a higher percentage (ten percent) of parents presenting with a poor attitude in regard to their child being encouraged to pursue education, training or employment, although this amounts to only two cases. The Non-engaged group has a comparatively high number of parents (n=7 or eighteen percent) who were less likely to support their child during their YOT intervention.

Within the Parenting Order, Voluntary and Non-engaged groups there were similar figures in regard to parental involvement with crime or substance misuse (thirty to thirty-six percent), with the highest percentage in the Non-engaged group. The comparatively lower figure for the No-referral group (thirteen percent) therefore provides another indication for why referrals for parenting support were not made for these parents.

When looking at the cases where parents were involved in crime or substance misuse there were several that also had young people presenting with all five areas of need. See Diagram B. In the total sample there were forty parents (twenty-seven percent) who were involved in crime or substance misuse. There were forty-six young people (thirty-one percent of the total sample) who
presented with all five areas of need. When considering how many cases had both elements present, this gave a total of nineteen cases within the full sample: five within the Parenting Order group, six within the Voluntary group, five within the Non-engaged and three within the No-referral group.

Diagram B: Percentage of cases in the case-file study where both a poor relationship with the parent in the home and inconsistent supervision were reported:

![Diagram B](image)

Therefore nearly half of the parents who were themselves involved in crime or substance misuse had children presenting with high levels of concern regarding behaviour or needs. This includes nearly a quarter (twenty-four percent) of the parents who had received parenting orders. This also shows that forty-one percent of the cases with young people presenting with all five areas of need had a parent involved in crime or substance misuse. This gives an indication of the compounding needs, and challenges, present in many cases.

(3) Experiences of trauma (abuse, violence or significant loss) and positive factors:

Sixty-one percent of the total sample had cases with separated parents, including eight cases with young people living in a 'two parent home' but with a
step-parent or partner. For this section the figures do not include parental separation unless this was reported to have had a significant impact upon the young person’s emotional wellbeing and behaviour.

See Table 6. Nearly half (forty-eight percent) of the young people whose parents had received a parenting order had experienced significant bereavement or loss, this is a higher proportion compared to the other groups (thirty-three percent within the Non-engaged group then nineteen and eighteen percent for the Voluntary and No-referral groups respectively). Interestingly, against the trend so far, the Voluntary group has a much higher proportion of young people who have experienced abuse or witnessed Domestic Violence (fifty-one percent compared to thirty-eight percent for the Parenting Order and Non-engaged groups). This again emphasises the disparity between these two groups in regard to ‘relationship problems’ in the home and perhaps further supports the hypothesis that parents are more likely to engage in support where there are experiences of relationship breakdown or concern.

Table 6: Experiences of trauma, level of need and positive factors of cases within the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person had significant bereavement or loss in the family:</td>
<td>10 48%</td>
<td>8 19%</td>
<td>13 33%</td>
<td>8 18%</td>
<td>39 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person abused or witnessed Domestic Violence:</td>
<td>8 38%</td>
<td>22 51%</td>
<td>15 38%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>51 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All five family needs identified:</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>9 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No family needs identified:</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>14 31%</td>
<td>9 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive factors: Any for family / carer:</td>
<td>21 100%</td>
<td>42 98%</td>
<td>31 79%</td>
<td>43 96%</td>
<td>137 93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the full sample there were nine cases that were presenting with all five areas of family need, these were not however concentrated within the Parenting
Order group. The majority (four cases) were within the Non-engaged group, although this only accounted for ten percent of this group. When looking at the number of cases that presented with all five family needs and all five young person's needs this resulted in a total of five cases within the full sample (one within the Voluntary group and two each within the Parenting Order and Non-Engaged groups). Although the percentage is therefore higher within the smaller sample of parents in the Parenting Order group, it again indicates that this level of need was not uniquely present within this group. When considering the number of cases that did not present with any family needs however, this again highlights a stark contrast between the No-referral group compared to the other groups. All of the cases in the Parenting Order group and ninety-five percent of the Voluntary and Non-Engaged groups were experiencing at least one issue within the family situation, compared to sixty-nine percent of the No-referral group. So far the findings confirm that parenting orders were being given to parents who were experiencing multiple and complex needs.

All of the parents or families within the Parenting Order group presented with positive factors, with the Voluntary and No-referral groups closely followed with ninety-eight and ninety-six percent. Although the Non-engaged group still had a high level of positive factors reported (seventy-nine percent) this is comparatively lower than the other two groups. It is possible in these cases that the workers had been unable to engage the young people or the parents within a full assessment to be able to report on the positive factors. The length of intervention for the different groups may give an indication of the amount of information workers would have gathered during their assessments. However, the average length of intervention (one year) is the same for the Voluntary, Non-engaged and No-referral groups. Only the cases within the Parenting Order group had young people on a longer average length of intervention of two years. The potential links between levels of offending and the levels of need or the lack of positive factors will be discussed in the findings in following chapters.
c. Social needs:

These were taken from the Living Arrangements and Neighbourhood sections of the ASSET:

- Living in unsuitable accommodation
- Living with known offenders
- Living in a deprived household
- Neighbourhood concerns
- 'Other problem' with living arrangements

Unsuitable accommodation included temporary crisis housing, homelessness or reports of unsanitary living. Although there were cases with young people having periods of time in care or custody and cases where young people moved out of home, often resulting in them living in hostel accommodation, these were not noted as 'unsuitable accommodation' as the focus here is on the parent's or family's living situation while the young person was at home. 'Known offenders' included the young person's siblings. Household deprivation primarily involved reliance on benefits. 'Other problems' could include overcrowding, several changes in address, recent eviction or risk of eviction and uncertainty over the stability of the accommodation. Neighbourhood concerns included reports of local gang activity, the area being identified as a 'hot spot' by police, frequent disputes with neighbours or living in a poor housing estate.

Table 7: Social needs (living arrangements, deprivation and neighbourhood) of the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living situation unsuitable:</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>9 23%</td>
<td>10 22%</td>
<td>24 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with known offenders:</td>
<td>5 24%</td>
<td>5 12%</td>
<td>6 15%</td>
<td>6 13%</td>
<td>22 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in deprived household:</td>
<td>12 57%</td>
<td>20 47%</td>
<td>17 44%</td>
<td>12 27%</td>
<td>61 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood concerns:</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>17 40%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
<td>7 16%</td>
<td>35 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Other problem' in living situation:</td>
<td>8 38%</td>
<td>11 26%</td>
<td>6 15%</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
<td>28 19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
See Table 7. Few cases within the total sample were living in unsuitable accommodation (n=23 or sixteen percent). The majority of these cases were within the Non-engaged and No-referral groups (twenty-three and twenty-two percent respectively). Only one case within the Parenting Order group was living in unsuitable accommodation. Although overall the figures are low, this disparity between the groups may indicate that a focus for some of the parents within the Non-engaged and No-referral groups was to address their living situation, rather than undertake any form of parenting support.

Few cases within the total sample had a ‘known offender’ living in the home (n=22 or fifteen percent). These were evenly spread among the groups but the highest proportion was within the Parenting Order group (n=5 or twenty-four percent of this group). Looking at the notes for these cases none of the Parenting Order cases involved the parents as the ‘known offender’, although there were such cases in the other three groups. Two cases in the Voluntary group had one mother on a licence and one father on a licence following a period of custody. Within the Non-engaged group there were three cases with the father or mother’s partner under the supervision of Probation. In the No-referral group there were two cases with a father previously receiving a custodial sentence or being ‘known’ to be in a gang. Therefore, although the Parenting Order group have a higher percentage of cases where there is a ‘known offender’ living in the home, they involved only older siblings. This would indicate further pressure, needs or concerns that the parents subject to a parenting order are likely to have to address.

Table 8: Level of social need in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation and Neighbourhood concerns;</td>
<td>5 24%</td>
<td>10 23%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>18 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation and ‘other problem’</td>
<td>6 29%</td>
<td>7 16%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>18 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation, neighbourhood concerns</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>5 12%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>6 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND ‘other problem’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social problems:</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>13 30%</td>
<td>16 41%</td>
<td>17 38%</td>
<td>50 34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The majority (fifty-seven percent) of the cases within the Parenting Order group were living in a deprived household, dependent on benefits. Half of these families were also dealing with an 'other problem' in their living situation (see Table 8). Compared to the other groups there were more cases in the Parenting Order group reporting 'other problems' in the living situation (thirty-eight percent compared to twenty-six, fifteen and seven percent). Many of these 'other problems' were individual to the families, for example, an elderly grandmother living in the home and requiring a lot of extra care; a family that were not reliant on benefits but both parents were having to work long hours in order to manage financially; a parent's partner causing antisocial behaviour placing the family at risk of eviction and five cases involved a parent with either a physical disability or mental illness that was placing extra pressures on the family.

The Voluntary group presented with the highest proportion of cases with 'neighbourhood concerns' (n=17 or forty percent). Looking at the notes for these cases, the neighbourhood concerns were either to do with the area being deprived or 'well known' for crime (n=10) or the young person was being influenced by local groups of pro-criminal peers or 'gangs' (n=7). When considering the compounding needs of deprivation and neighbourhood concerns (see Table 8), the Voluntary group had ten cases (twenty-three percent) where both these needs were present. Furthermore, five of these cases were also dealing with an 'other problem' in the living situation. Although there were similar proportions within the Parenting Order group, this may be an indication that the parents in the Voluntary group, facing problems with the environment outside of the family's control, were willing to seek assistance in grappling with the impact of these issues on the family.

When considering the absence of 'problems' within the living situation, only four cases (nineteen percent) in the Parenting Order group did not report or present with any social problems. Therefore eighty-one percent of the families within the Parenting Order group were dealing with at least one social problem. The other
groups did however still present with a relatively low number of cases where 'no social need' was reported (thirty to forty-one percent).

Since the ASSET takes into account all three areas of personal, family and social need when considering risk of further offending, looking at the total ASSET scores also highlights the overall levels of need (or risk) within the different groups (see Table 9). Although the ASSET is not intended as an assessment of need it is still interesting to consider the scores as many of the questions are in relation to the needs discussed here. The table shows that the total ASSET scores were, on average, higher at the time of the parenting order, with a comparatively lower average score for the cases in the No-referral group. There was also on average a score of two (out of a maximum of four) within the Family and Personal relationship section of the ASSETs in all but the No-referral group. A score of two within any section would normally indicate a need for a referral or further assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average total ASSET score at start of Parenting Order / Referral / Intervention:</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Family and Personal Relationship score at start:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Summary of Personal, Family and Social needs:

In summary, the personal, family and social needs presented by young people and their parents subject to a Parenting Order show that all of the young people in the Parenting Order group were reported to be negatively influenced by their peers and most were presenting with education concerns. Almost half of the young people were using substances, half had mental health problems and
some also presented with low motivation or poor attitude. The parents were often unable to provide consistent supervision and almost half of the cases had experienced significant loss or bereavement. Many of the families were living with deprivation, often compounded with other problems in the living situation.

A comparison of the needs presented in cases where there is a parenting order with those cases where parents (a) undertake parenting support on a voluntary basis, (b) have been referred but not engaged in support or (c) have not been referred for support but have a child aged less than 16 years at the time of their court sentence suggests that there is not a great deal of difference. Although most of the needs are more prevalent among the Parenting Order group they are not unique to this group. The Voluntary and Non-engaged groups were often close behind the Parenting Order group and in some instances had a higher proportion of need. The Non-engaged group had higher numbers of young people presenting with poor motivation or attitude and with a parent or carer involved in crime or substance misuse and more families living in unsuitable accommodation. Both the Voluntary and Non-engaged groups had higher proportions of relationship problems reported between the young person and primary carer and a high number of cases with inconsistent supervision. A finding of graduated need with higher levels of different forms of intervention might have been expected but surprisingly although overall the Parenting Order group had a higher proportion of young people with a mental health diagnosis, the Voluntary group also had higher proportions of young people using substances and presenting with mental health concerns. The Voluntary group also had the highest proportion of cases where the young person had experienced abuse or witnessed Domestic Violence and where a significant adult failed to communicate or show care to the young person or where there were relationships problems with a sibling or non-caring parent. The Voluntary group presented with the most ‘parenting needs’ and the highest proportion of neighbourhood concerns.
Consistently the No-referral group had fewer problems or needs presented and a significantly lower number of cases where inconsistent parental supervision was reported. The two areas where this group had comparatively high levels of need were the number of cases where the young person had previously been excluded from school and in the category ‘other problems’ for the family and personal relationships. The No-referral group had the highest number of cases where no social problems were reported. The difference in the level of need within this group, compared to the other three groups, provides some insight into why a referral for parenting support was never made. This is further evidenced when reviewing the average ASSET scores which show that the No-referral group usually did not meet the automatic threshold for a referral.

The data show that although most of the parents either referred or ordered to undertake parenting support had to manage several needs, the parents subject to parenting orders appear to be presenting with slightly more compounding needs and complex situations.

I.ii. The level and gravity of young people’s detected offending in the case file study.

The next two questions in this section will also be considered together:

- What is the level and gravity of young people’s offending prior to a Parenting Order being imposed?
- Is the level or gravity of offending in those cases where there is a parenting order different from those cases where parents:
  - Undertake parenting support on a voluntary basis?
  - Have been referred but not engaged in support?
  - Have not been referred for support but have a child aged less than 16 years at the time of their court sentence?
To answer these questions, the case file study was again used. The information is in regard to recorded offences. In order to compare the impact of the various interventions in relation to the young people’s offending, a note was taken of the number and gravity of offences prior to the parent starting any parenting support work, rather than prior to the date of the Parenting Order or the date of the referral for parenting support in the cases of the Voluntary group. In any cases where the parent did not undertake parenting sessions the date of the parenting order or the date of the referral for the Non-engaged group and the date of the young person’s intervention in the No-referral group were used. This date will be referred to as ‘the relevant start date’. A note was taken of the total number of offences committed by each person prior to the relevant start date and also of the number and gravity of offences committed within just the twelve month period before the relevant start date. A note was taken of the young person’s most serious offence (based on the gravity score of the offence), of the average of the gravity of all their offending and of the offences committed within the twelve month period before the relevant start date. See Appendix H for a list of the Gravity scores for each offence, as recorded on the Youth Offending Information System. The highest possible gravity score is eight. In the case-file study there was one case where the young person had committed an offence with a gravity of ‘seven’ (for Arson endangering life), otherwise the highest gravity was ‘six’, usually for Domestic Burglary and Robbery.

Offences that were committed on the same date, within the same incident but had multiple victims were counted as one offence (for example a Robbery committed against a group). This was because not all Robbery offences were recorded consistently; some young people would be prosecuted and convicted against each victim and some against the incident of one Robbery. Also, driving offences that were prosecuted as three separate offences of Taking with out Owners Consent, Driving without a Licence and No Insurance were recorded as one offence in this data. Breach of Order was omitted because it was not always clear within the records whether the young person had admitted and been convicted for the breach or if the breach had been dropped. Although
breaching an order is an offence, carrying a gravity score of 'four', these were only noted within the types of offences that young people committed to ensure consistency among the sample. The Breach of Order did in some cases influence whether a young person became labelled as a 'persistent young offender', which refers to young people who have received three separate court sentences within a three year period. Time scales within the court system are reduced when a young person is a 'persistent young offender', for example, they should be sentenced within two weeks of their conviction rather than the usual three weeks. Therefore if the Breach of Order resulted in the order being revoked and the young person being resentsenced on the original offences to a new order, this could result in them becoming classified as a 'persistent young offender'.

a. Level and Gravity of offending within all sample groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagram C: Number of young people who were 'persistent young offenders' at relevant start date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Order (n=21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary (n=43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-engaged (n=39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-referral (n=45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forty-three percent of the young people in the Parenting Order group (n=9) were 'persistent young offenders' when the parents received the parenting order. The same number of young people within the Voluntary group were
'persistent young offenders' but this equates to almost half the proportion. The Non-engaged group had six cases (fifteen percent) and the No-referral group did not have any ‘persistent young offenders’. See Diagram C.

Table 10: Level and Gravity of all offending by young people in the case file study prior to the relevant start date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest gravity of offending - prior to relevant start date:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of gravity for all offences prior to relevant start date:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of offences prior to relevant start date:</td>
<td>6 offences</td>
<td>4 offences</td>
<td>3 offences</td>
<td>2 offences</td>
<td>3 offences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Level and Gravity of all offending by young people in the case file study in the YEAR BEFORE relevant start date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest gravity of offending - in the YEAR BEFORE relevant start date:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of gravity for all offences in the YEAR BEFORE relevant start date:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of offences in the YEAR BEFORE relevant start date:</td>
<td>4 offences</td>
<td>3 offences</td>
<td>2 offences</td>
<td>2 offences</td>
<td>2 offences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Tables 10 and 11 (above). The number of offences committed by young people prior to their parents receiving the parenting order was on average six offences. The highest number of offences prior to the order was twelve (committed by one young person in this group) and the least was two offences (committed by four young people). In the year prior to the parenting order the
average was four offences. The highest gravity of offending at any time prior to the parenting order, and within the year before the order, was on average ‘five’ in this group. The highest recorded offence gravity in the group was ‘six’ and twelve young people (fifty-seven percent of the group) had committed offences of this gravity, all involving Robbery. When considering all of the offences committed by the young people prior to the parenting order and within the year before the order, the average of the gravity of each young person’s offending was ‘four’. This was the same average of gravity for the other groups.

The average number of offences committed at anytime prior to the relevant start date and within the year before the start date was comparatively lower within the Voluntary, Non-engaged and No-referral groups than the Parenting Order group. However there were some remarkable exceptions. The case with the most offences, prior to referral, with nineteen offences was within the Non-engaged Group. Also one of the cases within the Voluntary group had committed twelve offences and one of the cases within the No-referral group had committed ten offences. The average number of offences in these groups was reduced due to the high number of young people who had committed only one offence. Nearly half of the No-referral group (n=21 or forty-seven percent) had young people who had committed only one offence. Thirteen of these cases were for offences with a gravity of ‘six’, therefore explaining why these young people had received a court sentence (rather than a pre-court disposal of a Reprimand or Final Warning) for their first offence. This could also provide an indication for why a referral for parenting had not been made in these instances. Perhaps workers were reluctant to consider such intervention at this early stage and perhaps parenting orders were more likely to be imposed as a ‘last resort’ in addressing a young person’s offending but parents would avoid a parenting order if they engaged in voluntary support.

The hypothesis, of the parenting order being imposed as a ‘last resort’, is supported by the higher proportion of cases in the Parenting Order group where young people were classified as a ‘persistent young offender’ and the higher
level of offending prior to the Order, but also when looking at the length of time between the young person’s first offence and the relevant start date. Looking at the average age of the young people at the time of their first offence and then the average age at the relevant start date, the Parenting Order group had a longer period of time in which the young people had been offending and from an earlier age (see Table 12). Therefore, these young people were more likely to have had more court appearances and the parents would probably have had more opportunities to undertake voluntary support than the other cases, increasing the likelihood of receiving a Parenting Order if they have not previously engaged in support.

Table 12: Average age of young people at the time of their first offence and their age at the ‘relevant start date’ in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age of the young person at the time of their first offence:</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of the young person at the relevant start date:</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of years between the young person’s first offence and start date:</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I.iii. Differences in personal, family and social needs compared to levels of offending

The case file study was used to consider whether there are differences in personal, family or social needs between those young people who have high levels of offending compared to those with low levels of offending.
The total sample of 148 cases has been sorted into four separate groups based on the total number of offences committed by the young people as of 1st April 2009. These groups were:

- Between one to two offences (n=44)
- Between three to four offences (n=42)
- Between five to eight offences (n=32)
- More than nine offences (n=30)

Within the total sample, 800 offences had been committed by the 148 young people. Half of these had been committed by thirty-one young people (twenty-one percent of the group). The highest number of offences committed by one young person was twenty-three offences. There was only one other young person who had committed over twenty offences. The average number of offences for the total sample was five offences, with twenty-two young people committing just one offence.

As discussed in the methodology, information was gathered from the ASSETs throughout the young person's involvement with the Youth Offending Team. Therefore, different needs may have been present at the time of each offence and some needs may have developed after the young person had started offending. This exercise is to consider whether young people with different levels of offending have experienced different levels of need.

a. Differences in personal needs

Please see section I.i.a (above) for an explanation of the categories used in regard to Personal Need, which are:

- Education needs
- Lifestyle concerns (negative peer influences),
- Substance use
- Mental health concerns
- Attitude or motivation concerns
Table 13 shows that across all the five categories of personal need, the more offences committed the higher the proportion of young people presenting with that need. Although there were some small discrepancies between the groups with five-to-eight offences and with more than nine offences, most categories indicated a proportionate increase. In most categories there was at least double the percentage of cases within the high offending group (with more than nine offences) compared to the low offending group (with one-to-two offences). Education needs and negative peer influences appear to be the most common concern within all the groups. A majority of the high offending group presented with all five areas of need (sixty-seven percent) whereas only one of the young people in the low offending group presented with all five areas of need. In regard to this one case, they did not have any previous exclusion from school, a Statement of Education Needs or a Mental Health diagnosis. However, when looking at the two cases where the young people had committed more than twenty offences, both presented with all of five areas of need but interestingly only one presented with an ‘extra category’ with a Statement of Education Needs.

Table 13: Personal needs and level of need in different offending groups within the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal needs:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education needs identified:</td>
<td>24 55%</td>
<td>28 67%</td>
<td>32 100%</td>
<td>28 93%</td>
<td>112 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle (peers) concerns:</td>
<td>24 55%</td>
<td>36 86%</td>
<td>30 94%</td>
<td>29 97%</td>
<td>119 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use:</td>
<td>14 32%</td>
<td>26 62%</td>
<td>25 78%</td>
<td>26 87%</td>
<td>91 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health concerns:</td>
<td>9 20%</td>
<td>17 40%</td>
<td>18 56%</td>
<td>21 70%</td>
<td>65 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude / motivation concerns:</td>
<td>14 32%</td>
<td>31 74%</td>
<td>28 88%</td>
<td>26 87%</td>
<td>99 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more personal needs recorded:</td>
<td>26 59%</td>
<td>40 95%</td>
<td>32 100%</td>
<td>30 100%</td>
<td>128 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 5 areas of personal need identified:</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>10 24%</td>
<td>15 47%</td>
<td>20 67%</td>
<td>46 31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When looking at the number of cases within the same subsamples that not only had mental health concerns but also a mental health diagnosis or were presenting with not only education needs but had a Statement of Special Education needs, slightly different results emerge (see Table 14).

Table 14: Statement of education need and Mental Health diagnosis within different offending groups in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of need:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person has Statement of Education Needs:</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>5 12%</td>
<td>6 19%</td>
<td>4 13%</td>
<td>17 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health diagnosis:</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
<td>10 24%</td>
<td>3 9%</td>
<td>10 33%</td>
<td>26 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous exclusion from school:</td>
<td>13 30%</td>
<td>14 33%</td>
<td>18 56%</td>
<td>16 53%</td>
<td>61 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of those previously excluded: this was for fighting or 'disruptive behaviour':</td>
<td>3 23%</td>
<td>6 43%</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>8 50%</td>
<td>23 38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the last row is showing the percentage of the cases in the row above it.

Although the differences between the low and high offending groups are still more than double, the other 'mid-range' offending groups do not follow the same pattern. The incline is also not as steep for the cases where the young person had previously been excluded from school. It is worth noting that this could be a consequence of lower numbers within the subsample.

Table 15: Substance misuse requiring intervention within different offending groups in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse where intervention required:</td>
<td>5 11%</td>
<td>16 38%</td>
<td>19 59%</td>
<td>22 73%</td>
<td>62 42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When considering the proportion of young people who misuse substances to the extent that an intervention is required there is a starker contrast between the high and low offending groups (see Table 15, above).

Although there is still a similar pattern of increased need with increased offending, the incline appears to be much steeper, similar to that of mental health concerns. An attempt to depict the incline of need in regard to substance use, substance misuse requiring intervention, mental health concerns, education needs and peers is shown in Diagram D.

Diagram D: Incline of need within different offending groups in the case file study:

It appears that the proportion of young people who require substance misuse intervention is seven times more prevalent within the high offending group compared to the low offending group. Of the twenty-two cases within the high offending group requiring substance misuse intervention, four reported Class A drug use, which was rare among the total sample with only two other cases reporting Class A drug use. Most of the young people were reporting regular cannabis use, to the extent that it was reducing their motivation and affecting their education attendance.
Finally, considering the presence of compounding needs present in the different subsamples, the majority of the twenty-two cases in the high offending group had involvement with a negative peer group (n=19) and twelve of these cases also had previous exclusions from school. A high number of the cases had a Mental Health diagnosis of ADHD (n=10) and two cases were assessed as having possible Conduct Disorder but did not receive a diagnosis. Although it was rare for all three of these areas (previous exclusion, negative peer group and mental health diagnosis) to be present together with substance misuse (n=4) these results do indicate that the high offending group presents with more overlaps between categories and a compounding of need.

b. Differences in Family Needs

Please see Section I.i.b (above) in regard to the categories of family needs, which are:

- Relationship problems within the family
- Inconsistent supervision or concerns in regard to parenting evidenced
- Evidence of primary carers involved in crime or substance misuse
- Negative parental attitude
- Experiences of trauma (abuse, violence or significant loss)

The data concerning family needs show a similar pattern to those of the previous section concerning personal needs. In most categories the group of high level offending (nine or more offences) has at least double the percentage of cases presenting with that need compared to the group with low level offending (one to two offences). This is particularly evident when looking at relationship problems, inconsistent supervision and experiences of abuse or domestic violence (see Table 16). Due to the significance placed on the influence of a poor parent-child relationship in the literature, a higher percentage of relationship problems with the primary carer may have been expected. Yet even in the high offending group more than half do not report a
relationship problem between the young person and parent(s) in the home. Furthermore, within the high offending group, the seven cases where young people had committed more than fifteen offences only three of them (forty-three percent) report relationship problems between the young person and the parent. As discussed in earlier sections, an absence of reported relationship problems may indicate a loving and caring relationship but does not necessarily translate into consistent supervision or parental care. The high proportion of cases with inconsistent supervision and the level of incline compared to the lower offending groups further support this.

Table 16: Family relationship problems, inconsistent supervision and experiences of abuse or Domestic Violence within different offending groups in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family needs:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant adults fail to communicate or show care?</td>
<td>10 (23%)</td>
<td>12 (29%)</td>
<td>13 (41%)</td>
<td>17 (57%)</td>
<td>52 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationship with parent in home?</td>
<td>9 (20%)</td>
<td>15 (36%)</td>
<td>17 (53%)</td>
<td>14 (47%)</td>
<td>55 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems in regard to: sibling or non-primary carer:</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
<td>9 (21%)</td>
<td>11 (34%)</td>
<td>11 (37%)</td>
<td>36 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Other problem' in family or personal relationships:</td>
<td>14 (32%)</td>
<td>22 (52%)</td>
<td>12 (38%)</td>
<td>26 (87%)</td>
<td>74 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent supervision:</td>
<td>14 (32%)</td>
<td>23 (55%)</td>
<td>23 (72%)</td>
<td>23 (77%)</td>
<td>83 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person abused or witnessed Domestic Violence:</td>
<td>10 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (31%)</td>
<td>13 (41%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>51 (34%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high offending group presents with a much higher proportion of cases with an 'other problem' in family or personal relationships compared to the low offending group (eighty-seven compared to thirty-two percent).

Looking at the notes of these cases, the 'other problems' relate to: the young person living in a hostel or with friends after being asked to leave home due to their behaviour (seven cases); the young person experiencing several changes in care between parents or other family members (five cases); the young person
often staying out or reported missing (three cases); ongoing acrimonious separation between parents (three cases); family struggling as one parent still living in their home country (two cases); parent's ill health placing strain on relationships in the home (two cases); young person previously in care due to Domestic Violence (two cases); young person's emotionally demanding relationship with girlfriend placing strain on household (one case) and the parent's new partner living in the home resulted in child protection proceedings (one case).

The group with three-to-four offences has just over half (fifty-two percent) with an 'other problem' in family and personal relationships. Looking at the notes for this group, the ‘other problems’ are similar in many respects: an ongoing acrimonious situation between the parents following separation (five cases); several moves for the young person between family members (five cases) and although there were no young people living outside of the home there were threats of asking the young person to move out due to their behaviour (six cases). There were also families (that had fled war-torn countries) with a parent still living in their home country (three cases).

Interestingly, the young person's behaviour appears to be the catalyst for many relationship breakdowns and the request or threat to move out of home. It is worth considering therefore whether the close link between high levels of offending and a high proportion of inconsistent supervision is due to the young persons' behaviour influencing the parent's behaviour, rather than the other way round.

Where the primary carers were involved in crime or substance misuse or where the young person had experienced significant bereavement or loss the percentages are somewhat similar across all groups (see Table 17). These categories do not seem to be particularly pertinent factors in relation to levels of offending. As previously explained, the category of significant bereavement did not include parental separation. The proportion of cases which were single
parent households is also similar across all the groups, although slightly lower within the low offending group.

Table 17: Carer’s involvement in crime or substance misuse, experiences of bereavement, loss and separation within different offending groups in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family needs:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of carers involved in crime / substance misuse:</td>
<td>10 23%</td>
<td>12 29%</td>
<td>8 25%</td>
<td>10 33%</td>
<td>40 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person had significant bereavement or loss:</td>
<td>9 20%</td>
<td>12 29%</td>
<td>10 31%</td>
<td>8 27%</td>
<td>39 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent household:</td>
<td>23 52%</td>
<td>28 67%</td>
<td>21 66%</td>
<td>19 63%</td>
<td>91 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram E: Incline of some of the family needs within different offending groups in the case file study:

Diagram E is an attempt to depict the different level of incline between carers involvement in crime or substance misuse or the young person experiencing significant bereavement or loss and other factors such as inconsistent supervision, the young person witnessing domestic violence and ‘other problems’ in the family and personal relationships.
c. Differences in Social Needs

Please refer to section l.i.c above for a more detailed explanation of the social needs, which were taken from the Living Arrangements and Neighbourhood sections of the ASSET:

- Living in unsuitable accommodation
- Living with known offenders
- Living in a deprived household
- ‘Other problem’ with living arrangements
- Neighbourhood concerns

Table 18: Social needs within different offending groups in case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social needs:</th>
<th>1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living situation unsuitable:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with known offenders:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in deprived household:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood concerns:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Other problem’ with living situation:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicate that high levels of social need bear a close relationship to high offending levels (see Table 18). Only seven percent of the high offending group reported ‘no social problems’ compared to forty-eight percent of the low offending group. Consistently, around double the proportion of cases presenting with various social needs appear within the high offending group compared to the low offending group. When we combine the category of “living in a deprived household” with various other social needs, the high offending group still stands out (see Table 19).
An aspect worth considering is that the young people who continued to offend would have been subject to longer periods of intervention with the Youth Offending Team and therefore their behaviour and the tensions within the family home would have been more likely recorded. However, when looking at the first ASSET scores completed for the young people in the different groups, it appears that the assessments highlighted the level of need and ‘risk of reoffending’ from the beginning. See Table 20.

**Table 20: Initial ASSET scores for different offending groups in case file study:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average ASSET score: 1-2 offences (n=44)</th>
<th>3-4 offences (n=42)</th>
<th>5-8 offences (n=32)</th>
<th>9+ offences (n=30)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average ASSET score at start of YOT intervention:</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, due to the levels of mental health concerns and experiences of abuse or domestic violence present in the high offending group it would be interesting to look at the level of involvement with ‘helping agencies’.⁴ See Diagram F. The high offending group had eighty percent of the cases (n=24) with prior involvement with an organisation. This is more than double the proportion of the low offending group that had thirty-six percent (n=16). Furthermore, twelve of

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⁴ These include: Children’s Services, CAMHS (Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Services), Adult Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Women’s Refuge, Education Welfare Service and Connexions.
the high offending group cases (forty percent) had previously self-referred to Children's Services, compared to five cases (eleven percent) in the low offending group. If a close relationship between levels of inconsistent supervision, for example, and a young person's offending are evidence of the influence that parental supervision has on a young person's behaviour then the above data also suggest that prior involvement with a 'helping organisation' will increase rather than decrease levels of offending. However, it is not known whether the agency involvement, or their level of effectiveness in providing support, is related to an increased level of offending or whether the young person's behaviour was highlighted as a concern early on and therefore increased the level of involvement with organisations.

Diagram F: Prior involvement with an organisation in the different offending groups in the case-file study:

- Prior involvement with a 'helping agency'
- Previous self referral to Children's Services – Social Care

**d. Summary of differences in personal, family and social needs in the different offending groups**

The data discussed above suggest that there are indeed notable differences in personal, family or social needs among those young people that have high levels of offending compared to those with low levels of offending. In the high
offending group often double the proportion of cases present with each of the various needs compared to the low offending group. When the mid-range offending groups are included we see a consistent increase in the percentages of need with an increase in the level of offending. Where there is little difference in needs between the groups, the needs may be related to the onset but not the persistence of offending, such as significant loss or bereavement. The aspects that showed a more consistent incline of the proportion of need with the levels of offending were the young person’s presenting needs (in particular substance misuse requiring intervention and mental health concerns), inconsistent supervision, significant adults failing to show care, the young person experiencing abuse or domestic violence and the level of social need. These aspects are indicative of the relationship between offending and level of need but, as noted earlier, the offending behaviour may be influencing the increase of the presence of some factors rather than the other way round. The level of need is also reflected in the proportion of prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’.

The results suggest that the presence of overlapping or compounding problems and needs is more likely to be present in cases of higher levels of offending. If this is so, one might expect the low offending group to present with no more than one or two needs in each area; and indeed only two percent (representing only one case) presented with all five personal needs and nearly half (forty-eight percent) did not present with any social needs. In contrast, in the high offending group sixty-seven percent of the young people presented with all five personal needs and a much higher proportion of cases had compounding family and social needs, while only two cases (seven percent) reporting ‘no social needs’. 
I.iv. Differences in cases with more than one child in the home

The final question in this section asks:

- In those cases where there is more than one child over the age of 10 years living in the household:\(^5\)
  - How many have more than one child offending?
  - Are there differences in the family or parenting needs present in those cases where there is more than one child in the same family offending compared to where only one child is offending?

This question will again be explored through the case file study. There were 102 cases (sixty-nine percent of the total sample of 148 cases) where it was known that there was more than one child, over the age of ten years, living in the home. The data are based on information within the ASSETs that provide details of the family structure and indicate whether there is another child in the home who has also offended. In some cases the information is provided by the family or young person, in others the worker is aware the sibling is also under a YOT intervention.

Out of the 102 cases, a total of thirty-seven had another child in the home offending. Sixty-seven cases had one other child in the home of which thirty-one cases had the young person and one of their siblings offending; thirty-five cases had two or more other children in the home of which six cases involved the young person and two of their siblings offending. A note was also taken if there was a younger child under the Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) for a crime.

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\(^5\) This question only considers those cases where there is a child over the age of ten years because this is the legal age of criminal responsibility. An upper age limit was not used, therefore some cases had adult siblings living at home.
prevention intervention (n=4) or another child was involved in 'risk taking' behaviour but not offending (n=6). See Table 21.

Table 21: Cases with more than one young person over the age of ten-years in the home (n=102) and the number of cases where other children offended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two young people in home offended:</th>
<th>Three young people offended:</th>
<th>Another child not offended but under YISP:</th>
<th>Another child not offended or under YISP but involved in 'risk taking' behaviour:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, of the 102 cases, a total of forty-seven cases had a second child offending or considered at risk of offending or involved in 'risk taking' behaviour. Leaving fifty-five families that had other children over the age of ten years living at home but only one child had offended and no other concerns were reported in regard to the other children. See Diagram G.

Diagram G: Cases with more than one young person over the age of ten-years in the home (n=102) and the number of cases where other children offended:

a. Family and parenting needs in cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years living in the home

The purpose of this question is to consider whether the family and parenting needs impact upon the behaviour of more than one child in the same home.
Therefore the same areas of family need as discussed above will be considered:

- Relationship problems within the family
- Inconsistent supervision or concerns in regard to parenting evidenced
- Evidence of primary carers involved in crime or substance misuse
- Negative parental attitude
- Experiences of trauma (abuse, violence or significant loss)

Interestingly, there is little difference in the proportion of cases presenting with relationship problems in the homes where there was more than one child who had offended, was under YISP or involved in ‘risk taking’ behaviour compared to the homes where there was only the one child who had offended (see Table 22).

Table 22: Family relationship problems in cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant adults fail to communicate or show care:</td>
<td>10 32%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>5 50%</td>
<td>17 36%</td>
<td>20 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationship between the young person in case and parent in home:</td>
<td>8 26%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>6 60%</td>
<td>16 34%</td>
<td>21 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems are in regard to sibling or non-primary carer:</td>
<td>7 23%</td>
<td>3 50%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>12 26%</td>
<td>13 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Other problem' in family or personal relationships:</td>
<td>17 55%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>5 50%</td>
<td>24 51%</td>
<td>24 44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the proportion of cases presenting with inconsistent supervision, poor parental attitude and parent or carer involvement in crime or substance
misuse (see Table 23), slightly different results emerge. Interestingly, it appears
that inconsistent parental supervision is slightly more prevalent within the
families where there was only one child offending. Where it could be expected
that a parent would have different relationships with children in the home,
thereby influencing their behaviour independently, a parent who is inconsistent
with their supervision would in theory be a factor that influences more than one
child in the home. On the other hand, it could also be assumed that higher
levels of surveillance are exercised in relation to a first child and then parents
tend to relax more. In any event, this might appear to be suggestive that
supervision in itself is less influential than often considered to be. Furthermore,
although the majority of families with more than one child offending did have
inconsistent supervision (fifty-eight percent in families with one other child
offending and sixty-seven percent in families with two other children offending)
the proportion was also notably high in the families where there was only the
one child offending (sixty-four percent).

Table 23: Supervision, attitude and involvement in crime or substance misuse in
cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent supervision:</td>
<td>18 58%</td>
<td>4 67%</td>
<td>5 50%</td>
<td>27 57%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative parental attitude to education, training or employment:</td>
<td>2 6%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>1 10%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person unlikely to receive support from parent / carer during YOT intervention:</td>
<td>3 10%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 10%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>8 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of carers involved in crime or substance misuse:</td>
<td>12 39%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>3 30%</td>
<td>16 34%</td>
<td>12 22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the total sample there were few cases reporting negative parental attitude in regard to the young person’s education or in regard to their support for the young person’s intervention. Therefore, the numbers in this sample are also small. Of note however is that none of the cases where there were three young people who had offended reported that the parent or carer was unlikely to support their child during their YOT intervention. Whereas, eight of the cases (fifteen-percent) with only one child offending reported to have a parent who was unlikely to support their child’s intervention. One hypothesis for this result is that the parent’s support of their child’s intervention may be seen as giving the wrong message to the other children in the home. A parent may wish to make an example of the child who has offended and refuse to support their intervention as a means to discourage the other children from offending. This is however theorising in regard to a small number of cases.

The parent or carer’s involvement with crime or substance misuse appears to be more prevalent in the cases where there was more than one other child who had offended, was under YISP or involved in risk taking behaviour. Thirty-four percent (n=16) of these cases, compared to twenty-four percent (n=12) of the cases with only one child offending, had a parent involved in crime or substance misuse. Of note, however, is that only one of the six cases with three young people in the home offending reported this concern.

Among the cases where young people had experienced abuse or Domestic Violence, a greater distinction is evident between the cases where there is only one child offending, compared to those cases where there is more than one child either offending, under YISP or involved in risk taking behaviour (see Table 24). In this category the proportion of multiple offenders is higher than that of single offenders. It is worth noting that the majority of these cases involve abuse or violence perpetrated by a parent who is no longer living in the home. The impact of this abuse or violence does however appear to have been an influencing factor in the behaviour of more than one child in the home.
Table 24: Experiences of trauma and level of need in cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person abused or witnessed Domestic Violence:</td>
<td>12 39%</td>
<td>3 50%</td>
<td>7 70%</td>
<td>22 47%</td>
<td>16 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person had significant bereavement or loss:</td>
<td>8 26%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>1 10%</td>
<td>11 23%</td>
<td>17 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Needs noted in ASSET:</td>
<td>23 74%</td>
<td>5 83%</td>
<td>8 80%</td>
<td>36 77%</td>
<td>40 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All five family needs identified:</td>
<td>3 10%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>5 11%</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive factors: Any for family / carer:</td>
<td>29 94%</td>
<td>6 100%</td>
<td>9 90%</td>
<td>44 94%</td>
<td>50 91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Summary of family and parenting needs in cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years living in the home

Other than the cases where young people had experienced abuse or domestic violence and the cases where there was a parent (in the home) involved in crime or substance misuse, there was little difference between those families that had only one young person who had offended compared to families with more than one young person who offended. In fact, the prevalence of inconsistent parental supervision was just as high in the cases with three young people offending as in the cases with only one young person offending, even though there was more than one child over the age of ten-years living in the home.
Due to the above outcomes, the social needs were also considered (see Table 25 and Table 26). Because in most of the cases in which a young person lived with a ‘known offender’, this known offender was in fact a sibling who was also offending this data has been removed for this sample.

Table 25: Social need in cases with more than one child over the age of ten-years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living situation unsuitable:</td>
<td>8 26%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>10 21%</td>
<td>6 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in deprived household:</td>
<td>16 52%</td>
<td>4 67%</td>
<td>4 40%</td>
<td>24 51%</td>
<td>20 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Other problem’ in living situation:</td>
<td>7 23%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>3 30%</td>
<td>11 23%</td>
<td>7 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood concerns:</td>
<td>6 19%</td>
<td>3 50%</td>
<td>4 40%</td>
<td>13 28%</td>
<td>15 27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26: Level of social need in cases with more than one child over the age of ten years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or ‘risk taking’ (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation and ‘other problem’:</td>
<td>5 16%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>8 17%</td>
<td>3 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation and Neighbourhood concerns:</td>
<td>5 16%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>4 40%</td>
<td>10 21%</td>
<td>5 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation, neighbourhood concerns AND ‘other problem’:</td>
<td>3 10%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>5 11%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social problems:</td>
<td>6 19%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>4 40%</td>
<td>10 21%</td>
<td>20 36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a higher occurrence of social need within the cases where there is more than one child offending, under YISP or involved in risk taking behaviour. Furthermore, the overlapping presence of need is more likely. The only exception is that of neighbourhood concerns, where the proportions are almost equal. Although the six cases with three young people offending did not report an unsuitable living situation and did not have the compounding presence of deprivation, neighbourhood concerns and an ‘other problem’, all of the cases had at least one social problem, with the majority living in a deprived household and half reporting neighbourhood concerns. An area of consideration is that once a family has been identified in regard to one child’s behaviour, the other children in the home may be more likely to be under the spotlight from police or prevention services. The evidence does suggest that social need and deprivation is more likely than parenting or family needs to be linked to whether more than one child in the family offends.

The question is whether the level of offending by a young person influences their siblings’ offending behaviour. When sorting the sample into different levels of offending (see Table 27) the results are inconclusive.

Table 27: The level of offending by the young person in families with more than one child over the age of ten-years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of 102 cases where there is more than one child, over the age of 10 years, living in the same home as the young person offending:</th>
<th>One other young person in the home offended (n=31)</th>
<th>Two other young people in the home offended (n=6)</th>
<th>Another child not offending but under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=10)</th>
<th>Total where more than one child offended, under YISP or 'risk taking' (n=47)</th>
<th>No other child over 10 years offended, under YISP or risk taking (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person committed 1-2 offences:</td>
<td>7 23%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>10 21%</td>
<td>19 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed 3-4 offences:</td>
<td>10 32%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>3 30%</td>
<td>15 32%</td>
<td>10 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed 5-8 offences:</td>
<td>5 16%</td>
<td>2 33%</td>
<td>3 30%</td>
<td>10 21%</td>
<td>17 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed 9+ offences:</td>
<td>9 29%</td>
<td>1 17%</td>
<td>2 20%</td>
<td>12 26%</td>
<td>9 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the families where more than one child offended, or was under YISP or involved in risk taking behaviour the percentages are fairly evenly spread, with the highest proportions divided between two and four or more than nine offences. In the families where no other child offended the highest percentages were in the category of one-to-two offences (as one might have expected) but also the category of five-to-eight offences.

In conclusion, it appears that all social needs and to some degree the presence of violence, abuse or parental involvement in crime or substance misuse are the primary factors present when more than one young person in the home offends.
II. *Is the parenting order made due to ‘wilful neglect’?*

II.i. Reasons given for parenting referral or order

The first two questions in this section will be looked at together:

- What are the reasons given by workers or the court when making a referral or order for parenting support?
- What are the reasons given by parents for undertaking support voluntarily?

The case file study provides the data, with the no-referral group omitted. The possible reasons for why parents in this group were not referred were discussed in earlier sections. Briefly, although the No-referral group had similar proportion of cases with prior school exclusion and a Statement of Education Needs, they had lower proportion of cases with individual needs for the young person (particularly substance use and substance misuse requiring intervention), fewer relationship problems between the young person and primary carer and lower proportion of parents involved with crime or substance misuse.

The reasons for either the parenting order or referral were separated into nine categories based on the notes recorded for each of the cases. Although many cases presented with more that one rationale, only one category was chosen as focus, to enable a clearer distinction when examining the results. If the parent’s own behaviour was considered to be a concern, this was noted as an additional category. See Table 28.
Table 28: Reasons given for order, referral or for accessing support in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons given:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of young person whilst also seriously and/or persistently offending:</td>
<td>9 42%</td>
<td>5 13%</td>
<td>0 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent struggling with young person's behaviour in the home:</td>
<td>6 29%</td>
<td>5 13%</td>
<td>12 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve parental supervision or control of young person:</td>
<td>3 12%</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For general parenting information or support due to young person offending or nature of offence:</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>17 44%</td>
<td>11 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve relationship between parent and young person:</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
<td>6 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person returning home after period away:</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent threatening to ask young person to move out of home or refusing to have back home:</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>3 8%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoping to receive support for other issues:</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For information about YOT / youth offending issues:</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's behaviour a concern and also seen as influencing factor:</td>
<td>8 38%</td>
<td>8 21%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A primary reason given by the court for making a Parenting Order was the age of the young person in light of their persistent or serious offending. Nine orders (forty-two percent) were given on this basis. The average age of the young people in these cases was fourteen years, the youngest was twelve and the oldest was fifteen years and eight months. In this latter case the court had also reported a concern that the parents were not acknowledging the seriousness of their son's offence. Six of the cases (twenty-nine percent) had noted that although the parent(s) had reported that they were struggling with the young person's behaviour in the home they had not attended support on a voluntary basis. In most of these cases the parents were refusing to accept support but two of the cases were parents who were willing to attend but had not managed to for various reasons. Three of the orders were made to ensure the parents undertook sessions to look at their parental supervision and appropriate
enforcement of boundaries and one of the orders was in an attempt to have the parent receive support to enhance their relationship with their child. These were seen as a concern and influencing the young person's risk of offending. In all but one of these cases the parents had been offered voluntary support but had not attended. Two orders were made so that the parents could receive general parenting support and guidance due to the worrying nature of the young person's offence, which both involved high levels of alcohol consumption. Eight of the cases (thirty-eight percent) had also noted a concern in regard to the parent's own behaviour and how this may be influencing the young person's risk of offending. For example, the parents' attitude in court, their lack of attendance at review meetings, being openly insulting to the young person or the parent had been involved in an offence.

The main reason for parents to be referred or seek support in the Non-engaged group was for general parenting support or advice due to the young person offending. Seventeen cases (forty-four percent) were referred on this basis, three of these were self-referrals and a further six parents had acknowledged a need for support but then did not attend. Seven of the referrals (eighteen percent) were in an attempt to encourage the parent to attend sessions aimed at improving the parent-child relationship, which was in most cases seen to be negatively impacting on the young person's self esteem and motivation. One of these had been a self-referral and the parent undertook a joint session, at home, with his son but then did not continue with voluntary support. Five of the cases (thirteen percent) were referred by workers because the parents were reporting difficulties in managing their child's behaviour in the home. However most of the parents were not interested in undertaking support when the referral was discussed with them, although three parents acknowledged the likely benefit of support they were not willing to attend parenting sessions. A further three cases were referred because the breakdown in relationship or the young person's behaviour had resulted in the parents threatening to ask the young person to move out of home but the parents were not willing to undertake support. Two cases were referred by workers as the young person was being
released from custody with the aim to support a positive reintegration into the home. The remaining five cases (thirteen percent) were referred by workers due to the young person's continued offending at a young age. In three of these cases the parents had acknowledged a need for support but did not attend.

Finally, the main reasons given by parents for their attendance at sessions on a voluntary basis was either because they were struggling with the young person's behaviour in the home (n=12 or twenty-eight percent) or they were concerned about the young person's offending behaviour and wanted general parenting information or advice (n=11 or twenty-six percent). Four further parents specifically wanted to learn ways to improve their supervision and implement appropriate boundaries. Another six parents were referred or sought support to specifically look at improving the relationship with the young person and another parent undertook voluntary support after initially refusing to have her daughter return home on bail. Three parents had self-referred because the young person had recently come into, or returned to, their care and they wanted support to ensure a positive transition. However, the remaining six parents (fourteen percent) were not necessarily attending sessions in order to seek parenting skills support. Two of these parents had attended parent-information sessions, which included general parenting advice, for the purpose of finding out more about the Youth Offending Team and the other four parents undertook sessions in the hope that they would receive support with either their housing situation, their past experiences of Domestic Violence or to receive support for their younger child's mental health concerns.

From the above it appears that the young person's behaviour is a strong factor as to why a parent is referred for or undertake support. The court's concern at the age and level of offending of many of the young people whose parents received a parenting order indicates the expectation that the offending child is at an age where parents are responsible and should be better able to address this behaviour by attending guidance sessions. The parent's non-attendance of support on a voluntary basis appears to be another influential factor as to
whether the court will make a parenting order. If the parent has themselves shown concern in regard to the young person's offending behaviour and how they may be able to address this, they are more likely to undertake support, while this is less often the case if they were referred on this basis by a worker.

II.ii. Level of self-referral and threat of parenting order

The next three questions will be considered together:

- How many parents subject to an order were offered voluntary support prior to the order being made?
- How many parents who attended voluntarily were told that they were at risk of a parenting order?
- How many parents had 'self-referred' for parenting support?

The case file study provides the data, with the no-referral group omitted. The Non-engaged group are included since some meet the criteria for these questions.

Table 29: Number of cases involving self-referral, prior offers of support or told at risk of parenting order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of engagement:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary support offered (Parenting Order group) or parent told at risk of Parenting Order (Non-engaged / Voluntary cases):</td>
<td>16 76%</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self referred for support:</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
<td>18 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent acknowledged need for support but did not attend voluntarily:</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>18 46%</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 29 and Diagram H. Seventy-one percent (n=15) of the Parenting Order cases the parents had previously been offered but did not attend voluntary support. Four of these parents had acknowledged a need for support.
but had not attended prior to the court appearance and three of the parents who were offered voluntary support reported previously attending some sort of parenting sessions in the past and were therefore reluctant to do any more.

Diagram H: Of cases involving self-referral, prior offers of support or told at risk of parenting order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Order (n=15 of 21 cases)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=7 of 39 cases)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=3 of 43 cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent told at risk of Parenting Order:</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary support offered:</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self referred for support:</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent acknowledged need for support but did not attend voluntarily:</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly half (n=18 or forty-six percent) of the Non-engaged group had acknowledged a need for support but did not attend. Four of these parents had self-referred for support. Seven parents in the Non-engaged group were told that they may be at risk of receiving a parenting order if they did not attend voluntarily and their son or daughter reoffended. Of note, only one of the young people in these seven cases did reoffend but he had moved out of home and was living in supported lodgings when he next appeared at court. A large number of the parents in the Voluntary group (n=18 or forty-two percent) had self-referred. Only three of the parents in this group had been told that they would be at risk of receiving a parenting order.

Therefore the evidence suggests that parents are more likely to undertake support if they self-refer. Although parents may acknowledge a need to receive support they may not attend for various reasons and a threat of a Parenting Order is unlikely to encourage engagement in support.
II.iii. Prior involvement with or self referral to ‘helping agencies’

The final questions for this section will be considered together:

- What proportion of parents of children subject to an intervention with the Youth Offending Team have:
  - Previously sought support to address their child’s behaviour?
  - Had prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
- More specifically, for parents that either a) are subject to a parenting order; b) have undertaken support on a voluntary basis; c) have been referred for support but did not engage, or d) have a child under 16 years of age at the time of sentence but are not referred for support, what proportion had:
  - Prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
  - Previously self-referred to Children’s Services?
  - A child subject to a Child Protection Plan?
  - A child with a Mental Health diagnosis?
- How many parents attending parenting courses on a voluntary basis have:
  - Sought support to address their child’s behaviour?
  - Had prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
- In all cases where support had been sought:
  - Who did they approach?
  - What sort of support were they seeking?
  - Did they receive the help they were seeking?

These questions will be explored using the questionnaires completed by parents as part of an initial interview with the local Youth Offending Team, the case file study and the seventeen questionnaires completed by parents voluntarily attending the three parenting groups visited.
a. Questionnaires completed at initial interview

Forty questionnaires were completed by parents during an initial interview with the Parenting Coordinator at the Youth Offending Team between March 2007 and January 2009. See Appendix E for a sample of the questionnaire. Two of the parents were being assessed for and then later received a parenting order and four more parents were meeting with the parenting worker for the first time after being made subject to a parenting order. The questionnaire asked if parents had been struggling with their child or children’s behaviour and for how long, whether they had previously sought information or support with regard to their child’s behaviour and which agencies they may have previously had involvement with. See Table 30.

Table 30: Parents who completed ‘previous support questionnaire’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options:</th>
<th>Total sample (n=40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Struggling with child / children’s behaviour:</td>
<td>25 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously sought information or support with regard to child’s behaviour:</td>
<td>22 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to meet other parents to talk to about their experiences:</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like specialist advice or assistance to better address a certain issue:</td>
<td>20 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the forty parents, nearly two-thirds (sixty-three percent or n=25) reported that they had been struggling with their child or children’s behaviour. The length of time that parents had been struggling with their child’s behaviour ranged from two months to ten years. The calculated average length of time for all twenty-five parents was three years (or thirty-seven months). More than half of the total sample (n=22 or fifty-five percent) reported that they had previously sought information or support with regard to their child’s behaviour. When asked if they would like to meet other parents or receive specialist advice to address a certain issue most parents favoured the latter with fifty percent (n=50) stating that they would like specialist advice or assistance. Very few said that they would like to meet with other parents (n=7 or eighteen percent). Therefore this
indicates that parents are less likely to attend a parenting group unless perhaps it was led by a facilitator who had specialist knowledge or provided information that was specific to that parent’s concerns.

Over two thirds (n=27 or sixty-eight percent) of the parents reported having previous involvement with a ‘helping agency’. See Table 31. Parents were asked if they had ever had prior involvement with one of the following ‘helping agencies’:

- Children’s Services
- Education Department
- Mental Health services (for themselves or for their child)
- Drug and Alcohol services (for themselves or their child)
- ‘Other’ service

The majority of these parents had involvement with Children’s Services, the Education Department or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, ranging between forty-eight to fifty-six percent of the cases having prior involvement with one of these agencies. In eleven of the cases one of the three agencies were solely involved, eight cases had prior involvement with two agencies and five cases had prior involvement with all three agencies.

Table 31: Parents completing ‘previous support questionnaire’ that had prior involvement of ‘helping agencies’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Helping agencies’:</th>
<th>Those who had previous involvement with ‘helping agencies’ (n=27)</th>
<th>Those who reported struggling with child’s behaviour (n =25)</th>
<th>Total sample (n=40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior involvement with agency:</td>
<td>27 100%</td>
<td>20 80%</td>
<td>27 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Services</td>
<td>15 56%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>15 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Department</td>
<td>15 56%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>15 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health services for self</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health services for child</td>
<td>13 48%</td>
<td>11 44%</td>
<td>13 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and Alcohol services for self</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and Alcohol services for child</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4 15%</td>
<td>2 8%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only three cases reported prior involvement with Drug and Alcohol Services or Adult Mental Health. Four cases (fifteen percent) had ‘other’ prior involvement. Two were with Women’s Refuge, one was Victim Support and in one case the young person had previously been under the Youth Inclusion Support Panel. Although the results are in regard to a small number of cases they do show that the majority of parents had access to support and specialist services prior to their child attending the Youth Offending Team. Despite this involvement, the child had offended and most parents were still reporting that they were struggling with their child’s behaviour.

Parents were asked if they had ever accessed support through one of the following avenues:
- support group or courses
- help lines
- minister or church
- family members
- ‘other’

Nearly half (n=19 or forty-eight percent) of the cases who completed the questionnaire reported that they had previously accessed help or support from one of these avenues. See Table 32.

Table 32: Parents completing ‘previous support questionnaire’ that had previously accessed support:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avenues of support:</th>
<th>Cases where support accessed (n=19)</th>
<th>Cases that reported struggling with child's behaviour (n=25)</th>
<th>Total sample (n=40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever accessed any support / advice:</td>
<td>19 100%</td>
<td>14 56%</td>
<td>19 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support group / courses</td>
<td>8 42%</td>
<td>7 28%</td>
<td>8 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help lines</td>
<td>3 16%</td>
<td>2 8%</td>
<td>3 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister/ Church</td>
<td>2 11%</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>7 37%</td>
<td>5 20%</td>
<td>7 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11 58%</td>
<td>7 28%</td>
<td>11 28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

136
Eight of these cases (twenty percent of the total sample) had previously attended a parenting class or group. Many had also accessed help or support through family members (n=7) whilst a small number had accessed help lines (n=3) or their minister or church (n=2). Eleven cases (fifty-eight percent of those who accessed support) had done so through an 'other' form of support; four of these were cases where the child had undertaken 'anger management' sessions through the school, two were through their GP, the others were Citizen’s Advice, a behaviour specialist, the internet, friends and counselling for the parent. These results indicate that parents whose child offends are not necessarily averse to accessing support and some will do so through parenting courses or groups. However, just over half of the parents who completed the questionnaire had apparently not accessed any form of support or assistance, many of whom (n=11) were struggling with their child's behaviour.

A total of seventeen cases in the sample (forty-two percent) had both a prior involvement with 'helping agencies' and had accessed some form of support, as outlined above. Another ten cases had prior involvement with an agency but had not accessed further support or advice and interestingly only two cases had accessed support without prior involvement with an agency. In these instances the support had been through family members and the child attending anger management at the school. This provides a total of twenty-nine cases of which sixty-nine percent (n=20) gave a comment as to what they had found the most helpful or unhelpful. See Table 33.

Table 33: Parents completing 'previous support questionnaire' and commented on agency involvement or support accessed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options:</th>
<th>Those that had prior agency involvement or accessed support (n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noted an agency or support as 'most helpful':</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noted an agency or support as 'least helpful':</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not comment in regard to helpfulness:</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
See Table 34. Of all the agencies, Children's Services had the highest number of parents who found them to be the least helpful. Eight of the fifteen parents who had prior involvement with the service chose them as the least helpful.

Looking at the comments, parents spoke of:
- inconsistency between workers
- a sense that workers did not care
- workers did not consider the child as an individual
- three reported that no actual support was given
- in one case the situation was made worse

Children's Services were however also chosen by three of the parents as the most helpful, commenting that practical support or avenues for further support to follow up had been given.

Although thirteen families had prior involvement with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) most did not choose them as either the most helpful or unhelpful agency or avenue of support. One of the two parents who chose CAMHS commented that the advice given by the psychiatrist had been particularly helpful. The Education Department was chosen by one parent as both the most helpful and the most unhelpful because their child was never given a Statement of Special Education needs and had been moved through several Pupil Referral Units; they also reported that the current unit was proving to be supportive and 'on board'. Another parent had chosen the Education Department as most the helpful because the school was giving extra support for their child's Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. One of the two other parents who chose the Education Department as most unhelpful commented that the agency was "badly organised" and they experienced "poor communication".
Table 34: Parents completing 'previous support questionnaire' and the agencies and avenues of support chosen as most helpful or least helpful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency involved or support accessed</th>
<th>Chosen as most helpful</th>
<th>Chosen as most unhelpful</th>
<th>Not chosen as either</th>
<th>No comment given in questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Services (n=15)</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
<td>8 (53%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Department (n=15)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
<td>6 (40%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Mental Health (n=1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (n=13)</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>9 (69%)</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Drug and Alcohol Services (n=1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (n=1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other agency (n=4)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting support group or courses (n=8)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help lines (n=3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister / Church (n=2)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members (n=7)</td>
<td>2 (29%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other support / advice (n=11)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the parents who attended a parenting group chose this as the most helpful (n=4) with one parent commenting that "having someone who listens is helpful". The 'other agency' chosen as most helpful by a parent was Women's Refuge. This parent also chose the Housing Department as the most unhelpful agency because the family were still in temporary accommodation nine years after fleeing domestic violence. Three of the eleven parents who had accessed some 'other support or advice' chose this as the most helpful support. These were a behaviour specialist, Citizen's Advice and the GP, with all the parents commenting that they received practical or helpful advice. Two of the eleven
parents noted that their GP and the counselling they accessed had been the least helpful. One of the parents who chose their family as the most helpful commented that they “understood the problem and able to give support”.

Unsurprisingly, the evidence suggests that parents’ most value practical assistance or advice that is relevant to their situation and value having someone who will listen, respect them and communicate well with them. Furthermore, the findings seem to suggest that many of the support services appear to not be providing the kind of support that is valued.

**b. The case file study**

The 148 cases within the case file study at the local Youth Offending Team have again been sorted in to four groups of: cases where a parent was subject to a parenting order (n=21), cases where parents had undertaken support on a voluntary basis (n=43), cases where parents had been referred for support but did not engage (n=39) and cases where a child was under 16 years of age at the time of sentence but the parent was not referred for support (n=45). These groups are then categorised in regard to the number of parents who had:

- Prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’
- Previously self-referred to Children’s Services
- A child subject to a Child Protection Plan
- A child with a Mental Health diagnosis

See Table 35. Over half of the total sample (n=82 or fifty-five percent) had prior involvement with an agency. The majority of these cases were parents who undertook voluntary support (n=27) which accounts for sixty-three percent of this group of parents. However, the largest proportion of cases was in the parenting order group. All but three of the parents who received a parenting order had prior involvement with a ‘helping agency’ (n=18 or eighty-six percent).
Furthermore, over half (n=11 or fifty-two percent) of the parenting order cases had contacted Children’s Services for support or assistance.

Table 35: Prior involvement with helping agencies in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of involvement:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=43)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=39)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=45)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=148)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior involvement with an agency:</td>
<td>18 (86%)</td>
<td>27 (63%)</td>
<td>20 (51%)</td>
<td>17 (38%)</td>
<td>82 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous self referral to Children’s Services:</td>
<td>11 (52%)</td>
<td>12 (28%)</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>31 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person or sibling on Child Protection Register / Plan:</td>
<td>8 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>19 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person offending has Mental Health diagnosis:</td>
<td>5 (24%)</td>
<td>9 (21%)</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>6 (13%)</td>
<td>26 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In thirteen percent (n=19) of the cases in the total sample the young person or one of their siblings were on the Child Protection Register or subject to a Child Protection Plan. The majority were within the parenting order group (n=8), which accounts for thirty-eight percent of this group. This may be seen as an indication of the level of need of the parents made subject to parenting orders and shows that many had not only been seeking support prior to the parenting order but also prior to their child coming to the attention of the Youth Offending Team.

Diagram I: Cases in the case-file study with more than one agency involved:
Furthermore, just over half of the parents in the Parenting Order group had involvement with two or more agencies (n=11 or fifty-two percent) of which six cases (twenty-nine percent of the group) had involvement with three agencies (see Diagram I).

Table 36: The cases in the case-file study with prior involvement with a 'helping agency' and where this was with Children’s Services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups broken down according to having had prior involvement with an agency:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=18 of 21 cases)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=27 of 43 cases)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=20 of 39 cases)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=17 of 45 cases)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=82 of 148 cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement was with Children’s Services</td>
<td>16 89%</td>
<td>17 63%</td>
<td>16 80%</td>
<td>12 71%</td>
<td>61 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated requests for support from CS:</td>
<td>7 39%</td>
<td>3 11%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>12 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single request for support from CS:</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>4 15%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>8 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with CS due to concerns of child protection or domestic violence:</td>
<td>8 44%</td>
<td>10 37%</td>
<td>13 65%</td>
<td>10 59%</td>
<td>41 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The notes for the Parenting Order cases show that the primary agency involved with the families was Children’s Services (sixteen of the eighteen cases). See Table 36. Seven cases reported “repeated requests for support” because the parents were struggling to manage their child’s behaviour. The type of support sought is not always recorded. Where it was recorded there were requests for respite or practical advice or help with accessing specialist education services. Eight cases had prior involvement with Children’s Services due to concerns of Child Protection or Domestic Violence, some of which reported that they had also made calls for support to manage their child’s behaviour. Some of these families also had involvement with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Adult Services, including self referrals to Drug and Alcohol services for support. Only one parent had self-referred to Children’s Services on one isolated occasion. The other two families of the eighteen Parenting Order cases that had prior involvement with a 'helping agency' involved a parent who had sought support through their Adult Mental Health worker and a case where
the young person was under CAMHS. It is worth highlighting that this involvement was not only prior to the parenting order being made but prior to the young people coming to the attention of the Youth Offending Team.

Sixty-four other cases within the total sample had had prior involvement with a ‘helping agency’. The Voluntary group had twenty-seven cases (sixty-three percent of this group) and the majority of these were with Children’s Services (n=17). Ten cases had prior involvement with this service due to concerns of Child Protection or Domestic Violence, three other cases reported that they made several requests for support and four cases made one isolated request for support from Children’s Services. Several of these seventeen cases also had involvement with other agencies, such as CAMHS and Adult Mental Health. The remaining ten cases in the Voluntary group that had prior involvement with agencies were involved with CAMHS (n=5), Women’s Refuge (n=2), Drug and Alcohol Services (n=1), Adult Mental Health (n=1) and the Education Welfare Service (n=1).

Within the Non-engaged group the majority of cases also had involvement with Children’s Services, however most of these (n=13) were involved due to reports of Child Protection concerns. One case reported making repeated requests for support and two cases reported having contacted Children’s Services on one prior occasion for support. The other cases had involvement of CAMHS, Adult Mental Health and Connexions. Within the No-referral group the majority of cases were again involved with Children’s Services. Similar to the Non-engaged group most of these were due to concerns of Child Protection (n=10) and many of the young people had spent periods of time in care. Two of the cases had parents who had self-referred and one case had made repeated requests for support to Children’s Services due to their child’s behaviour. Four cases had involvement with CAMHS and two with Adult Mental Health services. Interestingly, seven further cases are noted to have no prior involvement with an agency ‘except perhaps the Asylum Team’. These notes do not appear within the other cases.
In summary, the majority of the families in the Parenting Order group had prior involvement with helping agencies, more so than the other groups. This raises the question what a compulsory parenting course could achieve, that previous involvement with agencies had not. It also raises the question whether earlier intervention and support might have made a difference for these young people and their parents. Although within all the groups where parents had involvement with ‘helping agencies’ there is a similarly high proportion of this involvement being with Children’s Services, the Parenting Order group had the highest proportion of parents that had made repeated requests for support. This could indicate that these parents did not receive support, or when they did, that it was not considered helpful. The latter possibility may explain why these parents were reluctant to undertake voluntary parenting support through the Youth Offending Team.

c. Questionnaires completed by parents voluntarily attending parenting groups

The following research questions will be addressed by this sample:

- How many sought support to address their child’s behaviour?
- How many had prior involvement with ‘helping agencies’?
- Where support had been sought:
  - Who did they approach?
  - What sort of support were they seeking?
  - Did they receive any assistance?

Visits to three parenting groups were conducted during the course of this research and seventeen parents completed a questionnaire (see Appendix D). All of the parents were attending the groups on a voluntary basis.
The questionnaire asked parents whether they had been told they may receive a parenting order if they did not attend the group voluntarily. All but one of the parents answered this question and they all answered 'no'.

Three couples were attending the groups and gave the same answers in regard to prior involvement and support sought. Therefore, in order to accurately reflect the results, one of the two questionnaires from each couple has been removed. This leaves a total of fourteen questionnaires.

The parents attending the groups had between one and seven children living at home. On average the families had two children living at home. One parent was pregnant with her first child, which was subject to a Child Protection Plan. Some parents had adult children living at home and one parent had four children aged between two-and-half to twenty-three years. Ten parents had children over the age of ten years living at home. Six of these parents had a child who had offended, one of whom had more than three court outcomes. Only two of the parents reported that they sought support before their child offended.

Parents were asked how many children in their care were:
- subject to a statement of Special Education Need (SEN)
- not subject to SEN statement but had been assessed for one
- were diagnosed with a Mental Health condition
- not diagnosed with but assessed for a Mental Health condition
- were subject to a Child Protection Plan
- not subject to a plan but had a social worker

Parents were also asked to note if any of these children had also offended. Among the six parents that reported they had a child that had offended, three had other children in the home that came under one of the above categories but apparently not the child who offended. Two of the parents had a second child who had a social worker and one of the parents had a child diagnosed with a Mental Health Condition, one other child assessed for a Mental Health condition
and two children subject to a Child Protection Plan. Among the other eight cases, where parents did not have a child who had offended: one parent had a child subject to a statement of Special Education Needs; two other parents had a child who had been assessed for a statement (one of these parents also had a child with a social worker); one parent had a child who had been assessed for a Mental Health condition, another child assessed for a statement and all three of their children allocated a social worker; two other parents had children subject to a Child Protection Plan and one parent had a child with a social worker. Therefore, all but one of the families attending the groups (n=13) had some involvement with a ‘helping agency’.

Among the fourteen parents attending the groups, thirteen had sought support to address the behaviour of one of their children. Ten parents gave examples of the type of support that they were seeking. These are outlined below:

- “Visited doctor and asked for an assessment when we were having problems with our oldest”
- “Getting her to come home and go to school”
- “Counselling support”
- “Swearing, hitting, fighting”
- “Parenting Skills, Behaviour problems”
- “Didn’t know where to look. Ask for guidance on what to show, how to respond to child”
- “Help for his violence towards me and his behaviour in general”
- “Anything!”
- “How to control his anger and frustration”
- “Help, support – someone to talk to”

Parents were asked to list who they went to for support and whether they had received the help they were seeking. Table 37 gives a list of the agencies or workers that the thirteen parents accessed for support. A variety of avenues are presented and most received the help that they were seeking. Five parents had
mentioned Children’s Services but only one parent reported that they had received the help that they were seeking from this agency.

Table 37: Agencies and workers accessed by parents attending groups (n=14):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies and workers:</th>
<th>Number of parents who accessed services:</th>
<th>Of those accessed, whether they said that they helped:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Visitor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting classes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mental Health Clinic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents were asked if they had spoken to particular services or agencies about their parenting needs. The services listed were:

- Social Care / Children’s Services
- Education Welfare
- Housing
- Probation
- Adult Mental Health
- Adult Drug and Alcohol Service
- CAMHS
- Youth Offending Team

Parents were also asked to note whether they had prior, current or no involvement with these services. See Table 38. Although some parents had contacted the services about their parenting needs they did not all answer the type of involvement they had with the service and some reported ‘no involvement’.

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Table 38: Services parents attending groups (n=14) spoke to about parenting needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services:</th>
<th>Spoken to service about parenting needs:</th>
<th>Prior involvement:</th>
<th>Current involvement:</th>
<th>No involvement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Care / Children's Services</td>
<td>10 71% 2 20% 5 50% 2 20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare</td>
<td>5 36% 1 20% 2 40% 2 40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Department:</td>
<td>1 7% 1 100% 0 - 0 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>0 - n/a - n/a - n/a -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Mental Health</td>
<td>2 14% 0 - 2 100% 0 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Drug and Alcohol</td>
<td>1 7% 0 - 0 - 1 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>4 29% 1 25% 2 50% 0 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
<td>3 21% 0 - 3 100% 0 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the parents (n=10 or seventy-one percent) had spoken to Social Care or Children’s Services with half of these parents having current involvement with the agency. Education Welfare, CAMHS and the Youth Offending Team were also accessed by a few parents. Outside of the services that dealt primarily with children’s needs, one parent had spoken to the Housing Department, two with the Adult Mental Health service that they are currently involved with and one with the Adult Drug and Alcohol service.

Parents were asked to indicate if they had approached any other service but all of them answered ‘no’ to this question.

Parents were then asked to note out of all the services they had been involved with, which had been most helpful, which had been least helpful and to comment on what they could have done differently. All of the fourteen parents noted either a service that they found helpful or unhelpful. See Table 39 and Diagram J.

Five parents said that the parenting course was the most helpful, although two other parents also said that this had been the most unhelpful service. One parent commented on what could have been done differently and said: “earlier intervention”. Each of the following services was considered the most helpful by one parent each: the social welfare worker, the family centre, the school, CAMHS, education welfare and the counselling service.
Table 39: Most helpful and least helpful services according to parents attending groups (n=14):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Most helpful</th>
<th>Least helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Course</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling Service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Mental Health</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three parents had noted that Children’s Services had been the most helpful, one commenting that they had “lots of resources” and another commenting that they (and CAMHS): “have helped me loads to try and get my relationship back on track with my son”.

However, five parents had noted that Children’s Services were the least helpful service. The following comments were made in regard to what they could have done differently:
• “Advised more about support groups”
• “Improve communication”
• “Pay more attention to the case in hand and treat all equally important”
• “Listen to us rather than my mother, be less bias”
• “Listened and actually come up with constructive ideas / suggestions instead of just going through the motions just to make sure all their boxes were ticked”

The last comment was also in regard to the education welfare service. The Youth Offending Team was chosen by one parent as the least helpful, who had commented that they “looked out for my daughter’s interests rather than mine”. Finally, one parent had chosen the Adult Mental Health service as the least helpful and commented that what they could have done differently was “treated me with more respect”.

In summary, it appears from this small sample of questionnaires that many parents were seeking support to address their child’s aggressive behaviour or relationship problems within the home. Parents who accessed parenting groups and community based services appeared to receive the help they were seeking. Most of the parents had involvement with specialist agencies, although these statutory services were given less favourable reports in regard to the help offered. Parents appear to appreciate clear communication and practical support from services.

Within this questionnaire parents had also been asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. The responses to the statements from all seventeen parents (including couples) are outlined in Table 40 with Diagrams K and L depicting the percentages of agreement.
Table 40: Views of parents attending groups (n=17) in regard to particular statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements:</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Did not respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If a child (under 16 years) has offended the parent should receive parenting support:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child/ren's behaviour would be better if I'd been offered parenting advice earlier:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I follow the advice given to me it is likely to make a difference to my child/ren's behaviour:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel ready to put in place any new parenting ideas or skills offered:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are enough good services for parents in my area:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are enough good services and activities for children in my area:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My housing or financial situation has made parenting more difficult:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram K: Percentages of views of parents attending groups (n=17) in regard to statements about the application of parenting support:
The views in regard to whether or not there were good enough services for parents in their area were mixed but none of the parents 'strongly agreed' that there were good enough services and activities for young people in their area and only four 'agreed' with this statement. A large proportion of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that if a child under the age of sixteen has offended then the parent should receive parenting support. Interestingly, of the eight parents who had said that they 'strongly agree' with this statement, seven of them were parents whose children had offended. Three parents did not give a response to this statement, one of whom had a child that had offended and only one parent disagreed with this statement. Most of the parents (thirteen of the seventeen) either agreed or strongly agreed that if they had been offered parenting advice earlier their child or children's behaviour would be better. Only one parent 'strongly disagreed' that if they follow the advice given then it is likely to make a difference to their child or children's behaviour, one parent did not respond to this statement but all the other parents either agreed or strongly agreed. Most parents felt ready to put in place any new parenting ideas or skills offered. Finally parents were asked if their housing or financial situation had made parenting more difficult. Although most parents (n=10) agreed or strongly
agreed with this statement, two parents did not respond, four parents disagreed and one parent strongly disagreed.

Parents were also asked to give the age in which parents can not expect to have any influence on their children. Four parents did not give a response. The other thirteen parents gave ages ranging between ten years and sixty years. Not counting the last response of sixty years, as most were within the ages of childhood or adolescence, the average age was fifteen years. This is therefore generally in line with the legislation in regard to parenting orders, which states that magistrates must consider making a parenting order if a child under the age of sixteen years receives a criminal conviction.

Finally, parents were asked to place in order the three factors that they thought could most likely lead young people to offend (with ‘one’ for the most influential) from a choice of the following factors:

- their friends or siblings who offend
- exclusion from school
- poor relationships with parents / carers
- no boundaries or supervision
- their personality
- nothing to do in their spare time

Two parents did not answer this question and five parents ticked rather than numbered the three they chose. These have all been given the ranking of ‘one’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors to chose from:</th>
<th>Chosen in top three:</th>
<th>Average score:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No boundaries or supervision:</td>
<td>11 73%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion from school:</td>
<td>5 33%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or siblings who offend:</td>
<td>12 80%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationships with parents / carers:</td>
<td>11 73%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing to do in spare time:</td>
<td>4 27%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality:</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
See Table 41. Of the fifteen responses, the three most popular factors were: ‘friends or siblings who offend’, ‘poor relationships with parents or carers’ and ‘no boundaries or supervision’. However, when ‘exclusion from school’ was chosen it was placed highly in priority and it received an average score of ‘one’. Interestingly, a child’s personality was rarely chosen and when it was chosen it had a lower priority to the other factors.

d. Summary of results in regard to prior involvement with or self referral to ‘helping agencies’

It appears that the majority of parents had accessed support and specialist services prior to their child attending the Youth Offending Team. Of the forty parents that completed a questionnaire at the initial interview, over half had previously sought support to address their child’s behaviour and over two-thirds had prior involvement with a ‘helping agency’ but despite this involvement the child had offended and most parents were still reporting that they were struggling with their child’s behaviour. Over half of the total sample in the case file study had prior involvement with a ‘helping agency’. Parents subject to a parenting order had the highest proportion of cases with prior involvement and nearly a third of this group had involvement with three agencies. Within all of the groups (parenting order, voluntary, non-engaged and no-referral) there were parents who had self-referred to Children’s Services for support, however the largest proportion was within the Parenting Order group and many were parents who had made repeated requests for support. Therefore, the suggestion of ‘wilful neglect’ and the justification for the parenting order are placed under challenge with this evidence. The parenting order cases also had the highest proportion of cases where a child was subject to a Child Protection Plan or a child with a Mental Health Diagnosis. Therefore the level of need and likely specialist input required is again highlighted within this group. Furthermore, where intervention was sought it was not generally well received by the parents.
Of the parents attending parenting courses on a voluntary basis, all but one of the parents had sought support to address the behaviour of one of their children and all but one had some involvement with a 'helping agency'. Although a small sample, this questionnaire gave more detailed information in regard to who parents approached, the sort of support they were seeking and whether or not they received any assistance. Many parents were seeking support to address their child's aggressive behaviour or relationship problems within the home. Parents who accessed parenting groups and community based services appeared to receive the help they were seeking. Most of the parents had involvement with specialist agencies, although these statutory services were given less favourable reports in regard to the help offered.

Finally, although parents may be struggling with their child's behaviour or have a child who has offended, not all of them will seek support. Many of the parents completing the 'previous support questionnaire' reported that they had been struggling with their child's behaviour but nearly half of them had not accessed support. Furthermore, of the parents attending parenting groups who had a child that had offended only a third had sought support prior to them offending. However, the evidence suggests that the majority of parents do seek support and have sought support prior to their child offending. Not only have parents subject to a parenting order sought support prior to the parenting order being made but prior to their child coming to the attention of the Youth Offending Team. In general, many parents will access services that are most likely to work with children although some have approached adult services. Therefore avenues for earlier support could be accessed through these services, particularly Children's Services. However, Children's Services was chosen as the least helpful by parents completing the initial questionnaire at the Youth Offending Team and by parents attending the groups. Therefore, how this service is able to support parents effectively needs to be considered further. Parents appear to appreciate consistency, clear communication, practical assistance or advice and someone who will listen.
III. Does the parenting order have an impact on the young person’s behaviour?

III.i. Level and gravity of offending following parenting intervention

The following two questions will be considered together:

• What is the level and gravity of young people’s offending after the end date of the parenting order?
• Is the level or gravity of reoffending for those cases with a parenting order different to those cases where a parent has:
  • Undertaken parenting support on a voluntary basis?
  • Been referred but not engaged in support?
  • Not been referred for support when their child was aged less than 16 years and sentenced to a court order?

The date of the parenting order, referral or young person’s intervention is the ‘relevant start date’ for those cases where no parenting sessions were undertaken, otherwise the start date is the date of the first session of parenting work. The ‘relevant end date’ signifies the end of the parenting order, voluntary sessions, six months after the referral for the Non-engaged group or the end of the young person’s intervention for the No-referral group. The period of time from the relevant end date to the time when the last recorded offences were taken from the Police National Computer (PNC) check on 1st April 2009 will be a minimum of six months in all cases but the length of time will be longer for those with interventions beginning earlier in the sample period (this is the same three year period across all the groups). It is worth noting that ‘reoffending’ is used as shorthand for offending leading to reconviction as the data derives only
from recorded convictions on the Youth Offending Team Information Service
and PNC, not for example from reports of offending by the young people.

a. Level of reoffending

See Table 42. In the Parenting Order group only four young people did not
reoffend at any time after the order was made and a further two young people
did not reoffend after the end of the parenting order. There were three cases
where young people had offended after the order and before their parents
started any parenting sessions but they also offended after this work started. A
total of seventeen cases (eighty-one percent) offended after the parenting order
was made but two cases involved young people who offended during the order
but did not commit any offences after the end date. Therefore a total of fifteen
cases (seventy-one percent) of the Parenting Order cases reoffended after the
order finished.

Table 42: Reoffending rates within case file study groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offending rates:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=43)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=39)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=45)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=21)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not reoffend after start of order or referral:</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>13 30%</td>
<td>13 33%</td>
<td>20 44%</td>
<td>49 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person offended after start of order or referral but before parent had first session (relevant start date):</td>
<td>3 14%</td>
<td>9 21%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>- 14 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person offended at any point after relevant start date:</td>
<td>17 81%</td>
<td>29 67%</td>
<td>27 69%</td>
<td>25 56%</td>
<td>98 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offended in the first YEAR after relevant start date:</td>
<td>11 52%</td>
<td>22 51%</td>
<td>18 46%</td>
<td>17 38%</td>
<td>68 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the 1-3 months after start date:</td>
<td>6 29%</td>
<td>13 30%</td>
<td>8 21%</td>
<td>7 16%</td>
<td>35 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the 3-6 months after start date:</td>
<td>6 29%</td>
<td>12 28%</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>23 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In 6-12 months after start date:</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>12 28%</td>
<td>9 23%</td>
<td>13 29%</td>
<td>41 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offended after relevant END date:</td>
<td>15 71%</td>
<td>26 60%</td>
<td>23 59%</td>
<td>23 51%</td>
<td>87 59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Parenting Order group had the highest percentage of reoffending within the four groups but the Voluntary, Non-engaged and No-referral groups all still had more than half of the young people reoffending after the referral or young person’s intervention and after the relevant end date. See Diagram M.

Diagram M: Reoffending after relevant end date in the case file study:

Interestingly, despite their parents undertaking parenting support sessions on a voluntary basis twenty-six young people (sixty percent) in the Voluntary group reoffended after the sessions were completed. Based on this evidence, there is little difference in outcome if a parent who is referred for support undertakes sessions on a voluntary basis or not. Furthermore, there is no prima facie evidence of the Parenting Order leading to a reduction in reoffending.

To assist with a more accurate comparison and provide the same time period for looking at reoffending levels, a record was taken of the number of offences committed in the year before and in the year after the relevant start date as well as all offending before the start date and after the end date. See Table 43.
Table 43: The average number of offences committed by young people before and after the relevant dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average number of offences committed:</th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=43)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=39)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the YEAR before relevant start date:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the YEAR after relevant start date:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to relevant start date:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After relevant end date:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Parenting Order group is the only group to have a reduction in the number of offences committed in the year after the order was made. All the other groups maintained a consistent level of offending in the year before and the year after the referral or the young person’s intervention.

There are slightly different results when looking at the average number of offences committed in the total period before the start date and in the total period after the end date (until the phase two check in April 2009). The average number of offences committed by young people who offended after ‘the relevant end date’ was highest amongst young people in the Voluntary group (average of four offences). The average in the Non-engaged group was two offences and in the No-referral group three offences. The average number of offences after the end date of the parenting order is also three offences but more interestingly the level of offending by the young people in the Parenting Order group had therefore halved compared to before the parenting order, when the average number of offences was six. Therefore, although the Parenting Order group had a high number of cases where the young people reoffended, there was a reduction in the level of offending among these young people. It is not known however if this is a result of the parenting order or the young person’s intervention or due to ‘regression to the mean’, in that the young people may have been reaching a ‘peak’ in their offending at the time the parenting order was made and therefore offending levels would naturally reduce.
The Voluntary group cases had however maintained a constant level of offending in both time periods. The Non-engaged group had a reduction in the average number of offences (from three to two offences) when looking at all offences before the referral and six months after the referral. This suggests that a parent’s non-engagement in parenting support has little impact on the young person’s reoffending compared to those parents who undertake support voluntarily. The No-referral group is the only group to have an increase in the level of offending after the end of the young person’s intervention, which was from two to three offences. Because several of the young people in the No-referral group had few offences at the time of their intervention a similar argument to the Parenting Order group could be made in that they may have been at the start of a likely rise in offending behaviour and would naturally reoffend before reaching a ‘peak’. Although it is interesting to note that the only group to have an increase in levels of offending is the one where the parents were never referred for parenting support.

b. Gravity of reoffending

The highest gravity scores were taken for each case for the offences committed before the relevant start date, in the twelve months before the start date, after the start date, in the twelve months after the start date and after the relevant end date. A average of gravity of all the offences was also taken for each case in each of these stages. It turns out that the gravity score results in each subsample group are the same within each time period, whether for all offences before the order or in the year before and similarly for all offences after the start date or after the end date. Therefore these are shown in Table 44 as simply the average scores before and the average scores after.

Interestingly, all of the groups had a similar reduction in gravity when considering the average of all their offences. All the groups had a average gravity of offending of ‘four’ before the relevant start date and a average of
'three' after the start date. When looking at the average highest gravity scores, only the Parenting Order and Non-engaged groups have a reduction in scores. See Table 44.

Table 44: The gravity of offending by young people within the case file study before and after the relevant dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Order (n=21)</th>
<th>Voluntary (n=43)</th>
<th>Non-engaged (n=39)</th>
<th>No-referral (n=45)</th>
<th>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=148)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average of gravity for all offences BEFORE:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of gravity for all offences AFTER:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average highest gravity of offending BEFORE:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average highest gravity of offending AFTER:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A note was also taken in cases where there had been reoffending of whether there had been a decrease, increase or no change in the gravity of offences after the relevant start date and after end date. See Diagrams N and O.

Diagram N: Changes in gravity of offending after the start date in those cases where there had been reoffending:

```
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Parenting Order (n=17) 47% 24% 29%
Voluntary (n=29) 41% 14% 46%
Non-engaged (n=26) 42% 38% 23%
No-referral (n=25) 56% 12% 32%
TOTAL SAMPLE (n=97) 46% 21% 33%
```
Diagram O: Changes in gravity of offending after the end date in those cases where there had been reoffending:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Order</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-engaged</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-referral</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SAMPLE</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=87)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of young people in the Parenting Order group had a decrease in the gravity of their offences committed after the end of the order (sixty percent of the young people who reoffended). Only three young people committed offences with an increased gravity (twenty percent) and three young people committed offences that were the same gravity as prior offences. The Voluntary group had the lowest proportion of cases where the gravity of offending had decreased (n=10 or thirty-eight percent) and the highest proportion of cases where the gravity remained the same (n=14 or fifty-four percent) but only two cases (eight percent) had an increase in gravity. Therefore, the level of offending and gravity appears to have remained consistent with these young people prior to and after the parents undertook voluntary support. The Non-engaged group had the highest proportion of cases where there was an increased gravity in the young people's offending (n=6 or twenty-six percent). However, nearly half of the young people in this group committed offences of a decreased gravity (n=11 or forty-eight percent). Therefore, although the young people within the Non-engaged group had a reduction in the level of offending, most of the offences were either the same gravity or more serious than previous offending. The No-referral group had the highest number and proportion of cases where there was a decrease in the gravity of offending (n=14 or sixty-one
percent) and the lowest proportion of cases where there was an increased gravity (n=3 or thirteen percent). Therefore despite there being an increase in the level of offending among the young people who reoffended in the No-referral group, there were fewer young people who did reoffend and the gravity of this offending was usually lower or of equal gravity to their previous offences.

### III.ii. Relationship between offending and the number or type of parenting sessions

The next question is:

- Is there a link between the number of sessions or type of sessions that a parent attends and the reoffending rates?

This question considers whether the number or type of sessions, rather than the voluntary or compulsory nature of attendance, is reflected in the rate, level or gravity of offending.

#### a. Number of sessions and reoffending rates

The 148 cases in the case file study have been sorted into the following groups of parents:

- those who ‘did nothing’ (n=84)
- those who ‘attended something’ (n=64)

The second group has then been separated into a further four groups of those who attended:

- one to two sessions (n=21)
- three to five sessions (n=17)
- six to nine sessions (n=14)
- ten or more sessions (n=12)
The average number of sessions undertaken by parents who ‘attended something’ was six sessions, with two parents attending twenty sessions. All of the parents who attended one to two sessions had done so voluntarily. Four of the Voluntary group cases had attended one session. These still counted toward a ‘voluntary intervention’ as they occurred prior to April 2007 and met the criteria as per the Youth Justice Board guidance at the time. Two cases within the Non-engaged group had attended one session but these fell in the period after the guidance was amended, stipulating that a voluntary intervention of parenting support required a parent to attend at least two sessions following an assessment. Eighty-two percent (n=14) of the cases where parents attended 3-5 sessions were from the Voluntary group and sixty-four percent (n=9) of the cases where parents attended 6-9 sessions were from the Parenting Order group. A similar proportion of cases from both groups were amongst the parents attending more than ten sessions. See Table 45. Two cases within the Parenting Order group did not undertake any sessions but the average number of sessions undertaken by parents on orders was eight sessions, compared to an average of four sessions in the Voluntary group. This suggests that the parenting order was at least effective in ensuring that the majority of parents attended sessions, especially as many had previously been offered but refused to undertake sessions voluntarily.

Table 45: Quantity of sessions attended by parents within the different groups of the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of sessions in groups:</th>
<th>Did nothing (n=84)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
<th>1-2 sessions (n=21)</th>
<th>3-5 sessions (n=17)</th>
<th>6-9 sessions (n=14)</th>
<th>10+ sessions (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Order:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Engaged:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the parents in the No-referral group (n=45) are included in the “did nothing” group.
The reoffending rates of young people in the cases where parents attended 'something' are slightly higher than those young people whose parents 'did nothing'. This is consistent when looking at whether the young people offended at anytime after the relevant start date or after the end date and whether the young person offended in the first year after the start date. See Table 46. Fifty-seven percent (n=48) of the cases where the parents did not attend any sessions reoffended at some point after 'the relevant end date' (end of the young person's intervention for the No-referral group, six months after the referral for the Non-engaged group or the end of the parenting order) compared to sixty-one percent (n=39) of the cases where parents attended something, which is on average six sessions for this group. Therefore, based on this data there is little evidence that a parent's attendance at parenting sessions will lead to a reduction in reoffending. This result is generally consistent within the groups of parents attending different quantities of sessions as well.

Table 46: Reoffending rates in the case file study compared to number of sessions attended by parents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period in which young person reoffended:</th>
<th>Did nothing (n=84)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
<th>1-2 sessions (n=21)</th>
<th>3-5 sessions (n=17)</th>
<th>6-9 sessions (n=14)</th>
<th>10+ sessions (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANYTIME after 'relevant start date':</td>
<td>53 63%</td>
<td>45 70%</td>
<td>16 76%</td>
<td>11 65%</td>
<td>10 71%</td>
<td>8 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the first YEAR after start date:</td>
<td>36 43%</td>
<td>32 50%</td>
<td>12 57%</td>
<td>9 53%</td>
<td>6 43%</td>
<td>5 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 'relevant end date':</td>
<td>48 57%</td>
<td>39 61%</td>
<td>13 62%</td>
<td>10 59%</td>
<td>8 57%</td>
<td>8 67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the period between the relevant end date and the phase two check on the Police National computer could vary within each case it is interesting to see that a similar outcome is given when looking at just the reoffending rates within the first year after the start date. Diagram P is at attempt to depict the similar rates of reoffending in the different groups. A notable difference is where parents have attended a small number of sessions. Here the reoffending rates are slightly higher than the other groups and points to a potential correlation between the numbers of sessions attended by parents and reduced offending.
Diagram P: Reoffending rates in the case file study in the first year after the relevant start date compared to the number of sessions attended by parents:

![Diagram showing reoffending rates]

When considering the frequency, or level, of reoffending within the different groups a slightly different result is found. See Table 47 and Diagram Q.

**Table 47: Level of offending before and after sessions attended by parents in the case file study:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average number of offences committed:</th>
<th>Did nothing (n=84)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
<th>1-2 sessions (n=21)</th>
<th>3-5 sessions (n=17)</th>
<th>6-9 sessions (n=14)</th>
<th>10+ sessions (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before start date:</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After start date:</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After end date:</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average number of offences committed by young people in the cases where parents ‘did nothing’ was just over two offences before the relevant start date and only slightly higher after the relevant end date. Whereas the average number of offences committed by young people whose parents ‘attended something’ reduces after the start date from four offences to three offences. Therefore, although there is no difference to the rate of reoffending when parents ‘attend something’, there is on average a slight reduction in the frequency or level of offending when they do offend.
When examining the differences between the sub-groups of cases in the group, the parents that attended only one or two sessions have a slight increase in the level of offending whereas the other groups have a reduction, particularly the group who attend six-to-nine sessions. When considering the level of offending in the year before and the year after the relevant start date it appears that in all cases where a parent attends something, no matter how many sessions, there is a reduction in the level of offending. See Diagram R.
Therefore, here the evidence shows that although the majority of young people still reoffend, there is a slight improvement in the level of offending if a parent attends something compared to attending nothing, particularly if they attend more than three sessions and ideally between six-to-nine sessions.

Although there is a reduction in gravity when parents attend sessions, this appears to have little difference in rate compared to those that ‘did nothing’. Table 48 shows the average of the gravity of all offences in each time period. Diagram S depicts the figures for the year before and year after the start date, and after the end date.

Table 48: Gravity of offending by young people before and after start date, grouped by number of sessions attended by parents in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average of gravity of all offences:</th>
<th>Did nothing (n=84)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
<th>1-2 sessions (n=21)</th>
<th>3-5 sessions (n=17)</th>
<th>6-9 sessions (n=14)</th>
<th>10+ sessions (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anytime before the start date:</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the YEAR before start date:</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime after the start date:</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In first YEAR after start date:</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the relevant END date:</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram S: Gravity of offending before and after the sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:
When looking at the cases with reoffending and whether there was a decrease, increase or no change in the gravity of previous offending, similar results are produced whether parents attended something or not. See Diagram T. The parents that 'did nothing' had a slightly higher proportion of cases where the young people's offences were of a decreased gravity. There were forty-eight young people who had reoffended and fifty-four percent (n=26) of the offences were of a decreased gravity, compared to forty-six percent (n=18) of the thirty-nine young people who reoffended after their parents' 'attended something'.

Diagram T: Gravity of offending in cases where there was reoffending after the sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did nothing and reoffended (n=48)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended something and reoffended (n=39)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 sessions (n=13)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 sessions (n=10)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 sessions (n=8)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ sessions (n=8)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cases where parents 'did nothing' also had the highest proportion of offences that were of an increased gravity (n=9 or nineteen percent). The cases where parents 'attended something' had only five cases (thirteen percent) where there was an increase in offending gravity. When looking at the subgroups within these cases it does appear that the cases where parents attended between three to nine sessions had the better outcomes in regard to gravity. Only one of the eighteen cases within the three-to-five and six-to-nine session subgroups, where young people reoffended, involved an increase in offence gravity and the majority of both these subgroups had a decrease in gravity.
b. Type of sessions and reoffending rates

The group of cases where parents 'attended something' (n=64) were then sorted into the following three groups:

- attended course (n=18)
- attended one-to-one sessions (n=25)
- attended course and one-to-one sessions (n=21)

The average number of sessions attended by parents who undertook only a course was six sessions, for those who attended one-to-one sessions it was three sessions and for those who attended both it was eight sessions. Sixty-one percent of parents attending a course (n=11) and eighty-eight percent of the parents attending one-to-one sessions (n=22) attended voluntarily. Of those attending both types of sessions, forty-eight percent (n=10) attended voluntarily.

Interestingly, a large proportion of the young people whose parents attended both a course and one-to-one sessions reoffended after the intervention ended (n=17 or eighty-one percent). The other two groups of parents had comparatively lower rates of reoffending after the completion of the intervention (fifty-two and fifty percent). See Table 49. Those that attended both had higher rates of reoffending in each time period. The rate was slightly lower in the year after the relevant start date but still double of those attending a course only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average rate of offending:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANYTIME after 'relevant start date':</td>
<td>10 56%</td>
<td>16 64%</td>
<td>19 90%</td>
<td>45 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the first YEAR after start date:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>13 52%</td>
<td>13 62%</td>
<td>32 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 6-12 months after start date:</td>
<td>3 17%</td>
<td>8 32%</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>18 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 'relevant end date':</td>
<td>9 50%</td>
<td>13 52%</td>
<td>17 81%</td>
<td>39 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One possible explanation for this result is that the parents who undertook both options of support were experiencing higher levels of need in the family or young person and therefore higher levels of offending might be expected. This will be explored further at the end of this section.

The average number of offences committed by young people prior to the parents undertaking sessions was similar within all the groups (average of four offences) but slightly higher in the group that attended both. See Table 50 and Diagram U. The frequency of offending remained somewhat constant where parents attended one-to-one sessions but reduced for cases where parents attended a course and although a large proportion of young people in the group of parents that attended both had reoffended, their level of offending reduced slightly more (to an average of just under three offences).

Table 50: Level of offending after intervention based on the type of sessions attended by parents in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average level of offending:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before start date</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After start date</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After end date</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram U: Level of offending before and after intervention based on the type of sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:
When looking at the level of offending in just the year before and year after the relevant start date, there appears to be a reduction in all groups, particularly those who attended a course, who also had a much lower reoffending rate within this time period. See Diagram V.

Diagram V: Level of offending in the year before and year after the start date, based on the type of sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:

As discussed, the average gravity of offending reduced in the cases where parents 'attended something' and also in the cases where parents 'did nothing'. When looking at the gravity scores within the groups according to the type of sessions attended, there was a similar average level of gravity prior to intervention in all of the groups. There was a reduction in all of the groups when looking at the average gravity of offences committed after the end date but the rate of decline is slightly steeper in the group that attended a combination of one-to-one and course sessions. Table 51 shows the average of the gravity of all offences in each time period. Diagram W depicts the figures for the year before and year after the start date, and after the end date. This shows that the cases where parents attended a course had no change in gravity until after the end date but there was a consistent reduction in the group where parents attended a combination of both.
Table 51: Gravity of offending by young people in the case file study, grouped by the type of sessions attended by parents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average of gravity of all offences:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anytime before the start date:</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the YEAR before start date:</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime after the start date:</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the first YEAR after start date:</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the relevant END date:</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram W: Average gravity of offending before and after sessions, based on the type of sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:

Diagram X depicts the cases where there was reoffending and whether there was a decrease, increase or no change in gravity compared to previous offending. In the group where parents attended a course the majority of young people who reoffended committed offences that had the same gravity to previous offences (n=5 or fifty-six percent) and only one young person’s offending was of a higher gravity to their prior offending. In the group where parents attended one-to-one sessions (n=13) only one young person offended with increased gravity, the remaining young people either had the same or
decreased gravity of offending. The group with parents who undertook both and
the young people reoffended (n=17) had the highest proportion of cases where
young people offended with an increased gravity (n=3) but in the majority of the
cases the young people's offending was of a decreased gravity (n=9 or fifty­
three percent).

Diagram X: Gravity of offending in cases with reoffending after the sessions, grouped
by the type of sessions attended by parents in the case-file study:

| Gravity changes in cases where young people reoffended |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|              | 0%    | 20%   | 40%   | 60%   | 80%   | 100%  |
| Attended course (n=9) | 33%   | 11%   | 56%   |
| Attended one-to-one (n=13) | 46%   | 8%    | 46%   |
| Attended course and one-to-one (n=17) | 53%   | 10%   | 29%   |
| Attended something (n=39) | 46%   | 13%   | 41%   |

In summary, it appears that there is little difference to the outcomes of
reoffending, level of offending or gravity of offending whether a parent attends
sessions or not. When breaking down the group of cases where parents
‘attended something’, it appears that the optimal number of sessions that may
have some impact on level and gravity of offending is between three to nine
sessions, rather than just one-to-two. Interestingly, attending more than ten
sessions appears to make little or no difference. Furthermore, parents
undertaking either a course or one-to-one had fewer cases of young people
reoffending after the end date than parents who attended a combination of both.
Although a large proportion of the young people whose parents attended both
had reoffended (eighty-one percent), there did appear to be a reduction in the
level and gravity of their offending that was slightly more pronounced than the
other groups, where the rate of reoffending was lower.
Due to the literature supporting the use of multi-modal programmes, the incongruence presented by this evidence raises the question whether the cases where parents attended both a parenting course and one-to-one sessions, with an average attendance of eight sessions, were experiencing higher levels of need to explain the high rate of reoffending after the intervention. Furthermore, the low rate of reoffending in the first year after the relevant start date for the group of parents who attended just a course also raises the question whether these parents were experiencing lower levels of need prior to attending something.

First, considering the demographics in these different groups, the average age of the young people prior to the start date is the same (15.3 years old in the group with parents attending just one-to-one sessions and 15.1 years old in the other two groups). The ratio of male and female young people in the groups is also similar (between seventy-six to eighty percent male). There was however a difference in the ratio of family structure in the groups, with more two-parent families in the group of parents who attended just a course. See Diagram Y.

Diagram Y: Family structure in the case-file study, grouped by the type of sessions attended by parents:
Although the group that attended just a course has a higher proportion of two parent families, the level of attendance by both parents in these households is slightly lower than the group where parents attended a combination of sessions. The group with parents attending a course had ten cases that were two-parent families (fifty-six percent) and three of these had both parents attend sessions. The group with parents attending one-to-one sessions had six two-parent families (twenty-four percent) and two step-parent families (eight percent) and two of these families had both parents attend the sessions. The group with parents attending a combination of sessions had seven two-parent families (thirty-three percent) and two step-parent families (ten percent) and four of these families had both parents attend sessions. If the rate of reoffending were linked to family structure and the attendance of both parents in sessions then the highest rate of reoffending would be expected in the group that attended one-to-one sessions, which is not the case. Therefore, with the level and gravity of offending and the age of young people being the same prior to the start date, the level of personal, family and social need in these groups has been investigated.

Diagram Z: Differences in personal needs in groups based on the type of sessions attended by parents:

Table 52 provides a detailed breakdown of the figures presented in Diagram Z.
As discussed in section 6.1.i, the personal, family and social needs are based on the tick-box answers and the evidence written within the young people’s ASSETs. Generally, there was a similar proportion of cases in each of the groups that had young people presenting with ‘lifestyle concerns’, a mental health diagnosis, attitude or motivation concerns and education needs. Parents attending a course had much fewer young people presenting with mental health concerns or who were using substances compared to the parents who undertook one-to-one sessions or both. The percentages were almost half for the parents attending only a course compared to the other two groups (thirty-three percent compared to sixty-four and sixty-two percent for mental health concerns and thirty-nine percent compared to eighty and ninety percent for substance use). The area of need that is more prominent within the group of parents who attended both a course and one-to-one support was the young person misusing substances and requiring intervention (seventy-six percent compared to forty-eight and twenty-eight percent for the other two groups). However, other than this area of need the parents attending both one-to-one and a course had young people presenting with similar levels of need as parents attending only one-to-one support and yet the reoffending rates were lower in the latter group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs presented by young person:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education needs identified:</td>
<td>11 61%</td>
<td>21 84%</td>
<td>16 76%</td>
<td>48 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle (peers) concerns:</td>
<td>16 89%</td>
<td>22 88%</td>
<td>21 100%</td>
<td>59 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use:</td>
<td>7 39%</td>
<td>20 80%</td>
<td>19 90%</td>
<td>46 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse requiring intervention:</td>
<td>5 28%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>16 76%</td>
<td>33 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health concerns:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>16 64%</td>
<td>13 62%</td>
<td>35 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health diagnosis:</td>
<td>4 22%</td>
<td>6 24%</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>14 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude or motivation concerns:</td>
<td>12 67%</td>
<td>19 76%</td>
<td>15 71%</td>
<td>46 72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There appears to be little difference in the level of family need in the different groups. In most cases the family needs are either similar across all groups or similarly higher in the groups where parents attended one-to-one sessions or a combination of both one-to-one and course sessions, compared to the group with parents attending just a course. See Diagram AA and Table 53.

Diagram AA: Differences in family needs in groups based on the type of sessions attended by parents:

Table 53: Family needs, grouped by the type of sessions attended by parents in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family needs:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of carers involved in crime or substance misuse:</td>
<td>7 39%</td>
<td>8 32%</td>
<td>5 24%</td>
<td>20 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant adults fail to communicate or show care:</td>
<td>8 44%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>10 48%</td>
<td>30 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationship between young person and with parent in home:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>14 56%</td>
<td>12 57%</td>
<td>32 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems in regard to: sibling or non-primary carer:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>9 36%</td>
<td>8 38%</td>
<td>23 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent supervision:</td>
<td>13 72%</td>
<td>15 60%</td>
<td>17 81%</td>
<td>45 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person abused or witnessed Domestic Violence:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>13 52%</td>
<td>10 48%</td>
<td>29 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person had significant bereavement or loss:</td>
<td>3 17%</td>
<td>8 32%</td>
<td>8 38%</td>
<td>19 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The group with parents attending a course had the higher proportion of cases with a carer involved in crime or substance misuse but a visibly lower proportion of relationship problems between the young person and the parent in the home. The group attending a combination of sessions had a high proportion of cases with 'inconsistent supervision' (n=17 or eighty-one percent), compared to sixty percent (n=15) in the cases where parents undertook one-to-one support. However, the reports of inconsistent supervision is also relatively high in the cases where parents attended a course (n=13 or seventy-two percent).

In considering the differences in social needs presented by parents who attended both one-to-one support and a course, it appears that the social needs are no different or actually more prevalent within one of the other two groups. The only exception, by seven percent, appears to be whether there were known offenders living in the home. See Diagram BB and Table 55.

Diagram BB: Differences in family needs in groups based on the type of sessions attended by parents:

![Diagram BB](image)

Although few groups had more than fifty percent of cases presenting with any particular social need, the parents attending one-to-one support had a consistently higher proportion of cases presenting with social needs compared to the other groups, particularly in regard to neighbourhood concerns and unsuitable living situation.
Table 54: Social needs, grouped by the type of sessions attended by parents in the case file study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social needs:</th>
<th>Attended course (n=18)</th>
<th>Attended one-to-one (n=25)</th>
<th>Attended course and one-to-one (n=21)</th>
<th>Attended something (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living situation unsuitable:</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>3 12%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>4 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in deprived household:</td>
<td>9 50%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>10 48%</td>
<td>31 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with known offenders:</td>
<td>2 11%</td>
<td>3 12%</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>9 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Other problem’ with living situation:</td>
<td>6 33%</td>
<td>9 36%</td>
<td>4 19%</td>
<td>19 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood concerns:</td>
<td>4 22%</td>
<td>13 52%</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>24 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social problems:</td>
<td>7 39%</td>
<td>5 20%</td>
<td>7 33%</td>
<td>19 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the number of cases living in a ‘deprived household’ has only a two percent difference between the groups even though there was more disparity between the groups when looking at the family structure and number of two parent households.

The evidence suggests that the possible explanation for the higher level of reoffending in the cases where parents attended a combination of one-to-one sessions and a course is not that the parents were experiencing higher levels of need. In most instances this group was presenting with similar levels of need as those who attended one-to-one sessions. This group was also presenting with a similar average level and gravity of offending before the parents attended something. Therefore, other than the young person’s substance misuse, it appears that the most prominent differentiating factor that could explain the lack of impact on reoffending rates is in fact the parents’ attendance in both one-to-one and course sessions. Perhaps one explanation for this is that the combination of sessions gave mixed messages in regard to the most appropriate application of any new parenting skills or techniques.

It is interesting to note that fifty-two percent of this group were subject to a parenting order and perhaps enforced attendance, despite ensuring a higher number of sessions attended, may reduce the impact of the sessions. It is also
possible that practitioners were either attempting to ‘double efforts’ for parents presenting with higher levels of need or were engaging parents in a combination of sessions to ensure they attended something as part of their order.

Another consideration is that cases presenting with higher levels of need do not benefit from parents attending a course. The parents who only attended a course were presenting with consistently lower levels of need and had a lower rate of reoffending in the first year after the start date compared to the other groups. Therefore, this could indicate that attendance on a course, for parents with ‘moderate’ needs, could have a positive outcome. The parents who attended only one-to-one sessions had a higher level of need but a moderate rate of reoffending when compared to the other groups. Therefore, this could also indicate that one-to-one sessions are more likely to be attended by parents with higher levels of need and could have a positive outcome as a single form of intervention. It is also worth noting that eighty-eight percent of the parents who attended one-to-one sessions did so voluntarily.

In conclusion, although the level of reoffending was actually higher for parents who ‘attended something’ compared to those who ‘did nothing’, the evidence suggests that when parents attend approximately three to seven sessions either through a course or one-to-one sessions, ideally on a voluntary basis, there could be a better outcome in regard to the rate of the young people reoffending compared to other types or quantity of sessions.

III.iii. Responses by parents to the parenting order

The final two questions in this section will be considered together:

- How did parents respond to being made subject to a parenting order?
- What did parents report about their experience of the parenting order?
See Diagram CC. Two cases involved parents who refused to attend any sessions. The workers had noted in both cases that the parents were upset or reported feeling ‘angry’ at being given an order. One involved an order made against a step-parent and the other order was made against separated parents where the mother refused to attend and the father, although initially agreeing to attend sessions, moved out of the country before attending any. Of the nineteen remaining cases where parents attended sessions, four did not have a record of the parent’s experience of the order. Of the fifteen cases where there are records in regard to the parent’s response, four parents had previously acknowledged the need for parenting support, three of whom fully engaged in sessions and found them to be ‘helpful’. The fourth parent found sessions helpful but struggled to attend due to continued crisis situations at home. The other eleven parents attended sessions after initial reluctance, seven of whom reporting that they felt resentful or angry about the order. Two of these parents had considered appealing and two said that they felt they were being punished for their child’s behaviour.

Diagram CC: Responses to the Parenting Order in the case-file study:
Of the eleven parents who reluctantly attended sessions, one reported that it was 'extremely helpful', four said that it was 'helpful' or 'useful', two said it was 'somewhat helpful' and another two said that it was helpful but was either too late due to the young person's age or was unlikely to make any difference. The two parents who attended sessions reluctantly (or resentfully) and did not find it helpful both spoke of their needs being too extensive and the offer of support coming too late. One of the parents had received a home visit from specialist workers who themselves said they could not offer anything further due to the specific needs of the child. The evidence suggests however that the majority of parents, despite initial reluctance or refusals to attend, found the sessions helpful to some degree. Further information in regard to what they found helpful or useful could not be found in the case notes on the Youth Offending Information System.
IV. *The views of practitioners*

This final section considers questions that were raised in regard to the views of those working with the Youth Justice system.

**Views of parenting practitioners within Youth Offending Teams:**
- Is the Parenting Order generally supported by these workers?
- In their experience, do the needs presented by parents restrict them from undertaking group work?
- Do they support the view that it is better to be in a poor family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a poor neighbourhood?
- What is their view about where the parenting practitioner, funded under the Youth Crime Prevention fund, should be based?

**Views of Safer Neighbourhood Police or Antisocial Behaviour Teams:**
- Is the Parenting Order generally supported by these workers?
- Do they view neighbourhood influences or parenting / family circumstances as the most influential factor in youth crime?
- In their view, what are the best interventions for addressing what they consider to be the most influential factors leading to youth crime?
IV.i._views of parenting practitioners within Youth Offending Teams

In January 2009, a questionnaire was completed by twenty-two practitioners attending a forum for parenting workers based within Youth Offending Teams. See Appendix F for a sample of the questionnaire. All but one of the respondents, a manager, undertook one-to-one work with parents. Most of the workers facilitated parenting courses (n=17) and most undertook joint work with parents and young people (n=17). Nineteen held a professional qualification, ranging from Social Work, Education, Health and Social Care, Counselling, Criminology, Youth Work and Psychology. The average number of years of experience working as a parenting support practitioner was five years. At the highest end, one worker had thirty years experience and at the lowest end, two workers had less than one year’s experience.

The questionnaire included thirty statements made by workers who attended the forums over the previous year and then ten statements taken from other research and literature. The questionnaire asked workers to circle whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. Some workers would put a mark in the ‘midpoint’ of the scale and some did not answer all the questions. This has been reflected in the data below. The answers have been sorted in regard to statements about:

- parenting orders
- the needs of parents
- engagement of parents
- the role of workers and services
- the impact of parenting work

Workers were also asked about where the parenting coordinator, funded by the Youth Justice Board’s prevention grant, should be based. They were given seven responses, taken from a panel of experts attending a conference on parenting, and asked to rank their preference in order of ‘one’ to ‘seven’.
a. Views in regard to statements about Parenting Orders

The following statements were made by practitioners attending the forums:

i. "I don't usually support the use of a parenting order, even if it increases the chance of parents attending, because it is the young person who has committed the offence":

![Graph showing responses to statement i]

ii. "My opinion about parenting orders has changed. When I started in this job I was sceptical about parenting orders but now I see them as a useful tool for engaging parents":

![Graph showing responses to statement ii]

iii. "I do not like the wording "Parenting Order", it should be "Parent Support Order"

![Graph showing responses to statement iii]

iv. "Whatever the wording of the order, if the court makes it, parents will see it as a punishment"

![Graph showing responses to statement iv]
v. "Parenting orders actually help engage the parent who would normally not work with us":

![Graph showing agreement levels for parenting orders]

vi. "In my area, magistrates will listen to the parent's refusal more than the report writer's recommendation for a parenting order, if a parent says they will not do an order then the magistrates won't make it":

(a) If the parent is refusing to attend then a parenting order should not be enforced:

![Graph showing agreement levels for attending]

(b) Generally, a parenting order should be made if the YOT recommends it, even if the parent is unwilling to co-operate:

![Graph showing agreement levels for YOT recommendations]

The following two statements were taken from literature or research sources:

vii. The parenting order is at variance to international law and human rights.\(^6\)

![Graph showing agreement levels for international law]

viii. By making a parent subject to a parenting order this may exacerbate the difficulties of the chaotic and complex situation experienced by many of the parents and their young people:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mid-point</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evidence from the parenting practitioner survey suggests a strong support for parenting orders. Interestingly, many agreed or strongly agreed (n=14 or sixty-four percent) with a worker who said that their views about parenting orders had changed from one of scepticism to viewing the order as a useful tool for engagement. The two workers who strongly disagreed with this statement made further comment, one said "I understood what they were, support for parents" and the other said "I have always seen the benefit of Parenting Orders". Workers viewed the order as an avenue of support; only two disagreed with the suggestion that the order should be renamed to "Parent Support Order" although the majority also agreed that parents would still view a court order as a punishment. One of the workers who strongly agreed with this last view commented that "some" will see it as a punishment and that "there are parents who welcome the order". Most agreed that the order helps to engage parents who would normally not attend and that the order should be made even if the parent is refusing to attend. One of the workers gave their agreement to this last statement with the proviso that "as long as there is evidence of poor parenting". Some workers agreed (n=6) that the order may be at variance with international laws but most disagreed (n=14) with this hypothesis and the majority also disagreed with the view that the order could exacerbate any difficulties experienced by parents.

b. Views in regard to the needs of parents

The following statements were made by practitioners attending the forums:

i. “A lot of parents who receive a parenting order had previous involvement with Social Services”:

ii. “More resources are required to meet all the various needs that parents present with”:

iii. “Even though the young person is offending, that doesn’t mean there is poor parenting”:

iv. “I’ve hardly come across a case where there are ‘no further needs’ of the parents”:
v. "A lot of parents are dealing with lack of confidence - not in what to do but in having the strength or ability to apply it":

The following statements were taken from literature or research sources:

vi. "The routine adversity of life in high-crime neighbourhoods may of itself be sufficient to overwhelm the best efforts of the most competent parents to protect their children from involvement in crime and criminal victimization":\(^8\)

vii. "A child is probably better off being raised in a troubled family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a troubled neighbourhood":\(^9\)

Although the data from the case file study and questionnaires with parents show that many parents had previous involvement with 'helping agencies', particularly Children's Services, forty-five percent of the parenting practitioners (n=10) had disagreed with the suggestion that most parents on Parenting Orders had prior involvement with Social Services. All but one of the workers agreed or strongly

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\(^8\) Pitts (2003 p82)  
\(^9\) Gladwell (2000)
agreed that parents often lack confidence in regard to having the strength or ability to apply strategies and all of the workers either strongly agreed or agreed that more resources are required to meet the various needs that parents present with. Interestingly, although the parenting order is strongly advocated and is likely to be implemented as a result of a young person offending, ninety-one percent (n=20) agreed or strongly agreed that a young person's offending did not actually mean there was poor parenting. As discussed above, parenting practitioners appear to advocate for the use of the order as a form of engaging parents to access support when 'poor parenting' has been identified. In regard to the impact of neighbourhood influences, none of the workers agreed with the research based statement that suggested a child is better off raised in a troubled family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a troubled neighbourhood. Fifty-five percent (n=12) disagreed with this suggestion and a further six workers (twelve percent) strongly disagreed. However, only eight workers (thirty-six percent) disagreed with the statement that the routine adversity of high-crime neighbourhoods could overwhelm the best efforts of the most competent parents. Forty-one percent (n=9) agreed and twenty-three percent (n=5) strongly agreed with this view. Therefore the impact of neighbourhood influences is generally supported but not considered more influential than the family setting.

c. Views in regard to engaging parents

The following statements were made by practitioners attending the forums:

i. “Parents are more concerned about getting their child's behaviour 'seen to', than to look at their parenting skills”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ii. “Within British culture it is often said ‘someone needs to do something’. The parents of young people who offend often express such a view but they aren’t always willing to be the one to do something”:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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iii. “I am often unable to address parenting strategies with parents because there are so many issues at the forefront of their life (relationship, Drug and Alcohol, Housing)”:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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iv. “It is more important to start somewhere. Of course problems will be there (Mental Health, Housing or debts) but sometimes looking at the parenting is a good place to start”:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

v. “Perhaps parenting interventions should be mandatory in all YOTs, as a natural and inevitable consequence of the young person receiving a conviction”: 

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vi. "Family Group Conferences should be used to provide the balance of making both the young person and the family accountable":

![Bar Chart]

vii. "Although the primary source of support is parenting groups, often the complexity of some cases means parents are not ready for groups":

![Bar Chart]

viii. "We have had to use basic counselling skills to first prepare parents for a group":

![Bar Chart]

ix. "A group provides an avenue for receiving support and often parents are relieved to share experiences":

![Bar Chart]

Although fifty percent (n=12) of the practitioners agreed or strongly agreed that parents often present with issues that impact on the worker's ability to address parenting strategies with the parents, three workers strongly disagreed and six workers disagreed with this. The majority of workers agreed that despite
problems presented by parents it was important to start somewhere and that looking at parenting was a good place to start. Most supported the use of parenting groups as an avenue for parents to receive support. However, many also agreed that parents are often not ready for groups and require some basic counselling to first prepare them for the group. Although one worker strongly disagreed with the suggestion that parenting interventions should be mandatory and a natural matter of course when a young person receives a conviction, this statement was largely supported by the workers with thirty-six percent (n=8) agreeing and forty-one percent (n=9) strongly agreeing. One of the workers who disagreed with the statement commented that the interventions should “not [be] compulsory but certainly offered to all”. It is interesting to note that despite most workers agreeing that a young person’s offending did not automatically mean there was poor parenting present, there is a lot of support for a parenting order to be made as an inevitable consequence of a young person’s conviction.

The majority of workers supported the statements of their colleagues that highlighted parents’ reluctance to take responsibility or undertake parenting support. One of the workers who strongly agreed with this statement said “they don’t see it as their responsibility”. All but three of the workers agreed that parents would rather have their child’s behaviour ‘seen to’ than undertake parenting sessions and all but four agreed that parents may say that ‘someone needs to do something’ but are not always willing to be the one to do something. There was strong support for the suggestion that Family Group Conferences could be used as an intervention to hold both the young person and family accountable (fifty-five percent or n=12 agreed and thirty-two percent or n=7 strongly agreed).

d. Views in regard to the role of workers and services

The following statements were made by practitioners attending the forums:
i. "We need YOT workers to be more aware of what support is available and feel more comfortable to discuss this subject with parents":

![Agreement Bar Chart](chart1.png)

ii. "Adult services should be taking the lead for supporting their clients who are parents":

![Agreement Bar Chart](chart2.png)

iii. "The culture in the YOT needs to change from it being focused primarily on the young person's offence to it having a family orientated approach":

![Agreement Bar Chart](chart3.png)

iv. "There is a real need for parent advocates or befrienders or mentors":

![Agreement Bar Chart](chart4.png)

All the workers agreed, with the majority strongly agreeing, with the view that YOT workers need to be more aware and comfortable about parenting services and discussing these with parents. There was also full agreement in regard to
YOTs becoming more family orientated, rather than primarily focused on the young person’s offence. This is not surprising due to the practitioners’ focus and primary role in the YOT but it does raise an area of consideration in regard to training needs within YOTs and how parents might be better engaged in services if all the workers are considering the wider context of the young person’s situation. Although three workers disagreed, a large majority of workers agreed that there is a real need for parent ‘advocates’, ‘befrienders’ or ‘mentors’. This supports the previous statements about the use of counselling services to prepare parents for groups. There was a mixed response in regard to the role of Adult services. Just over half agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they should take the lead for supporting their clients that are parents but six workers (twenty-seven percent) disagreed and a further three workers (fourteen percent) strongly disagreed with this suggestion. As previously noted, there was a mixed response in regard to how the parent’s needs (such as Mental Health or Housing) may impact the worker’s ability to engage parents. It appears that parenting support and family orientated practice within the Youth Offending Team is strongly advocated, even if this were through compulsory measures.

e. Views in regard to statements about the impact of parenting work

The following statements were made by practitioners attending the forums:

i. “In my YOT, I have had workers ask for parenting support to be provided and the young person was over 17 years old. For parenting work to be effective, it needs to start at least two years before this”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

196
ii. "We don't check whether the young person has re-offended or not, so we don't actually know whether or not the parent attending a programme has made a difference in behaviour":

iii. "Breaching a parent on an order is not worth it because they only get a small (£10) fine":

The following statement was taken from a literature or research source:

iv. "Although parents may benefit from attending a programme, it does not necessarily impact the young person's behaviour":¹⁰

The majority of workers agreed that parenting interventions needed to begin before the young person was fifteen years old. However, thirty-two percent (n=7) disagreed and nine percent (n=2) strongly disagreed with this view. One of these workers commented that "there may be younger children" and another commented that this statement was based "in an ideal world". Although two workers strongly agreed, most workers disagreed with the view that they did not actually know whether or not the parenting programme made a difference in

¹⁰Ghate and Ramella (2002)
behaviour, with six workers strongly disagreeing with this suggestion. However, most of the workers (n=14 or sixty-four percent) then agreed with the research based hypothesis that although parents may benefit from attending a programme it does not necessarily impact on the young person's behaviour. Two workers placed their view in the 'midpoint', one commenting that it "depends" and one of the workers who strongly disagreed with this statement said that "facilitators are not doing their job properly", thereby suggesting that the facilitator plays a key role in how the parent's attendance could have an impact on the young person's behaviour. The results suggest that parenting support work within YOTs is considered by parenting practitioners as appropriate, effective and timely.

f. Views in regard to where the Parenting Coordinator should be based

Workers were told about the following question that was given to a panel of experts at a conference on parenting: "where do you think the parenting coordinator, funded via the prevention grant of the Youth Justice Board should be physically based?" and were then asked to rank in order of 'one' to 'seven' their preference from the following answers:

- in the Safer Neighbourhood Team office
- 'at the school gate' (offering universal information)
- in the Youth Offending Team
- where support can be given in the community and not linked with stigma of YOT
- where the local authority partners perceive to be the greatest need
- working with parents in prisons
- outside the youth justice system, but services need to be talking with each other
It is worth noting here that the panel consisted of six experts and none had offered the Youth Offending Team as an answer. However, this was included as a possible option in this survey because the parenting practitioners undertaking the questionnaire were based in Youth Offending Teams and their response may have reflected this to be a preference. Two workers did not complete this question and one worker placed five ticks next to their preferred options. Four workers only ticked their single preference. The remaining fifteen respondents ranked their answers from one to seven. Therefore the first three questionnaires are discounted and the data is separated into two groups, first considering which of the options was chosen as the first preference by the nineteen workers and then considering the average ranking of the options based on the fifteen full responses.

See Diagram DD and Table 56. The most popular choice was to have the parenting coordinator based 'where support can be given in the community and not linked with the stigma of the Youth Offending Team'. Nine of nineteen workers (forty-seven percent) chose this as their first preference and it received an average ranking of 2.4 amongst the fifteen full responses.

Diagram DD: Preference of parenting practitioners in regard to where the Parenting Coordinator should be based:
Table 55: Detailed breakdown of the preference of parenting practitioners in regard to where the Parenting Coordinator should be based:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options:</th>
<th>Workers who gave first choice (n=19):</th>
<th>Average ranking (from fifteen workers) – lowest number most favoured:</th>
<th>Workers who ranked second to fourth (n=15):</th>
<th>Workers who ranked fifth to seventh (n=15):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Safer Neighbourhood Team office:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8 53%</td>
<td>7 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'At the school gate' (offering universal information):</td>
<td>2 11%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>8 53%</td>
<td>6 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Youth Offending Team:</td>
<td>5 26%</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3 20%</td>
<td>8 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where support can be given in the community and not linked with stigma of YOT:</td>
<td>9 47%</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7 47%</td>
<td>1 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the local authority partners perceive to be the greatest need:</td>
<td>2 11%</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9 60%</td>
<td>4 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with parents in prisons:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>13 87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the youth justice system, but services need to be talking with each other:</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8 53%</td>
<td>6 40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the workers chose ‘the Safer Neighbourhood Police team’ or ‘working with parents in prison’ as their first preference. The least popular choice overall was ‘working with parents in prisons’. Eighty-seven percent (n=13) of the fifteen ranking responses placed this as one of their lowest three preferences and it received an average ranking of 6.1 (out of a possible ‘one’ to ‘seven’). Interestingly, although the workers were based in Youth Offending Teams, only a quarter (twenty-six percent or n=5) chose the YOT as their first preference and fifty-three percent (n=8) of the fifteen full responses had placed the YOT as one of their lowest three preferences. Giving support outside of the YOT or the criminal justice system and within a community setting or ‘at the school gate’, particularly where the local authority perceived to be the greatest need, is considered more favourable.

It appears that parenting workers based within Youth Offending Teams strongly support the Parenting Order as a useful tool for engagement. There was
general agreement to change the name from Parenting Order to "Parent Support Order" although there was also agreement that it would still be viewed as a punishment by most parents. The responses indicated a view that parenting work made a difference to the parent’s behaviour but there was less consensus regarding the impact on the young person’s behaviour. Most workers saw groups as a helpful avenue for providing support to parents but all, except one, of the workers agreed that the complex situation presented by many parents often meant they were not ready to attend a group. There was strong support for advocates and mentors. None of the workers agreed with the statement that it is better to be in a poor family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a poor neighbourhood. Although the results of the first part of the survey indicated support for parenting and family work within the Youth Offending Team, most workers preferred to see the parenting practitioner funded under the Youth Crime Prevention fund based in a community setting, away from the stigma of the Youth Offending Team.

IV.ii. Views of Safer Neighbourhood Police or Antisocial Behaviour Teams.

In November 2007 an opportunity arose where I was asked to give a presentation to Police Officers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) about the role of the Parenting Coordinator in the Youth Offending Team. I was given permission to present a brief questionnaire to those present. See Appendix G for a sample of the questionnaire. The officers were asked which ‘risk factors’ they viewed to be the most influential in the likelihood of a young person being involved in offending or antisocial behaviour. They were given a list of thirteen factors and asked to rank them in order, with ‘one’ given to the factor they deemed to be the most influential. They were then asked to state what they believed to be the best intervention to address the three factors that they ranked highest. They were then asked to place on a scale, between ‘one’ to ‘ten’, how much responsibility they believed parents have for the behaviour of
their children ('ten' being full responsibility). Finally they were asked whether or not they agreed that a Parenting Order can positively influence and reduce the risk of a child being involved in antisocial behaviour.

Twenty-four officers completed the questionnaire. Seven gave their job title as 'Police Officer', sixteen as 'PCSO' and one did not give their job title. The average length of time in this position was two years, at the highest end, one officer had been in their role for ten years and at the lowest end, two officers had been in post for one month.

The ‘risk factors’ listed in the questionnaire were:
- Learning difficulties
- Peers involved in offending / antisocial behaviour
- High crime neighbourhood
- Truanting from school
- School exclusion
- Lack of parental supervision and monitoring
- Acrimonious separation of primary carers
- Significant bereavement or loss
- Overcrowding in the home
- Poverty
- Poor attachment or relationship with a primary carer
- Mental health difficulties
- Parent with a criminal conviction

Eighteen of the officers gave full responses, ranking the factors from ‘one’ to ‘thirteen’. One of the officers gave more than one factor a ranking of ‘one’ and the remaining five officers all gave, as a minimum, their top three preferences, with one going up to ‘five’ and one to ‘ten’. Therefore the data for this section is presented in two groups, the first showing the top three preferences of all twenty-four officers and the second providing an average ranking from the eighteen full responses.
See Table 57 and Diagram EE. All of the options were chosen at least once as one of the top three most influential 'risk factors' by the officers. ‘Lack of parental supervision’, ‘peers involved in offending or antisocial behaviour’ and ‘high crime neighbourhood’ were predominantly chosen as the most influential. Lack of parental supervision and peers were chosen as one of the top three most influential factors by seventy-one percent (n=17) of the officers. Fifty percent (n=12) chose high crime neighbourhood. Lack of parental supervision or monitoring was however the most popular choice for the primary factor with fifty percent (n=12) of the officers giving this a ranking of ‘one’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options:</th>
<th>Placed in the top three:</th>
<th>Chosen as primary influential factor:</th>
<th>Chosen as second most influential factor:</th>
<th>Chosen as third most influential factor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers involved in offending/ antisocial behaviour:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High crime neighbourhood:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truanting from school:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School exclusion:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental supervision and monitoring:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrimonious separation of primary carers:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant bereavement or loss:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding in the home:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor attachment or relationship with a primary carer:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health difficulties:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent with a criminal conviction:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagram EE: The most influential ‘risk factors’ of youth crime according to Police Officers and PCSOs (n=24):

As each of the factors were chosen at least once within the top three ranks a suggestion for the best intervention to address this factor should be available for each. However, three officers did not outline suggestions for possible interventions and seven officers gave only one or two suggestions. ‘Significant bereavement or loss’ and ‘parent with a criminal conviction’ were not accompanied by suggestions for intervention. The remaining factors and the suggested interventions are outlined below, in order of most preferred:

1. Suggestions for intervention for ‘Peers involved in offending or antisocial behaviour’ (chosen by seventeen officers):
   - “Youth activities or clubs” (three officers)
   - “Education”
   - “Tackling big groups”
   - “Teach consequences”
   - “School monitoring process”
   - “Move or restrict access”
   - “Break relationship with peer group”
   - “Remove them or group”
- “Interaction with police or other authoritative organisations"
- “Talks at school re: crime”
- Did not answer (four officers)

2. Suggestions for intervention for ‘Lack of parental supervision or monitoring’ (chosen by seventeen officers):
   - “Parenting classes”, “groups”, “support”, “guidance” or “learning parenting skills” (seven officers)
   - “Education” (two officers)
   - “Parent Order”
   - “Punish the parents – fines / prison … if they do not take or access the help then punish them”
   - “Closer monitoring in schools”
   - “Meeting with the parents to tackle the problem head on”
   - “ABCs” [Acceptable Behaviour Contracts]
   - Did not answer (three officers)

3. High crime neighbourhood (chosen by twelve officers):
   - “Police” (three officers)
   - “Youth club to attend”
   - “Tackle crime in area”
   - “More police officers – tougher sentencers”
   - “Continued safer neighbourhood blueprint”
   - “Structured spare time – remove time to get involved in crime”
   - “High level policing, stern approach!”
   - Did not answer (three officers)

4. Learning Difficulties (chosen by six officers):
   - “School” (three officers)
   - “Teacher pupil mentoring”
   - “Better support to the parents and child”
   - “Better educational options or assistance in school”
5. Acrimonious separation of primary carers (chosen by four officers):
   - “Counselling” (three officers)
   - “To be a better support to the child through the process”

6. Poverty (chosen by four officers):
   - “Benefits”
   - “Offer free activities”
   - “Seek appropriate funding”
   - Did not answer (one officer)

7. Truanting from school (chosen by two officers):
   - “Tighter enforcement and parents made aware when their kids don’t turn up at school”
   - Did not answer (one officer)

8. School exclusion (chosen by two officers):
   - “Extra one to one help with school work”
   - “Find other alternatives”

9. Overcrowding in the home (chosen by one officer):
   - “Parental guidance”

10. Poor attachment or relationship with a primary carer (chosen by one officer):
    - “Better education for parents in their youth”

11. Mental health difficulties (chosen by one officer):
    - “Closer liaisons between authorities to address it early”

Unfortunately, the responses were often brief and non-descriptive, making it difficult to see how “school” or “police” would in practice offer the best intervention to address some of the factors. Interestingly however, although a couple of suggestions were of a punitive nature most of the officers gave
supportive suggestions. Parental guidance and education was regularly noted and interestingly the officer who chose 'overcrowding' as one of the top three influential factors then suggested that 'parental guidance' was the best intervention.

See Table 58. Among the eighteen officers who gave full responses - ranking the factors from 'one' to 'thirteen' - there was less agreement in regard to which were the least influential factors.

Table 57: The average ranking and least influential factors in youth crime according to Police Officers and PCSOs (n=18):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Average ranking</th>
<th>Chosen as the least influential factor:</th>
<th>Chosen as the second least influential factor:</th>
<th>Chosen as the third least influential factor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers involved in offending/antisocial behaviour:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High crime neighbourhood:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truanting from school:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School exclusion:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental supervision and monitoring:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrimonious separation of primary carers:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant bereavement or loss:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding in the home:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>6 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor attachment or relationship with a primary carer:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health difficulties:</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (21%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent with a criminal conviction:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six officers (twenty-five percent) placed ‘Overcrowding’ as the least influential factor, giving this factor an average ranking of ‘eleven’. Two of the Police Officers and one of the PCSOs had chosen ‘high crime neighbourhood’ as the least influential factor (ranking it ‘thirteen’). Learning difficulties and mental health difficulties were both popular choices as the second least influential factor. Four officers (seventeen percent) ranked learning difficulties and five officers (twenty-one percent) ranked mental health difficulties as ‘twelve’. When considering the average ranking, significant bereavement or loss, poor attachment and mental health difficulties were all ranked low. The highest ranking was ‘three’ which went to peers involved in offending or antisocial behaviour. Along with ‘lack of parental supervision and monitoring’ this factor was not chosen as one of the least influential factors. It appears that lack of parental supervision is perceived as more influential than a high crime neighbourhood by the officers as it received an average ranking of ‘four’ whilst high crime neighbourhood received an average of ‘six’.

Only one officer did not complete the final section, which asked officers to scale the level of responsibility they believed a parent has for their child’s behaviour at different age ranges and whether they support the use of Parenting Orders. The first question asked the officers to place on a scale of ‘one’ to ‘ten’ how much responsibility they believed parents have for the behaviour of their children (ten being full responsibility) within the following age ranges:

- For children aged under ten years
- For children aged ten to thirteen years
- For children aged thirteen to fifteen years
- For children aged sixteen to eighteen years

See Diagram FF. Eight officers answered ‘ten’ for all of the age ranges and another officer gave ‘ten’ to the first three youngest age ranges and then a ‘five’ for the oldest age range. The remaining fourteen officers mostly gave a staggered scaling, reducing the number for each higher age range. All but four
of the twenty-three officers gave an answer of ‘ten’ for the first age range (children under ten years). None of the officers completely removed parental responsibility for a child’s behaviour at any age, with only three officers giving less than ‘five’ for the sixteen to eighteen year old age range.

Diagram FF: The level of parental responsibility for a child’s behaviour, within different age ranges, according to Police Officers and PCSOs (n=23):

Seventy-five percent (n=18) of the officers agreed that the Parenting Order can positively influence (and reduce) the risk of a child being involved in antisocial behaviour. The questionnaire outlined that the Order requires a parent to attend three months of guidance or counselling sessions no more than once a week. Ten officers gave further comments as to why they agreed with the Parenting Order:

- “Often the parents need to be educated as they are the role models and have ultimate responsibility. Even how they speak to their children has a huge impact on the children’s behaviour”
- “Support”
- “To help tackle ASB [antisocial behaviour]”
- “Can help them deal with child’s behaviour in an appropriate manner”
- “Children are most influenced by peers and parents behaviours”
- “Current parenting style / skills may be completely inadequate”
- "It gives them a chance to work problems out and understand themselves better"
- "Some parents need the chance to be taught / supported in helping them guide their child and make the right choices in life"
- "Parents need guidance too"
- "Can't be worse than it already is"

Three of the officers who did not agree gave the following comments:
- "If a person is a bad parent then I believe that their ability to learn is likely to be low"
- "Not enough sessions"
- "By the time we get to them, the behaviour is already set"

In summary, it appears that there is strong support for parenting orders and for parents to receive support and guidance in how to deal with their children's behaviour. Officers placed a high level of responsibility on parents for the behaviour of their children, even when they are over the age of sixteen years. Although 'high crime neighbourhood' was seen as one of the three most influential 'risk factors' that may influence the likelihood of a young person being involved in offending or antisocial behaviour, peers involvement in offending and lack of parental supervision or monitoring were considered much more influential. Interestingly, three officers placed 'high crime neighbourhood' as the least influential factor. The role of the police in addressing the influence of high crime neighbourhoods was offered by many as the best intervention. Breaking up peers or providing youth activities were popular suggestions for addressing the influence of peers and providing parents with parenting skills classes and support was suggested by several officers to address lack of parental supervision. A small number of officers recommended punitive measures but most gave supportive suggestions for addressing what they considered to be the most influential factors.
The hypothesis that parenting work provided after a young person has offended is 'too late' appears to be refuted by both those working as parenting practitioners in Youth Offending Teams and officers within Safer Neighbourhood Police teams.
7. CONCLUSION

For decades, youth justice legislation has included various elements to ensure that parents take a certain amount of responsibility for their child's offending behaviour, either through paying for fines, being fined themselves, or bound over. The introduction of the parenting order was based on the rationale that not only should parents be held accountable but that their parenting style has been a primary cause of their child's behaviour. Parents should therefore receive intervention involving guidance about appropriate parenting styles. This approach is derived from longitudinal research, such as the Cambridge Study (Farrington, 1996), and is based on the assumption that parenting is the most influential factor in youth crime. Although the authors of the study acknowledge that there could be 'thousands' of factors linked with offending and that an accumulation of factors is more likely to lead to early onset of offending in children, the influence of parenting and home life have been given primacy within legislation initiatives to tackle the causes of youth crime. There is much literature to support a link between parenting and child behaviour, but the specific areas of parenting that may be related to youth crime are various, for example lack of supervision and monitoring, poor parent-child relationship, inconsistent boundaries and negative role modelling such as involvement in crime or substance misuse, to name a few. In order to 'train' parents, an 'industry' of parenting programmes has developed to facilitate learning in regard to appropriate parenting styles, primarily through group-based parenting classes. Several programmes have been evaluated as effective tools for early intervention with families at risk of poor outcomes. Feedback indicates that parenting programmes also offer valuable support to parents who are struggling with periods of transition, such as their child's development into adolescence. Based on these positive evaluations the parenting order is advocated as a means of ensuring parents access this guidance and support, particularly 'out of
control' families with persistent offending or antisocial behaviour and parents who refuse to engage.

A second body of thought is that the parenting order is counterproductive and a punishment. The critics highlight that the order is likely to be given to parents who are experiencing multiple and complex needs, particularly structural adversity and deprivation. They argue for the importance of addressing factors outside of the family home and considering how these influence a child's onset or avoidance of youth crime. Such factors are, for example, poverty, neighbourhood deprivation, high-crime neighbourhoods, peer influences and the opportunities available to young people for negotiating successful transition into adulthood. Although the counter argument to this school of thought might be that parents are also responsible for the environment and context in which they raise their children, the fact remains that the literature suggests that a parent's ability to be effective in their role will be severely impacted by the stress of structural adversity. This adversity, along with the coercive nature of the parenting order, may negate the effectiveness of even the highest quality parenting programmes. Critics of the parenting order further argue that parents who are likely to receive an order have previously applied in vain for support from helping agencies and that the order therefore provides too little too late. The effectiveness of punishing (poor) parents for the behaviours of their children through the use of 'non-negotiable support' is also strongly challenged. Although parenting support may be a valuable intervention when undertaken voluntarily, there is little evidence to support the view that this would actually have an impact on a child's offending behaviour.

This thesis has explored these issues and tried to answer some of the questions raised. Although the data is derived from a relatively small sample from one specific site, the comparative nature of the research has added validity. The results confirm aspects of both sides of the argument and suggest that the situation is more complex than a two-sided argument of 'either or'. The data show that parenting orders are often given to parents when their child's
offending is persistent and in most cases where parents have refused to undertake support offered to them in the past. The parents who received parenting orders had children with higher levels of offending and from an earlier age than the other cases in this sample. Within all areas of need (personal, family and social) the parenting order cases presented with higher levels of compounding need. Inconsistent supervision was prevalent in the majority of the parenting order cases, higher than the other sample groups. However, there were not the expected ‘relationship problems’ within the parenting order cases. These problems were more prevalent in the other cases, particularly where parents undertook support voluntarily, which may explain why these parents were willing to engage in parenting programmes. The results raised the question of what constitutes a ‘good’ parental relationship. Several parents who reported positive relationships with their children also acknowledged a level of leniency in regard to applying consistent boundaries, often in cases where there were historical experiences of acrimonious separation or domestic violence. This suggests that a parenting programme may be a useful intervention to increase the parent’s ability to apply consistent boundaries but also indicates against the usefulness of enforced parenting support to improve parent and child relationships.

The majority of parents receiving parenting orders tended to view them as a punishment and expressed anger or resentment following sentence. However, the parenting order ensured that most parents engaged in a higher number of sessions and most parents, even after initial reluctance, reported that the sessions in which they participated were ‘helpful’. Yet, it is questionable whether the parenting order attains its intended goal, because the outcome in regard to the impact on the child’s reoffending is poor. A greater proportion of young people whose parents were the subject of a parenting order reoffended after the end of the intervention than in the other cases, while there was a similar rate of reoffending in all groups (including those where parents attended voluntarily) in the year following the start of intervention.
When the sample was broken down into those parents who ‘attended something’ and those who ‘did nothing’ the results were also poor. In the cases where parents attended a programme, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, the rate of reoffending was higher compared to those cases where parents did nothing (when parents either refused to engage or were never referred for support). There appears to be a better outcome in regard to reoffending rates when parents have attended a course, rather than just one-to-one sessions or a combination of both. It must be noted, however, that this group also presented with lower levels of need. One-to-one support appears to be more suitable for parents presenting with higher levels of need. The highest reoffending in this sample occurred when parents received a combination of the types of support. Although there are a range of possible explanations for these findings, including the importance of consistency and voluntary engagement, the analysis did not provide evidence for a positive effect.

The research sample confirmed that there was a higher level of deprivation and social need in cases where parents received a parenting order. It would seem therefore that isolating parenting as the primary issue for these families is unhelpful. If the only provision of support offered is a parenting skills programme the effectiveness of such programmes may well be reduced. The cases where parents received a parenting order had the highest proportion of prior involvement with agencies (eighty-six percent); many had repeatedly asked for assistance from Children’s Services. In fact, the data show that most parents in the sample and those attending initial interviews at the Youth Offending Team have asked for support prior to their children starting an intervention. The parenting order group also had the highest proportion of cases where a child was subject to a Child Protection Plan or with a child with a Mental Health Diagnosis. A young person’s substance misuse appears to be a critical factor in regard to levels of offending. These findings further highlight the level of need and likely specialist input required by families subject to a parenting order. Although the literature suggests the positive influence of peer support available through group programmes, many parents interviewed at the
start of their child’s YOT intervention were not much interested in meeting other parents but were wanting specialist advice or input. On the other hand, the data show that although many parents report favourably about the support they have received from groups or community organisations, statutory agencies were viewed as less helpful. These agencies, particularly Children’s Services (Social Care), were the primary contact for parents wanting to address their child’s behaviour or to receive parenting support. It is worth considering that the negative reports in regard to statutory agencies may be the result of high expectation in regard to what these agencies can deliver, while the roles and tariffs for intervention may restrict the ability of these services to provide practical and meaningful support. Parents emphasised the value of practical assistance or advice relevant to their particular situation, consistency of provision of services and having someone who will listen, respect them and communicate well with them.

Considering the poor results in regard to reoffending rates and the high level of compounding need for the parents receiving orders, it appears that the parenting order may primarily be an effective tool for practitioners. Most parenting practitioners support the use of the order, as a tool for engagement and as an inevitable consequence of a young person’s conviction. Many workers who initially felt misgivings about parenting orders have since changed their views. Workers appear motivated to support parents to address parenting issues and view the programmes as effective in achieving change. An area of concern for workers appears to be the lack of confidence of YOT workers to discuss parenting needs with parents and a lack of awareness of the support avenues available. This reflects concerns raised by parents in this study in regard to statutory agency staff and highlights a possible area of staff development of front-line workers who are in a position to discuss a child’s behaviour with a parent. Workers need to take the time to listen as well as talk and be fully aware of avenues of relevant support that parents can access, particularly those available in the community. Parents view community services more positively. Interestingly, the majority of parenting practitioners in YOTs
also believed that the best place for parenting services aimed at crime prevention is in the community, away from the stigma of the YOT.

This thesis suggests that the measure of the parenting order is 'too little, too late'. The order ensures that parents attend sessions even when they have refused to attend support in the past but the impact on reoffending is poor. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that the majority of parents present with compounding needs. Parenting programmes in isolation should therefore not be expected to have much of an effect. As parenting orders appear to still offer parents an avenue to helpful support it would not be useful for parenting orders to be abolished. As this research indicates, many of the parents under a parenting order had previously sought support from 'helping agencies'. Therefore, if the aim is to have an impact on young people's behaviour then parenting support needs to be available earlier and probably best through voluntary engagement.

This research has highlighted the need for not just parenting skills courses but also early intervention, and specialised services that are available to practically deal with periods of crisis and high need. The case-file study shows that not only do parents subject to parenting orders present with higher levels of multiple needs but so does the high offending group when the sample was separated into high and low offenders. Furthermore, in cases where more than one child in the family offends, the data suggest that all social needs and to some degree the presence of violence, abuse or parental involvement in crime or substance misuse are the primary factors linked to more than one young person in the home offending. A parenting course is not likely to make much progress with these families. It is possible that the Family Intervention Projects will be able to meet the need for more intensive, multi-systemic work with some families. However, these projects are still presented with a punitive tone and an expectation of sanctions being applied against families who refuse to engage. Parenting skills courses may be more suitable for families presenting with less compounding needs as an option of voluntary support. Although the Think
Family agenda is accompanied by messages of non-negotiable support and challenge, it appears to propose a variety of initiatives and programmes at both ends of the spectrum, of early intervention and dealing with high complex needs. The National Academy of Parenting Practitioners is currently in the process of evaluating over 100 parenting programmes and has identified ten 'evidence-based' programmes that local authorities are encouraged to implement. Furthermore, the Department for Children, Schools and Families have identified the five programmes from this list that should be used for families with children aged eight to thirteen years and 'at risk' of poor outcomes. One of these programmes appears to have the potential to address not only the area of developing positive parenting strategies but also includes discussions about the wider social context in which parents raise their children and ways to strengthen the family within the community environment. This programme is aptly named “Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities” (Steele et al, 2000). It outlines techniques for positive discipline and includes, rather than skirts around, the subject of smacking. By including this technique it recognises parental choice and cultural differences but also allows discussion in regard to violence and harm prevention, the founding premise of the programme. The programme was first developed in the United States\textsuperscript{11} and was originally titled ‘Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities: A Violence Prevention Parent Training Programme’. It has been adapted for use in the UK with funding from the Race Equality Foundation, who identified it as the one which could best meet the needs of Britain’s black and minority ethnic communities. The course is aimed at any parent with a child aged three to eighteen years. It asks parents to consider their role as adults guiding children in to adulthood and offers discussion about the various aspects that would assist or negatively influence a successful transition for the child and the parents. It covers material on drug and alcohol dependency, domestic violence, depression and self harm. It also introduces the concept of “rites of passage” that people go through in their life in order to develop. These include personal, spiritual, emotional,

\textsuperscript{11} Funded by grants from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
mental, physical, political, social, economic, cultural and historical rites of passage.

The Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities course appears to not only address the government's need for parents to take responsibility for their child's development and their role within society but also to take into account the wider societal context and the need for parents to be supported to access community resources. The course can be accessed by parents of children of different ages, whether their child is of pre-school age or entering adolescence, because it offers discussions about factors that influence and impact all parents. It is still a group based time-limited parenting programme and would need to complement rather than replace universal early intervention services, responsive critical services and effective structural support for families and young people but it has the potential to meet several areas of concern and need addressed within this thesis.
8. APPENDIXES

The following appendixes are supplied:

A. Breakdown for getting the No-referral sample set.
B. Questions asked of each case in the case-file study.
C. The process of going through each case-file on the Youth Offending Information System (YOIS).
D. Sample of questionnaire used with parents attending programmes.
E. Sample of initial interview questionnaire used with parents at the Youth Offending Team in regard to previous support.
F. Sample of questionnaire used with parenting practitioners in Youth Offending Teams.
G. Sample of questionnaire used with officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Team.
H. Offence Gravity scores

Please note that the questionnaires have been modified in order to fit within the margin width for the thesis. These were originally given out in larger text, in Times New Roman font. No changes have been made to the questions. The questionnaire given to the parenting practitioners in Youth Offending Teams did not include references for the statements that came from literature; these have been provided as part of the Appendix.
## Breakdown for getting No-referral sample set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>550</td>
<td>Interventions started between 1st January 2005 and 1st April 2008, ended prior to last parenting order end date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Deleted Final Warning starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Deleted Supervision Orders with ISSP as double interventions entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Deleted all future occurrences of young person sentenced (kept intervention with earliest start date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>Young people started a community sentence between 1st January 2005 and 1st April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 231 young people where this was the only sentence they received in this time frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 178 young people 16 years or over at start of order (first recorded order in that period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 123 young people under age of 16 years at start of order (first recorded order in that period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Young people living with relatives or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Living independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In foster care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In residential care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In supported lodging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Unknown living situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>Total number of young people living at Home or Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>17y12m, 17y11m and 17y10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>17y6m or older (two in other samples: 1 Vol, 1 Non)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>17y - 17y5m (three in other sample: 3 Vol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>16y10m - 16y12m (five in other samples: 2 Vol, 3 Non)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>16y6m - 16y9m (four in other samples: 2 Vol, 2 Non)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>16y -16y5m (six in other samples: 4 Vol, 2 Non)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Living at Home, under the age of 16 years at time of sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Already in samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Young people less than 16 years, living at home at time of sentence and parent not referred for support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Questions asked of each case in the case-file study

II.i. ‘Phase one’: 1st October to 15th December 2008

CASE TYPE (Parenting Order, Voluntary, Non Engaged, No Referral)
· The type of parenting support work undertaken (or offered if the parent ‘did nothing’)
· The number of sessions attended by the parent.

COMMENTS recorded on file in regard to:
· Why the parenting order was either recommended or made by the Court
· How the parent responded to the parenting order
· Why a parent was referred for support
· Why a parent sought or undertook support voluntarily
· Any indication why a parent was not referred for support
· Whether voluntary support was offered to parents receiving an order
· Whether parents who undertook support voluntarily were told that they were at risk of receiving an order

IN VolVEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS:
· Was there any involvement with other organisations?¹²
· If yes, was this prior to the young person’s first intervention with the YOT?
· How many services involved (recorded as more than two or more than three)?
· Had the parent previously self-referred to Children’s Services for support?
· Was the young person or sibling(s), subject to a Child Protection Plan?

¹² ‘Organisations’ were taken to mean statutory agencies: Children’s Services, Mental Health, Probation, Drug and Alcohol.
SIBLINGS:
- Was there more than one young person, over the age of 10 years, living in the home?
  - If yes, was there more than one young person offending?
  - Was the young person’s sibling(s) under the Youth Inclusion Support Panel or have allegations of antisocial behaviour (if known)?

DEMOGRAPHICS:
- ETHNICITY\textsuperscript{13} – of each biological parent (if known) and of the young person.
- Gender of the young person
- AGE OF YOUNG PERSON (in years and months):
  - At the time of their first offence
  - When they received their first court sentence
  - At the start date (of the parenting order sentence, referral or when the young person sentenced and no referral for support made).
- FAMILY STRUCTURE
  - Lone-parent, two-parent or reconstituted family
  - Gender of parent if lone-parent family.
  - If two-parent household: were they both given a parenting order, referred or attend sessions?

TYPES OF OFFENCES:
- The young person’s first offence – also took note if received court sentence for first offence and whether a Referral Order had been given.

\textsuperscript{13} Johnson (2007) highlights the difficulty in being able to provide politically correct means of recording ethnicity when in many respects there is a need to work with a narrow view of ‘race’ to be able to categorise subjects. In this research the following categories were recorded: White UK, White Irish, White European, Black Caribbean, Black African, Asian, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Asian, Mixed White. Although other ‘Mixed’ categories could have been included (for example Mixed White and Black African) none of the cases presented with any further categories.
- If the young person had committed one of the following offences: Robbery, Assault, Shoplifting, Possession Cannabis, Public Order, Breach of Order, Possession of Offensive Weapon, Burglary or a Driving matter.
- If the young person was a 'Persistent Young Offender' at the start date.
- The highest gravity of the young person's offending prior to the start date.
- The average gravity of the young person's offending prior to the start date.
- How many offences had they committed prior to the start date.
- The number of offences committed in the year before the start date.
- The average gravity of offences in the year before the start date.

REOFFENDING:
- Whether the young person offended:
  - After the start date but before the parent was met by a parenting worker or attended a parenting session.
  - After any work commenced or after the relevant start date for those that 'did nothing'.
    - If yes, the number offences committed
    - Did the gravity of offending decrease, increase or remain the same.
    - The average gravity of offending for these offences.
  - In the one to 3 months after work commenced, or start date
  - In the 3 – 6 months after the work commenced, or start date
  - In the 6 – 12 months after work commenced, or start date
  - In the year after the start date
    - If yes, the number of offences
    - The average gravity of offences in the year after start date
  - After the end date of the Parenting Order, Voluntary Intervention or young person's Intervention, or six months after the referral for parenting for the 'Non-engaged' cases.
    - If yes, the number of offences after the end date

---

14 A 'Persistent Young Offender' is a young person who has received three or more Court sentences in less than three years.
- Of these – did the gravity of offending decrease, increase or remain the same compared to the highest gravity offence prior to the relevant start date.
- The average gravity of offences after the end date.
- Whether the young person become a ‘Persistent Young Offender’ after the relevant start date.
- TOTAL number of offences committed by the young person (not including ‘Breach of Bail’ or ‘Breach of Order’)
- Any record of the young person committing an offence within their home
- Whether the young person was ever accommodated by the Local Authority, remanded or sentenced to secure or custody.
  - If yes, whether this was after the relevant start date.

**NEEDS of the Young Person** (taken from ASSET):
- Previous exclusion from school (prior to YOT involvement)
  - If yes, were they excluded for fighting?
- Education needs identified
- Has a Statement of Special Education Needs (SEN)
- Concerns re: lifestyle (peers)
- Substance use
- Substance misuse requiring intervention
- Mental health concerns
- Mental health diagnosis
- Attitude or motivation issues

---

15 In order to more accurately reflect the number of ‘offence incidents’ committed by young people the following method was taken in regard to multiple offences that related to the same incident: if the offence involved one incident with more than one victim (for example, a Robbery that involved three victims being robbed at the same time) this was counted as only one offence, even if the young person was prosecuted for more. For driving matters the offences of ‘no licence’ and ‘no insurance’ were not included. Breach of Order was not included due to the inconsistency of recording in regard to admittance and outcomes. If the young person had a breach recorded against their name this was however noted within the list of specific offences.
Whether there were individual protective factors noted in the ASSET

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
- Unsuitable?
- Deprived household?
- Living with known offenders?
- ‘Other problem’?

FAMILY and PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- Evidence of parents or carers involved in crime or substance misuse
- Significant adults fail to communicate with the young person
- Poor relationship with the parent(s) in the home
- Relationship problems are in regard to sibling or non-caring parent
- Inconsistent supervision assessed
- Young person experience abuse or witness Domestic violence
- Has the young person experienced significant bereavement or loss
- ‘Other problem’

OTHER FACTORS
- Negative parent attitude in regard to education, training or employment
- Young person unlikely to receive support with their intervention
- Neighbourhood concerns assessed
- Any ‘parenting needs’ recorded at any time within the ASSETs
- Any protective factors noted in regard to the family or parents

ASSET SCORES:
- Total ASSET, Family and Personal Relationship and Motivation scores were taken for:
  - the start of the young person’s first intervention with the YOT,
  - the start date for the parenting order, or referral for parenting or at time of young person’s sentence for those cases where no referral made,
- the end of the Parenting Order or voluntary intervention or six months after the referral or sentence date.
- the last recorded ASSET

II.i. ‘Phase two’: 16th March to 5th April 2009

- Whether there were any offences on the Police National Computer after the young person’s end date, or after 1st October 2008 for current cases
  - If yes: number of new offences
  - Gravity of new offences
  - Whether the gravity decrease, increase or remain the same

- Whether the case required a "Phase 2" ASSET check (if it was an active case on 1st October 2008 or there new offences on the PNC)
  - If yes: whether a new ASSET was completed since Phase one
    - Any increase in the ASSET score
III. *The process of going through each case file on the Youth Offending Information Service (YOIS)*

The sections outlined below show where information was taken from the Youth Offending Information Service for each case.

**YOUNG PERSON'S FRONT PAGE**
- Age
- Ethnicity

**LIFE CAREER PAGE**
- Intervention dates and age of young person at time of first intervention
- Living situation

**OFFENCES PAGE**
- Each offence committed by the young person
  - Dates
  - Gravity
  - Age of young person at time of first offence

**REFERRAL PAGE**
- Date of referral for parenting support
- When work commenced
- Type of work undertaken
  - Dates
  - Number of sessions

---

16 The referral page was not always completed and therefore the notes used for keeping raw data to support the Youth Justice Board quarterly returns were also accessed.
ASSET PROFILE
· All sections: Living arrangements, Family and Personal relationships, Statutory Education, Training and Employment, Neighbourhood, Lifestyle, Substance Use, Physical Health, Emotional and Mental Health, Perception of Self and Others, Thinking and Behaviour, Attitudes to Offending, Motivation to Change and Positive Factors.
· Scores for ASSET
  - Total score at start of young person's intervention, time of parenting intervention or referral, the end of the parenting intervention and the final ASSET for the young person.
  - Score for Family and Personal relationships at each of these stages
  - Score for Motivation to change at each of these stages

ASSET CONTEXT PAGE
· Any previous referrals to social services
· Any current or previous involvement with other agencies

CASE DIARY
Scanned for further information - notes were taken in regard to any comments recorded as to why the parent had sought voluntary support or why a parenting order had been made, or any indication why referral not made for the 'No-referral' group.

PARENT'S YOIS INTERVENTION (if available)
· If parent had a parenting order or substantial voluntary intervention there was usually a YOIS file, intervention page and case diary recorded for them.

Pre-sentence reports and Referral Order reports
· On occasion, would review reports if for example a 'yes' answer was given to an ASSET question but little evidence provided.
IV. Sample of questionnaire used with parents attending programmes.

PARENTING SUPPORT QUESTIONAIRE

INTRODUCTION
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This is a chance for you to give your views about any support you have received. The aim is to improve services for parents. Your answers will be used for research purposes and your comments will be kept confidential and will not affect or interrupt any support you are currently receiving. The information you give will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any publication arising from the research.

CURRENT SITUATION:
1. When were you first given parenting support?  ____ (month) ____ (year)

2. When did you have the last session? (today  ) ____ (month) ____ (year)

3. Roughly how many sessions in total have you attended? _______

4. If you are doing a parenting course, what is the name of the programme?

5. Are you, or were you recently, subject to a Parenting Order? Yes / No
   If YES please answer the following questions:
   a) When was the Order made? _____ (month) _____ (year)
   b) Why was the Parenting Order made? ...........................................................................................................
   c) Had you attended sessions voluntarily before the Order was made? Yes / No
      If No - had you been offered voluntary support? Yes / No

6. Have you been told you may receive an Order if you do not attend voluntarily? Yes / No
7. By attending parenting support do you feel a more confident parent? Yes / No

8. Has your child/ren's behaviour improved since attending parenting support? Yes / No

9. How helpful would you say the current / most recent programme has been:
   - [ ] Not helpful at all
   - [ ] Slightly helpful
   - [ ] Quite helpful
   - [ ] Very helpful

Would you like to add anything?

PAGE TWO:

10. How many children do you have / are in your care? _______

What are their ages? ________________

11. How many (if any) have offended? _____

How many have received two or more Youth Court Orders in the last 3 years _____ / None

Did you look for support with your child/ren's behaviour before they offended? Yes / No

12. How many (if any) of your children: (Number): How many also offended?
   - Are subject to a statement of Special Education Needs (SEN)? ____  ____
   - Are not subject to an SEN but have been assessed for one? _____  ____
   - Have been diagnosed with a Mental Health condition? _____  ____
   - Have not been diagnosed but have been assessed for one? _____  ____
   - Are on a Child Protection Register or Plan? _____  ____
   - Are not on a register or plan but have a Social Worker _____  ____

13. Have you ever asked for support because of your child/ren’s behaviour?
   Yes / No
   If no please go to the next question. If YES:
   a) What type of support or help did you ask for?
   ...........................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................
b) Please list below who you went to and whether you got the help you were seeking: (include any services as well as community groups and family members)

Do you feel you got the help needed?

WHO (please try to list in order of who you went to first):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>Do you feel you got the help needed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
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<td>Yes / No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAGE THREE

14. Have you spoken to any of the following services about your parenting needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service:</th>
<th>Spoken about your parenting needs?</th>
<th>Any type of involvement? (please circle)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Care / Children’s Services</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Department</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Mental Health</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Drug and Alcohol</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child / Adolescent Mental Health</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>None / Previous / Current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Have you spoken to any other service about your parenting needs? Yes / No

If yes, please state which services:

16. Of ALL the services you have been involved with, which were the most helpful?
(Please try to explain why)

17. Of ALL the services you have been involved with, which were the least helpful?
(Please try to explain why)
To summarise, how do you feel about the following statements?

There are enough good services for parents in my area:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

There are enough good services and activities for children in my area:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

If a child (under 16 years) has offended the parent should receive parenting support:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Please fill in the gap with the age that you think fits this statement:
After the age of ______ years parents can not expect to have any influence on their children

My child/ren’s behaviour would be better if I’d been offered parenting advice earlier:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

If I follow the advice given to me it is likely to make a difference to my child/ren’s behaviour:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I feel ready to put in place any new parenting ideas or skills offered:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

My housing or financial situation has made parenting more difficult:
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
Please place in order which THREE you think could most likely lead young people to offend:

- Their friends or siblings who offend
- Exclusion from school
- Poor relationships with parents / carers
- No boundaries or supervision
- Their personality
- Nothing to do in their spare time

PAGE FIVE

SOME STATISTICS:
Your age:
Ethnicity:
Your average monthly income:
Number of children / dependents that are in your full time care:

DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE?

.................................................................
.................................................................
.................................................................

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING YOUR ANSWERS FURTHER?
We would like to interview parents about their experiences, particularly those who have children who have offended and those who have been subject to a Parenting Order. This will take about 45 minutes and can be arranged at a time easy for you.

If you would like to be contacted please tick here □

Your contact details:

This section with your details will be torn off and kept separate from your answers so that the survey remains anonymous. The interview will be recorded for accuracy purposes but all your information will remain confidential and your details will not go beyond the interviewer unless you disclose information that places yourself or others at risk of harm.

Travel expenses can be paid or the interview can be held at your home or over the telephone. You would be able to stop the interview at any stage.

Thank you for your time.

CONTACT DETAILS:

[Removed for thesis to ensure supervisor's details remain anonymous]
V. Sample of initial interview questionnaire used with parents at the Youth Offending Team

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS: CURRENT & PREVIOUS SUPPORT

Parent’s name: Date:

Young person’s name:

Being a parent can be both extremely rewarding and enormously stressful. Even with the best will parents can struggle with this challenging role, especially when their child is offending or in the criminal justice system. Would you agree that any of the following statements apply to you?

- I have been struggling with my child / children’s behaviour
  If so, for how long? ______________
- I would like to meet with other parents to talk to about their experiences
- I would like specialist advice or assistance to better address a certain issue

Are you concerned about your child’s risk of offending? Yes / No
Can you explain your reasons for this answer?

Have you previously sought information or support with regard to you child’s behaviour? Yes / No

Have you or your child previously had involvement with any of the following Services?
  Children’s Services (Social Services)
  Education Department
  Mental Health Services - please circle if for: yourself / your child?
  Drug and Alcohol Services - please circle if for: yourself / your child?
  Other, please state ........................

Have you ever accessed (tick as appropriate)
  Parenting support groups or courses: please state if known:
  Parent help lines
  Minister / Church / Mosque / cultural advisor
  Specific support from family members
  Others, please state ..............................................................

Of the above, which have you found the most useful or helpful and why?

Of the above, which have you found the least useful or least helpful and why?
VI. Sample of questionnaire used with parenting practitioners in Youth Offending Teams

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?
Survey of Parenting co-ordinators and practitioners

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It is hoped this will take approximately 15min to complete. This survey constitutes part of a wider research project being undertaken as part of a Professional Doctorate in Youth Justice look at parenting work within crime prevention. The study aims to look at the history of the establishment of parenting orders and their use within youth justice legislation and practice.

This survey aims to gather your views on parenting work within the youth justice context. You will be asked whether you agree or disagree with what parent support workers have said, your opinion on where the Parenting Co-ordinator should sit and whether you agree or disagree with the arguments of some criminologists or academics. Other than information about your job title and experience in this field, personal details about you will not be sought.

YOUR VIEWS ABOUT WHAT PARENT SUPPORT WORKERS HAVE SAID

The following statements are derived from parenting practitioners attending the Youth Justice Board’s parenting support workers forums (during 2008). There are several statements ranging from various perspectives so please try to answer as quickly as possible to get your ‘gut reaction’.

Please circle ONE of the choices: ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’. Please also put a tick next to any statements that you think you may have ever said yourself.

1. There is no rhyme or reason to when Magistrates make parenting orders.
   Strongly disagree—-Disagree—-Agree—-Strongly Agree
2. In my area, magistrates will listen to the parent’s refusal more than the report writer’s recommendation for a parenting order (if the parent says they will not do an order then the magistrates won’t make it):

   a. If the parent is refusing to attend then a Parenting Order should not be enforced.
      Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

   b. Generally, a parenting order should be made if the YOT recommends it, even if the parent is unwilling to co-operate.
      Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

3. In my YOT, I have had workers ask for parenting support to be provided and the young person was over 17 years old. For parenting work to be effective, it needs to start at least two years before this.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

4. ‘Parenting style’ should be the number one risk factor addressed in Presentence Reports.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

5. I don’t usually support the use of a parenting order, even if it increases the chance of parents attending, because it is the young person who has committed the offence.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

6. I do not like the wording “Parenting Order”, it should be “Parent Support Order”.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

7. Whatever the wording of the order, if the court makes it, parents will see it as a punishment.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

8. Breaching a parent on an order is not worth it because they only get a small (£10) fine.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

9. My opinion about parenting orders has changed. When I started in this job I was sceptical about parenting orders but now I see them as a useful tool for engaging parents.
   Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

10. A lot of parents who receive a parenting order had previous involvement with social services.
    Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree

11. Parenting orders actually help engage the parent who would normally not work with us.
    Strongly disagree--------Disagree-------Agree---------Strongly Agree
12. We need YOT workers to be more aware of what support is available and feel more comfortable to discuss this subject with parents.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

13. Parents are more concerned about getting their child's behaviour 'seen to', than to look at their parenting skills.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

14. Within British culture it is often said “someone needs to do something”. The parents of young people who offend often express such a view but they aren't always willing to be the one to do something.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

15. Perhaps parenting interventions should be mandatory in all YOTs, as a natural and inevitable consequence of the young person receiving a conviction.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

16. More resources are required to meet all the various needs that parents present with.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

17. Adult services should be taking the lead for supporting their clients who are parents.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

18. Even though the young person is offending, that doesn't mean there is poor parenting.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

19. I've hardly come across a case where there are 'no further needs' of the parents.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

20. The culture in the YOT needs to change from it being focused primarily on the young person's offence to it having a family orientated approach.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

21. The use of Family Group Conferences should be used to provide the balance of making both the young person and the family accountable.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

22. In my experience, parents are usually told they only have to attend the Panel meetings when their child receives a Referral Order.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

23. Parents should be expected to be involved throughout the whole intervention.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree

24. We don't check whether the young person has re-offended or not, so we don't actually know whether or not the parent attending a programme has made a difference in behaviour.
Strongly disagree----------------Disagree----------------Agree-----------------Strongly Agree
25. I am often unable to address parenting strategies with parents because there are so many issues at the forefront of their life (relationship, Drug and Alcohol, Housing).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

26. It is more important to start somewhere. Of course problems will be there (Mental Health, Housing or debts) but sometimes looking at the parenting is a good place to start.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

27. A lot of parents are dealing with lack of confidence – not in what to do but in having the strength / ability to apply it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

28. A group provides an avenue for receiving support and often parents are relieved to share experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

29. We have had to use basic counselling skills to first prepare parents for a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

30. Although the primary source of support is parenting groups, often the complexity of some cases means parents are not ready for groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

31. There is a real need for parent advocates or befrienders or mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

WHERE SHOULD THE PARENTING CO-ORDINATOR SIT?

At a recent conference on parenting, the following question was put to a panel of experts:

Where do you think the parenting co-ordinator, funded via the prevention grant of the Youth Justice Board should be physically based?

Please rank in order of 1-7 your preference from the following answers:

_____ in the Safer Neighbourhood Team office
_____ ‘at the school gate’ (offering universal information)
_____ in the Youth Offending Team
_____ where support can be given in the community and not linked with stigma of YOT
_____ where the local authority partners perceive to be the greatest need working with parents in prisons.
_____ outside the youth justice system, but services need to be talking with each other.
DO YOU AGREE WITH WHAT SOME OF THE RESEARCH TELLS US?

The following statements are derived from various academic sources. Please circle ONE of the choices: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

32. The antisocial child tends to become the antisocial teenager, who tends to become the antisocial adult.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

33. The routine adversity of life in high-crime neighbourhoods may of itself be sufficient to overwhelm the best efforts of the most competent parents to protect their children from involvement in crime and criminal victimization.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

34. A child is probably better off being raised in a troubled family in a good neighbourhood than in a good family in a troubled neighbourhood.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

35. Most youth crime is non-serious and opportunistic.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

36. Most young people 'grow out of crime'.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

37. The parenting order is at variance to international law and human rights.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

38. By making a parent subject to a parenting order this may exacerbate the difficulties of the chaotic and complex situation experienced by many of the parents and their young people.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

39. Although parents may benefit from attending a programme, it does not necessarily impact the young person's behaviour.
   Strongly disagree—Disagree—Agree—Strongly Agree

17 References were not provided in the original survey but are included for the purpose of this Appendix.
18 Farrington (1994 and 2007)
19 Pitts (2003 p82)
20 Gladwell (2000)
21 Goldson (1997)
22 ibid
FINALLY:

What is your job title? ..............................................................................................................

How many years have you worked as a parenting support practitioner?  
........................................

If you personally facilitate parenting courses, how many do you facilitate a year?  
........................................

Do you personally undertake one-to-one work with parents?  
........................................

Do you work jointly with parents and young people?  
........................................

Do you hold a professional qualification? ......................
If so, in what area is this in (eg: social work / psychology / education)?  
...........................................

The results of this survey will be shared at a future Youth Justice Board Parenting  
Support Worker’s Forum.

ANY COMMENTS

CONTACT DETAILS:

[Removed for thesis to ensure Youth Offending Team and Supervisor’s details remain  
anonymous]
VII. Sample of questionnaire used with Officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Team

This questionnaire is designed for professionals who are working with children, young people or adults who may be involved in or at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour. It is to gain your views in regard to identified risk factors and what is perceived as the most beneficial interventions.

What is your current job title? __________________________________________

How long have you been in this position? _________________________________

Below is a list of identified ‘risk factors’ which may influence the likelihood of a young person being involved in offending or anti-social behaviour. Please put these in order of most pertinent, in your opinion, with 1 being the most influential factor ...

___ Learning difficulties
___ Peers involved in offending / anti-social behaviour
___ High crime neighbourhood
___ Truanting from school
___ School exclusion
___ Lack of parental supervision and monitoring
___ Acrimonious separation of primary carers
___ Significant bereavement or loss
___ Overcrowding in the home
___ Poverty
___ Poor attachment or relationship with a primary carer
___ Mental health difficulties which effects cognitive reasoning
___ Parent with a criminal conviction

For those which you marked from 1 to 3 what do you believe is the best intervention for addressing this:

1. _________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________
On a scale of 1 to 10 how much responsibility do you believe parents have for the behaviour of their children (10 being full responsibility).

For children aged under 10 years:
1 ___________________________ 5 ___________________________ 10

For children aged 10 – 13 years:
1 ___________________________ 5 ___________________________ 10

For children aged 13 – 15 years:
1 ___________________________ 5 ___________________________ 10

For children aged 16 – 18 years:
1 ___________________________ 5 ___________________________ 10

Do you agree that a Parenting Order, which requires a parent to attend three months of guidance or counselling sessions no more than once a week, can positively influence (and reduce) the risk of their child being involved in anti-social behaviour? Yes / No

Why:
### VIII. Offence Gravity Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0101</td>
<td>Abduction/Kidnapping</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abduction of female by force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child abduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>False imprisonment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hijacking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0102</td>
<td>Assault police officer (common assault)*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault with intent to resist arrest or assaulting a person assisting a police constable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0103</td>
<td>Common assault*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault and battery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault by beating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0104</td>
<td>Grievous Bodily Harm (wound or inflict)*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0105</td>
<td>Manslaughter*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child destruction, infanticide or manslaughter due to diminished responsibility</td>
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<td>Murder*</td>
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<td>0107</td>
<td>Indictable firearms offences</td>
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<td>Possessing a real or imitation firearm at the time of committing or being arrested for an offence specified in Schedule 1 of the Firearms Act 1968</td>
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<td>Possession of real or imitation firearms/explosives with intent to commit an indictable offence – including resisting arrest</td>
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<td>Possession of real or imitation firearms/explosives with intent to cause violence</td>
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<td>0108</td>
<td>Other wounding*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy</td>
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<td>Assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH)</td>
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<td>0109</td>
<td>Possession of an offensive weapon</td>
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26 Provided by the Information Officer at the local Youth Offending Team
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<td>Threat or conspiracy to Murder</td>
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<td>Wounding or other act endangering life*</td>
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<td>Attempting to choke, suffocate with intent to commit an indictable offence (garrotting)</td>
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<td>Burning or maiming by explosion</td>
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<td>Creating danger by causing anything to be on the road, or interfering with a vehicle or traffic equipment</td>
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<td>Causing explosions or casting corrosive fluids with intent to do grievous bodily harm</td>
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<td>Endangering life or causing harm by administering poison</td>
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<td>Endangering railway passengers (by placing anything on railway, taking up rails, changing points and signals or by throwing anything at railway carriages)</td>
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<td>Causing danger to road users (throwing stones, etc)</td>
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<td>Possession of firearms with intent to endanger life or injure property</td>
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<td>Using chloroform to commit or assist in committing an indictable offence</td>
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<td>Using firearms or imitation firearms with intent to resist arrest</td>
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<td>Wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm (section 18)*</td>
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<td>Gross indecency with a child*</td>
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<td>Incest*</td>
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<td>Incest with a female under 13</td>
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<td>Inciting a girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse</td>
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<td>0204</td>
<td>Indecent Assault*</td>
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<td>Indecent behaviour/exposure</td>
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<td>0206</td>
<td>Rape*</td>
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<td>Assault with intent to commit rape or buggery</td>
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<td>0208</td>
<td>Unlawful sexual intercourse with female under 16*</td>
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<td>0209</td>
<td>Other/unspecified sexual offences*</td>
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<td>DEATH OR INJURY BY DANGEROUS DRIVING</td>
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<td>Death by dangerous driving*</td>
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<td>Injury by dangerous driving*</td>
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<td>Dangerous Driving</td>
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<td>Driving under the influence of drinks/drugs</td>
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<td>Driving whilst disqualified</td>
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<td>Interfering with a motor vehicle</td>
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<td>Refusing to give breath test</td>
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<td>Road traffic/Additional Offences</td>
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</table>

- Driving without due care and attention
- Driving on a footpath or/and common land
- Driving defective motor vehicle
- Exceeding speed limit
- Failure to wear a seatbelt
- Failure to comply with a road traffic sign
- Failure to give particulars after an accident
- Failure to produce documents
- Failure to report an accident
- Failure to stop when requested by a constable
- Failure to stop after an accident
- Forge vehicle records/licence
- No insurance

No L plates
No licence
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<td>Not well maintained indicators/stop/hazard and light reflectors</td>
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<td>Other/unspecified arson</td>
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<td>Section 4a Public Order Act 1986 (intentional harassment, alarm or distress)</td>
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<td>Cruelty to animals or unlawful killing of animals</td>
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<td>Firearms Act Offences (e.g. no firearm licence)</td>
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<td>Interfering with witness/perveting justice</td>
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<td>Obstruct police or fire service</td>
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<td>Public nuisance (common law offence)</td>
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<td>Resisting arrest</td>
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<td>Sending indecent/offensive articles</td>
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<td>Trespassing on a railway</td>
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<td>Begging</td>
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<td>Consuming alcohol under the age of 18 in a public place</td>
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<td>Concealment of birth</td>
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<td>Cycling in pedestrian area</td>
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<td>Failure to make children attend school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infuriating an animal (Section 1 (1) (a) Protection of Animals Act 1911)</td>
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</table>

- Inciting a child away from local authority care
- Littering
- Nuisance on educational premises
- Urinating in a public place
- Vagrancy
- Making hoax/abusive or malicious telephone calls
- Non-payment of financial penalty
- Purchasing alcohol under the age of 18
- Wasting police time

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<td>1601</td>
<td>Criminal damage – racially aggravated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1602</td>
<td>Other wounding – racially aggravated*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual bodily harm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common assault</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intentional harassment alarm or distress</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting people in fear of violence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>Wounding or other act endangering life – racially aggrav</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ed*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>Other/unspecified racially aggravated offence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>BREACH OF CONDITIONAL DISCHARGE – this only applies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>where the breach has resulted in an additional substantive outcome. Where a young person has been resentenced, please refer back to the original offence for the seriousness.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Breach of conditions of discharge</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>BREACH OF BAIL – this only applies where the breach has</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resulted in an additional substantive outcome. Where a</td>
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<td>young person has been resentenced, please refer back to</td>
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<td>the original offence for the seriousness.</td>
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<td>1801</td>
<td>Breach of conditions of bail</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>BREACH OF STATUTORY ORDER – this only applies where the</td>
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<td>breach has resulted in an additional substantive outcome. Where a young person has been resentenced, please refer back to the original offence for the seriousness.</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>Breach of Order or license conditions</td>
<td>4</td>
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