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Centre for Institutional Studies

Research Report

NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES YOUTH INCLUSION PROGRAMME: EARLY OUTCOMES IN WEST HAM & PLAISTOW

Julia E. Selman

NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES YOUTH INCLUSION PROGRAMME: EARLY OUTCOMES IN WEST HAM & PLAISTOW

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July 2006

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Julia E. Selman
July 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on research of the New Deal for Communities Youth Inclusion Programme (NDC YIP) in the West Ham and Plaistow area. It presents findings on the early impacts of the NDC YIP project on service users.

Good practice has been identified and recommendations for improving the project have been suggested.

The research was conducted between July 2005 and mid October 2005 and was carried out by the Urban Regeneration Research Team at the Centre for Institutional Studies (CIS) at the University of East London (UEL).

2. THE RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach used in the evaluation.

2.2 Strategy and Purpose

The purpose of our research was to find out what impact, if any, participating in the activities at the NDC YIP core project had on the anti-social and offending behaviour of the young people who regularly attended. We also aimed to find out about the processes of change behind the impact.

At a **project level** we looked at how the project defined the problems and needs of the young people and how well the project responded to these problems.

At the **participant's level** we looked at the needs and problems of the young people as defined by them. This helped us to understand if the project may provide a solution to some of their problems. We spoke to some of the young people about their perceptions and experiences of participating in the project.

Due to budgetary constraints, as well as low levels of attendance, we have been unable to undertake as much research as we would have liked. The findings presented in this report therefore only give partial insight into the impact of the NDC YIP. At the same time, the findings have identified some good practice at the NDC YIP in West Ham & Plaistow which may be beneficial for the programme as a whole.

2.3 Sampling Issues

Researchers contacted the YIP manager and arranged for consent forms to be sent to parents. It was our intent to interview the young people who had been attending the project for the longest period of time. It was also the intention to interview non-attending young people (those who dropped out or were referred but never attended) to find out what prevented them from returning or ever attending the YIP. A number of attempts were made by staff to contact these young people but to no avail. Additionally, researchers sent letters to 24 parents and young people requesting interviews. Of these letters, one was returned due to the fact that the young person no longer lived at that address. There was no response from the remaining 23. Researchers requested phone numbers in order to follow-up on the letters, but for reasons of confidentiality, the phone numbers were not given to the researchers.

Ultimately, the young people interviewed were those who were in attendance at the project when the researchers visited.

Researchers also interviewed four members of staff including the project manager. The intention was to interview as many staff as possible to obtain a variety of viewpoints and working methods. However, due to time constraints, staff were

generally selected on the basis of availability with the exception of one worker who was selected because she was the only female member of staff.

- Interviews were conducted with 9 young people
- Interviews were conducted with 4 members of staff

2.4 Data Collection: Methods & Tools

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. In addition, information was obtained through numerous informal conversations.

In addition, all of the research is informed by observations carried out during repeated project visits where we observed the atmosphere at the project, how the activities were carried out, how the young people behaved and how the young people interacted with staff.

Information was obtained from the following data resources:

- Self-report offending data obtained from the young people
- Project monitoring data
- Young Offender Information System database (YOIS)¹
- Universal Monitoring and Evaluation Information System (UMIS)²
- Metropolitan Police data
- Various reports
- Literature on youth offending and crime reduction
- 3 observation sessions were undertaken in addition to the observations made in-between interviews
- Researchers also accompanied staff and young people to an off-site activity (dirt-biking).

The young people were asked questions regarding:

- The NDC YIP project
- Confidence
- School
- Extra-curricular activities
- Social support

They were also asked a number of questions relating to criminal and anti-social behaviour. These questions included;

¹ YOIS records details of offence information, court appearances, criminal orders, police custody records and arrest rates. Additionally, it includes the history of case management.

² UMIS is a prevention information system. This system records details of engagement on specific interventions offered by YIPs and YISPs, details of panels, community sentences and assessments intended to measure the impact of the interventions on the risk factors for the young person.

- If they have ever been arrested
- If so, how many times they have been arrested in total and how many times they've been arrested since joining the YIP
- how their criminal/anti-social behaviour has changed since attending the YIP.

While some of the young people did disclose information on their anti-social and offending behaviour, it is important to note that they are unlikely to tell researchers everything regarding their offending practice for various reason, one being fear of reprisal.

2.5 Analysis

A useful way to think about whether a programme is successful is to think about projects and activities as solutions to a problem. Can the NDC YIP, working alongside other agencies, be an effective solution to youth offending, truancy and social exclusion?

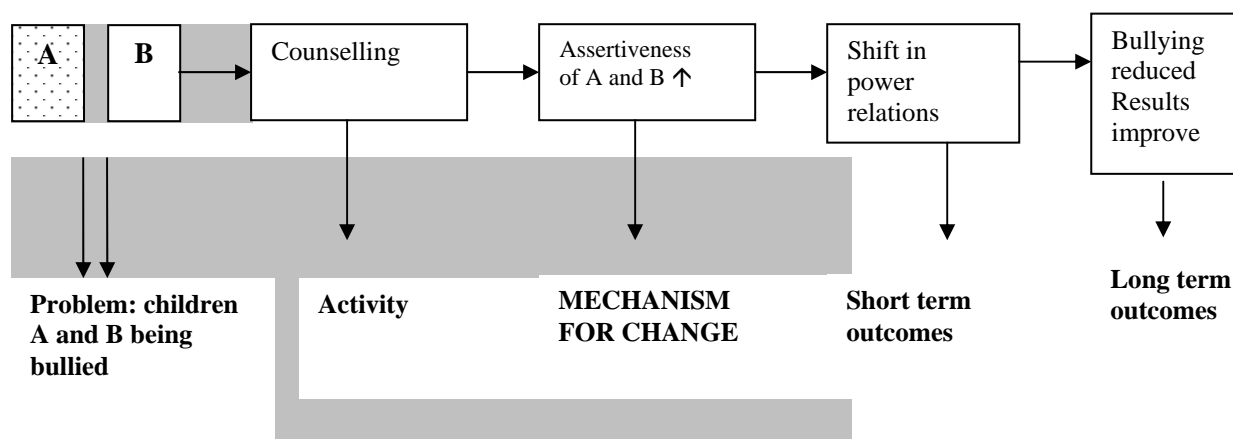
The research framework was designed to assess whether the young people felt that the YIP had impacted them so as to reduce their anti-social and offending behaviour. We intended to obtain project monitoring data as well as YOIS data. Additionally, we analysed self-report data from the young people regarding their involvement in crime. Also from the interviews we sought to have young people explain their opinion as to what difference, if any, participating in the NDC YIP has made to their involvement in crime.

To understand how the changes have come about we have tried to gain insight into the mechanisms of change. Mechanisms of change can be described as the activities or characteristics of an intervention that results in positive (or negative) changes for a person. Below, figure 2.1 provides an example from the Newham Children's Fund Disabilities Report^{3,4}

³ Rice, Becky. *Evaluation of the Newham Children's Fund Disabilities Theme*. Centre for Institutional Studies, 2003.

⁴ We can see that the background or circumstances for A and B are different. This is likely to affect how effective the activity is at bringing about change. If it works better for A we need to ask why this is, and how could we make it more effective for B (or whether another intervention would be better for B).

FIGURE 2.1 AN EXAMPLE OF PROCESSES OF CHANGE



In the illustration above, if a project offers counselling for victims of school bullying, counselling is the activity and the response may be greater assertiveness which shifts the power relationship between a bully and the bullied which leads to less bullying. The mechanism of change is therefore the child's new found assertiveness. This process is known as the 'programme logic'⁵.

To understand how changes come about we have tried to explore the mechanisms which explain the processes behind the outcomes. In understanding the processes that bring about certain changes, the project can work towards maintaining identified positive outcomes and aim to prevent negative outcomes and therefore to develop good practice.

2.6 Principles of Our Research

Participation in the research was not compulsory. The young people were asked to participate. Some young people did not want to take part, often due to lack of time, interest or simply because they were participating in an activity. Those young people who did participate received a £10 HMV voucher as a token of appreciation.

It was made clear to the young person that they could discontinue the interview at any time and that the interviews would remain confidential, thus no names are used in this report.

To avoid the interruption of activities, most interviews with the young people occurred when they were not in the middle of an activity. During the summer months when the YIP was frequently off-site on trips it was therefore difficult to conduct research and a larger number of visits was necessary.

⁵ Connell, J and A. Kubisch, *Applying a Theory of Change Approach to the Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Progress, Prospects and Problems* in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives Volume 2: Theory, Measurement and Analysis* by Karen Fulbright Anderson, Anne C. Kubisch, and James P. Connell (eds), The Aspen Institute, 2002.

2.7 Limitations of the Research

The intention of this research is to contribute to the development of the NDC YIP, to learn more about how the project is (or is not) achieving its aims and objectives and to identify good practices. This study focuses on some of the early impacts the project has had on the young people and the findings should be understood within this context.

- Understandably, some of the young people believed that if they explicitly talked about their participation in crime and anti-social behaviour, they would increase the likelihood of being arrested. Hence, it was sometimes difficult to discuss with young people the reasons for their offending.
- The interviews did not include young people who had 'dropped out' or who were on the list of the top 40 but had never attended the project. Thus barriers to participation were not ascertained from this group.
- The total number of young people interviewed was small. Thus, efforts have been made not to make generalisations. Further, the fieldwork for this report took place over a short period of time – 8 weeks – and therefore most of the outcomes stated were those which young people and staff reported to the researcher and were not identified by the researcher over time.
- In order to give a more detailed answer to the question: *why does the project have a positive impact with some young people and not others?* a more intensive collection of information about the young people's background, personal circumstances would be required. It would be useful to continue the research to gain insight on the answer to this question.
- Data provided by the Metropolitan Police, while interesting, was not always useful for the purposes of the research. Unfortunately, in many cases, the police were unable to provide crime data that matched the NDC YIP's geographical project boundaries. This reduced the ability to use the data to assess the success rate of the project's aims and objectives.
- Unfortunately, it is not feasible to separate the impact of the NDC YIP from that of other local initiatives.

Despite these limitations the findings give an understanding of the impact that the project can have on young people.

3. THE NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES YOUTH INCLUSION PROGRAMME

3.1 New Deal for Communities (NDC)

NDC is a government funded community-based urban regeneration programme. It was first introduced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 1999 with the second phase commencing in 2001.⁶ By 2010, the programme would have had approximately £2 billion pounds in financial support.⁷

Throughout the duration of the programme, the NDC will have operated in 39 of the most deprived areas, as indicated by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The objective of the programme is to enhance the local area as well as to enrich the lives of its residents. Some of the ways it seeks to achieve this is by, for example, reducing youth crime in the area and by providing the opportunity for people to learn new skills and obtain training. The NDC has several objectives which broadly fall within the following categories; Community Safety, Economy, Education, Environment, Health, Housing, Resource Centres and Youth.⁸

3.2 The Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP)

The Youth Inclusion Programme was launched in 2000 by the Youth Justice Board and is just one of many initiatives intended to combat youth offending. The objective is to change young people's attitudes to education and crime.

At the YIP, young people are able to get help with their homework. In cases where they have been permanently excluded, young people are assisted in finding a suitable education alternative. The YIP also provides young people with a safe environment where they can gain skills, participate in various group activities and become positively acquainted with their local community.

Over 70 of the most high crime areas in England and Wales have a YIP. Although any young person from the local area can access the YIP, the programme is specifically targeted at young people between the ages of 13 – 16 who are either already engaged in criminal conduct or have been identified as being most at-risk of offending, truancy or social or school exclusion.⁹

3.3 West Ham & Plaistow NDC – YIP: The Core Project

The West Ham & Plaistow NDC was launched in 2000 and is estimated to have more than £50 million pounds in funding dedicated for 2000 to 2010.¹⁰

In an effort to reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour in its local area, the West Ham and Plaistow NDC implemented the Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion Programme. The West Ham and Plaistow NDC – YIP: The Core Project (hereafter termed the NDC YIP) was rolled out in July 2004 and is located at 11 Hermit Rd in Canning Town in the London Borough of Newham. It was created through a

⁶ Adamson, Sue. Pg.3, 2004.

⁷ [<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=617>]

⁸ [<http://www.ndfc.co.uk>]

⁹ [<http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk>]

¹⁰ [<http://www.ndfc.co.uk>]

partnership between New Deal for Communities and the YIP. The Youth Justice Board invests £75,000 in the joint project per year with the condition that this funding is matched by other agencies or organizations.¹¹

The NDC YIP aims to reduce youth crime in the local neighbourhood by providing young people with the opportunity to acquire new skills through various activities. With the help of the YIP workers, the YIP also endeavours to achieve its aims and objectives by stressing the importance of desisting from crime and by helping young people to develop a more positive attitude toward education.¹²

Although, there are not a wide variety of community activities in the local area for children and young people to choose from, there are a few organisations that are well-attended. Some of the young people attending the NDC YIP also attend Community Links at 105 Barking Rd, Eastlea Community School on Exning Road in Canning Town and/or Glory House, a faith-based youth club located at 2 Tabernacle Avenue in Plaistow.

The YIP was established on the basis that it would provide a service different to that of generic youth work. Although, the YIP does work with a number of young people in the local area, what makes the NDC YIP unique is that it is mandated to work with the 40¹³ most at-risk young people in the area.

The Youth Inclusion Programme has 3 main aims¹⁴:

1. To reduce arrest rates in the top 40 most at-risk young people by 70% compared with the 12 months previous
2. To ensure that 75% of the core group are engaged with the YIP project and are participating in at least 5 hours of appropriate interventions each week
3. To ensure that 90% of the top 40 are engaged in suitable education, training or employment

3.4 YIP Services & Activities

The main provision, namely the general drop-in sessions, are provided at the project premises. Previously, these sessions were co-ed with males and females participating together. But due to difficulties engaging with both genders and that the needs and likes of the girls were often overshadowed by those of the boys, staff reorganised the activities so that the girls now meet once a week on their own.

¹¹ Adamson, Sue. Pg.6, 2004.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The YIPs that are run independently, target the top 50 young people. However, NDC YIP's usually only target the top 40 most at-risk young people. It should be noted that although the term 'top 40' will be used in this report, the West Ham & Plaistow NDC YIP has 43 young people on its list.

¹⁴ In NDC YIP documents these are termed 'aims', however, researchers believe these would be more appropriately termed 'objectives'. See *Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme*, Morgan Harris Burrows, July 2003.

FIGURE 3.1 QUAD-BIKING



A small percentage of the YIP's time is dedicated to detached work. Unfortunately, the NDC West Ham & Plaistow YIP does not operate through schools. However, it does run an Education Programme three days a week for those young people attending the project who are not in mainstream education. The education programme is supported by the National Youth Agency and accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

YIP activities include;

- General drop-in sessions where young people can use computers, play video games, watch T.V. and chat with the staff and other young people.
- A young women's group
- An education programme
- Go-karting
- Quad-biking
- Paint-balling
- Non-contact boxing and other activities and trips
- A media session (this includes the use of a recording studio where young people can use mixers, decks, etc to make music)
- Regular trips to a squash club where young people have access to a wider variety of activities, such as pool and table tennis.

3.5 Project Funding

The NDC YIP is half funded by the Youth Justice Board with matched funding from the NDC.

At the time of the research, the project manager only had confirmation of funding until July 2006 and there had been no news of a "winding-down" process. This lack of certainty about future funding impacts the effectiveness of the project. It makes

it very difficult for staff to plan activities other than on a short-term basis. Nevertheless, project staff regularly searched for various funding opportunities.

FIGURE 3.2 GRAFFITI ART BY THE YOUNG WOMEN'S GROUP



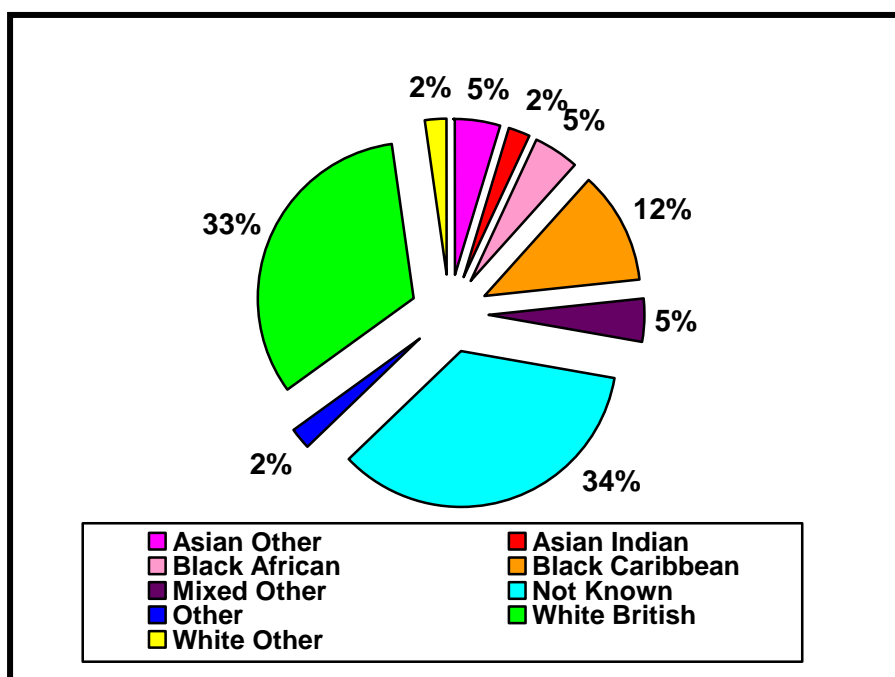
3.6 Service Users

Ethnicity

With regard to the ethnic composition of the top 40, the ethnic groups that predominate are White British (33%) and Black Caribbean (12%). Unfortunately, the ethnic background for a large percentage of young people on the list of the top 40 was unknown at the time this report was written (34%). This is due in part to the fact that most of the information held on UMIS was provided by the project staff and unfortunately, not all documentation was fully completed¹⁵ and because staff had not met all the young people face-to-face. Figure 3.3 illustrates the ethnic composition of the top 40.

¹⁵ Additionally, UMIS was introduced to the NDC YIP in Oct 2004, thus if initial contact was made prior to Oct 2004, it may not have been transferred onto the database.

FIGURE 3.3 ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE TOP 40



The ethnic composition of the group of young people who had attended the project during the times that researchers were present was quite consistent over the duration of the research – mainly Black Caribbean, Black African and White British. Whilst there are a number of Asian young people on the project’s list of the top 40, no Asian young people were in attendance at the project when researchers visited. Table 3.1 details the ethnicity of the young people who were interviewed.

TABLE 3.1 ETHNICITY OF INTERVIEWEES

Ethnicity	Number
Black African	2
Black Caribbean	1
White British	3
Mixed Heritage (Black African/Caribbean & White British)	1
Moroccan	1
Other ¹⁶	1
TOTAL	9

¹⁶ When this young person was asked about his ethnicity, he responded that he was ‘English’, although he appeared as if his background was Black African or Caribbean. This illustrates the issue of how one identifies themselves versus how others identify them.

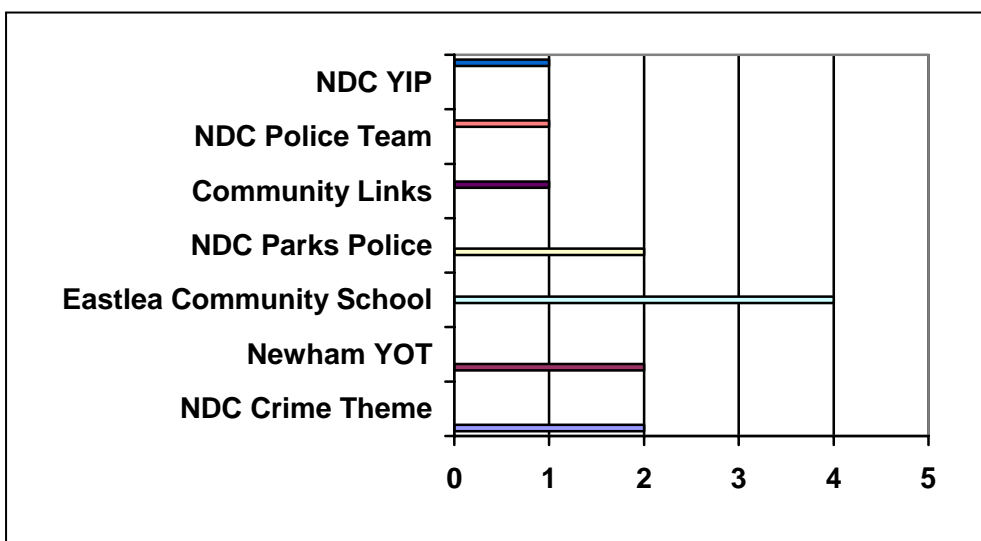
Gender

Of the top 40, 35 are male, 7 are female and the gender of one young person is unknown. All of the young people who attended the project during the period of the research were male, of whom nine participated in the evaluation.

Referrals

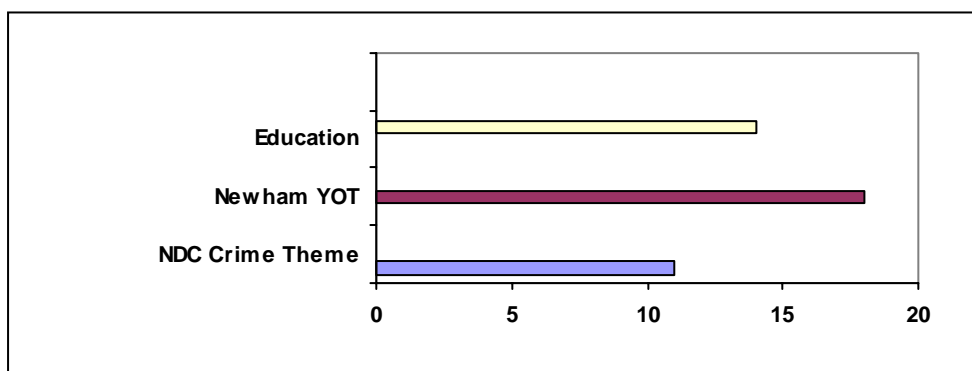
The top 40 are identified and referred by various agencies including the; Youth Offending Team (YOT), police, voluntary organizations, schools and Social Services.¹⁷ From UMIS, referral information was only available for 13 of the top 40 young people. These 13 young people were recorded as being referred by the agencies as listed in figure 3.4.

FIGURE 3.4 NUMBER OF REFERRALS BY VARIOUS AGENCIES ACCORDING TO UMIS



Referral information was also obtained from the project itself. This information was more thorough as it had information for all 43 young people. However, it did not correlate with the classifications used by UMIS, as it only classified referrals into three categories, nor was attendance recorded.

FIGURE 3.5 NUMBER OF REFERRALS BY VARIOUS AGENCIES ACCORDING TO THE NDC YIP



¹⁷ Verbal conversation with Newham Manager of UMIS.

3.7 The YIP as a Solution to a Problem?

The YIP was designed as a preventative programme.¹⁸ The overarching objective of the NDC YIP is to help reduce anti-social behaviour and offending by young people in the West Ham & Plaistow areas in the London Borough of Newham. The primary way in which the NDC YIP aims to achieve this goal lies in its distinctness from generic youth work.

According to the report by Morgan Harris Burrows,

what distinguishes the YIP from generic youth work is the focus on identifying, engaging and working with the most 'at-risk' young people in a neighbourhood in a concerted effort to reduce crime.¹⁹

Hence, in order to maximize the chances of the programme being successful, the NDC YIP would want to ensure that it had the most at-risk young people in its community on its list of the top 40. We tried to determine this information by requesting the offending histories of the top 40 from both the YIP and the Newham YOT. However, this information was not forthcoming from the project and although initially requested in July, this data had not been received by the researchers at the time of printing.

Many are aware of the level of crime and deprivation in the borough of Newham. We sought to confirm that the NDC YIP boundary areas indeed had one of the highest levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in the borough. However, most of the statistics requested from the Metropolitan Police had not arrived in time to be included in this report. Thus, we were not able to conduct a thorough analysis to determine the degree to which youth crime is problematic in the NDC YIP area.

We did however receive data on the number of young people accused of a crime in the precise NDC Area.

TABLE 3.2 YOUTH ACCUSED BY WEST HAM & PLAISTOW NDC BOUNDARIES AND BY AGE²⁰

Financial Year	Age			Grand Total
	10-13	13-16	14-17	
2000-01	0	1	1	2
2001-02	12	41	39	92
2002-03	18	40	38	96
2003-04	5	37	55	97
2004-05	4	36	49	89
Total	39	155	182	376

As table 3.2 above illustrates, the total number of young people accused of a crime in the West Ham and Plaistow NDC area²¹ has increased between 2001 and 2004. However, from 2004, the year in which the project started, to 2005, the number of

¹⁸ Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme by Morgan Harris Burrows, July 2003.

¹⁹ Ibid, pg. 23.

²⁰ Data obtained from the Metropolitan Police Performance Information Bureau. 30 Nov 2005.

²¹ See appendix for map of the West Ham and Plaistow NDC area.

youth accused has dropped, albeit not radically. At the current time, it is not possible to credit this result solely to the work of the NDC YIP.

What constitutes the YIP's definition of 'at-risk' was not made clear during the research. Further, some staff were not clear on the criteria that the referring agencies used to classify young people as being 'at-risk'.

It should also be noted that a number of the young people attending the NDC YIP at the time of the research were not referred by other agencies but in fact had come to the project after hearing about it from friends who are in the top 40. As the YIP does not itself do any risk-assessments²², these young people who came to the project on their own were not assessed. Although the YIP is permitted to work with other young people in the local area, if the majority of regular attenders are not on the list of the top 40, this poses a number of problems with regards to achieving the aims and objectives:

- [1] Due to the fact that these particular young people are not assessed, it is not known if they are at-risk. If they are not at-risk, then it may not be best practice to group them with young people who have been assessed as at-risk.²³
- [2] As mentioned earlier, what distinguishes the YIP from generic youth work is its target group of the top 40. If the majority of the young people attending the project on a regular basis are simply from the local neighbourhood and are not on the list of the top 40, then not only is the YIP not achieving one of its primary aims, but it then also becomes just another generic youth work service provider.

In order for interventions to be successful, its implementation should be preceded by a respected and validated assessment tool which addresses both the risk and need factors in the young person's life which contributes to their criminal behaviour.²⁴ Research has illustrated the effectiveness of this approach.²⁵ Knowledge and understanding of the young person's assessment from the referral agency would be sufficient. Alternatively, the NDC YIP could conduct its own risk assessments using a respected instrument such as ONSET.²⁶

Nevertheless, staff have stated that informal assessments are continually applied throughout the intervention. This is good practice because the young persons risks and needs may change over time. When implemented, these practices "allow for

²² However, the YIP does "continually monitor, track and assess young people's circumstances and seek to address and prioritize their work" (YIP manager).

²³ In a study conducted by leading psychologists Don Andrews and James Bonta, it was found that placing lower-risk individuals in the same intervention programme as higher-risk individuals may result in a negative effect and therefore increase the anti-social attitudes and criminal behaviour of the lower-risk group. However, it should be noted that this research took place at a young offenders correctional facility where the young people's attendance was mandatory and not voluntary, thus the possible effect may or may not apply. See Andrews, D. A. et al., 1998. However, it should be noted that this research took place at a young offenders correctional facility where the young people's attendance was mandatory and not voluntary, thus the possible effect may or may not apply.

²⁴ Motiuk, L., 1993.

²⁵ Andrews, D.A., et al., 1998 and Loza, W. et al., 1994.

²⁶ ONSET is a risk assessment procedure developed by the Centre for Criminological Research at the University of Oxford and is recognized and approved by the Youth Justice Board.

targeted interventions, better classification, (constructive) program evaluation, standardisation, and efficient resource allocation".²⁷

ISSUES

- × The NDC YIP area is imaginary in the sense that the organisation has created borders in the area that it chooses to serve. Unfortunately, the crime data generally available from the police does not correspond with the same geographical location, this makes it difficult to make comparisons with the data. Trying to separate the data would take a considerable amount of time and may not accurately reflect the real situation. This disjuncture weakens the ability to measure some of the NDC YIP's outcomes.

RECOMENDATIONS

- ✦ It would be beneficial if the West Ham & Plaistow YIP worked with the local police to determine how they can get the most reliable statistics which represent the NDC's boundaries. This would greatly enhance their ability to assess whether or not they are meeting their targets.
- ✦ It would be useful if there was an increased use of risk assessments in order to enable staff to plan interventions according to the needs and risks of the young people.
- ✦ It could be useful for some YIP staff to gain a clear understanding of what factors may qualify a young person as being 'at-risk'
- ✦ It could be beneficial if staff revisited the YIP's policies and guidelines. It may also be advantageous to seek further training opportunities to continually enhance the YIP service. Implementing a bi-annual refresher course could be a valuable addition to the YIP.
- ✦ It could be advantageous if there was more co-operation from and between agencies associated with the YIP with regard to sharing data such as referral agency, record of attendance, engagement at other interventions, offending history, etc.

²⁷ Hannah-Moffat, Kelly and Paula Maurutto. *Youth Risk/Need Assessment: An Overview of Issues and Practices*. University of Toronto, April 2003.

4. PROJECT LEVEL INFORMATION: THE EXPERIENCE & PERCEPTIONS OF STAFF

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the views and experiences of staff. Interviews were conducted with four workers including the project manager. Staff interviewed were full-time.

4.2 The YIP vs. Youth Clubs

When asked what it was about the YIP that will enable them to achieve its 3 main aims, one member of staff said,

Mainly it's the fact that we are not a youth club. We are trying to meet the needs of the top 40. In a youth club there is not someone always on your back. Here at the YIP, if we see that the young person is not engaging, we call their homes and mobiles, we write letters and do door knocks. You know...we ask them 'why'd you do this? why did you not turn up?'

Other staff made similar comments stating what they believed to be the difference between the work that they do and that of generic youth clubs.

4.3 Impact of the Activities

When asked how, in their opinion, the activities bring about changes in the young people's lives, one YIP worker responded by saying that they felt it was,

Frequent contact with young persons, sharing participation in activities, random one-to-one's, listening, caring, and showing concern. When they have a sense of value and worth, they change. It doesn't happen at once, it happens over a long period of time.

Staff felt that many of the activities teach the young people life skills, discipline and that this enables them to 're-direct their energy and focus'. Staff carried out a study with all the young people on the education programme to determine their learning style and found that these young people learn best "by doing", and felt that the activities implemented were suited to this learning style.

One particular activity that appears to have a strong impact are group discussions. These discussions are not formal nor are they planned ahead of time.²⁸ They occur on a random basis and young people have noted that they sometimes think about the things they have discussed at the YIP in their own time and that this has influenced their behaviour.

²⁸ With the exception of the Verbal Intercourse night where the young people discuss a subject chosen by themselves.

Case Example

One example was the topic of thieving. It just came up one day as we were playing video games. I stopped the game for a second and said: 'OK,' and put a question to them. As a result we had a 45 minute conversation with the young people and what came out of that was a very positive and productive conversation. It wasn't formal and all serious, we didn't turn off the T.V., we were still playing the video game, but we'd pause it and start again and some of the young people on the computers would stop to contribute to the conversation.

- member of staff

The evaluation sought to find out whether the activities provided by the NDC YIP have made a difference to the offending behaviour of young people in the area. The number of off-site activities that researchers were able to attend were limited. However, through discussions with some staff and observations of on-site activities some staff were able to discuss with researchers how the activities were planned with the needs of the young people in mind. Unfortunately, other staff members did not know how the activities were meant to help reduce offending. Other research²⁹ has shown that activities are often planned without the needs of the young person in mind or without thought to the ways in which they can bring about change. The YIP could strengthen the impact it has on young people by ensuring it takes these issues into account when planning activities.

It is important that all staff have a clear understanding and are able to clearly articulate the way in which activities are meant to have an impact. Below is a table with a few examples of activities provided by the YIP and possible mechanisms of change.

TABLE 4.1 IDENTIFIED MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

Intervention /Activity	Mechanism of Change	Observations and Impact
Computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interaction with others ▪ Combination of fun and learning ▪ Time spent alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better spelling ability ▪ Better and faster typing skills ▪ Development of a marketable skill
Music production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning a new and popular skill ▪ Spending one-to-one time with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced concept of abstract things ▪ Heightened creativity ▪ Development of constructive interest/talent ▪ Learned a different mode of communication
Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness of their surrounding environment ▪ Time spent with peers under supervision away from the centre, school or problem area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased knowledge of the history of London ▪ More connected to their local community, less sense of danger and therefore feel safer in their area ▪ Enables them to forget their problems for a short amount of time ▪ Learn how to use transport system ▪ Learn how to behave in public

²⁹ HM Inspectorate of Probation. *Offender Assessment and Supervision Planning: Helping to Achieve Effective Intervention with Offenders*. London, 1999.

4.4 Forward Thinking & Skills for Life

One member of staff believed that it was one of his duties to get the young people to 'see themselves not as only what they are now, but what they could be'. He went on to say that,

"...I think many times they [young people] see themselves in a current state and don't see beyond - my job as a worker is to point out their talents so they can put it to good use."

One such example was given by another member of staff:

Case Example

"One young person started on an Alternative Education Programme but then refused to go...I got in touch with his Mom and we discussed various options...then we spoke to an Alternative Education manager...eventually he finally went back there and settled down. Last year he ended up doing 3 days there, 1 day here and 1 day at school for science. This year he has only been given 2 days at the Alternative Education centre and NOW (with emphasis) he's kicking up a storm because he wants more days!!!!

He wants to do carpentry and go into the Army. He has even gone on his own back and went to a Plaistow construction site to ask if he could do some work experience. He's at that stage where he knows life is not a joke anymore and he knows what he wants to do - its just a matter of whose gonna help him. Last year - he was always getting into trouble, he was always getting picked up by the police...this year, nothing, no trouble at all."

- member of staff

Another example given by a different member of staff was the following;

Case Example: Camelot Games

"This is a type of boot camp...here it wasn't about being an individual anymore. The young people had to work with a team, they were forced to work as a team.

After this exercise, the young people understood the importance of listening to each other and listening to authority...these are life skills, you have to learn to listen to your manager at work...if they want to get into professional sports, they have to be disciplined, they can't just wake up when they want or practice when they want because its not just them it's a team...and what we (staff) do is try to relate these examples to the young people when we are doing the activities so they can relate it to real life and they can see the effects of it."

- member of staff

4.5 Long-term Impact

When discussing the changes in attitudes and behaviour of the young people, one YIP worker stated that he has indeed identified positive changes in some of the young people, but unfortunately, had not seen them lasting. He gave an example of one particular young person:

“This one young person, before they came to the YIP, they were not attending school for months, then they came on our education programme. Eventually, I got him on to Year 11 at the Turnaround Project...but he then got involved with another young person...he started stealing laptops, the next week he stole a vehicle and 2 weeks ago he breaks into an empty house. He’s now going to court and his Dad is at his wit’s end. This is a very frustrating situation.”

As frustrating as this is, staff knew that long-lasting positive changes would not occur in all the young people they worked with. They also stated what they thought was the key to effect these long term changes:

“Relationship building – when they first come it takes time...only when you build relationships with the young people can we really affect any changes...this is a slow process. We’re meeting these individuals between the ages of 14 and 16 and they’ve come to us with all these issues in their lives already (emphasis), as workers we’re trying to challenge their words, behaviour, etc. There are NO quick fixes. However, since they have been coming here there have been changes; their behaviour when they come in, respect to each other, respect to staff. We’re not going to see change right away, but seeds have been planted in their hearts and in their lives and over time you’ll see the change.”

As another member of staff put it,

“Our project is not a total solution...in order to address problems it [the project] needs to be very interlinked – family time, time with staff and the individual young people must have a willingness to change, we need to work with the young people, not for them. They need to want to change otherwise no matter what activities, etc, it won’t make a difference.”

4.6 Detached Work

The NDC YIP has a part-time detached team. The full-time staff also go out into the community twice a week, generally between 3 and 5 p.m. for at least an hour, to promote the YIP and its activities as well as to do door knocks.

This detached work, also distinguishes the YIP from generic youth work. It has proven to be a very successful aspect of their work, as a number of young people have joined the YIP as a result of the street work that the staff do.

Case Example

"We've gone out and promoted the YIP, gave away flyers, told young people on the street about the activities, one of these young people happened to be one of the yp on our top 40 who we had never been able to engage with. We had previously left numerous messages, sent out numerous letters, did door knocks, etc. He ended up coming to the project as a result of the detached street work. If we hadn't done that, then this particular young person probably would never have made contact with the YIP and come in to the centre. We have more success face-to-face."

- member of staff

4.7 Consultation with the Young People

Staff make every effort to ensure that activities reflect the desires of the young people. Staff have used survey sheets as well as informal chats with the young people to find out what they would like the YIP to offer.

One example of how staff have consulted with young people and have implemented their ideas is the issue of opening hours. Initially, the YIP was running 6 days a week, but were not engaging any of the young people on Saturdays, so they scaled their operation down to 5 days a week. A few months later, one of the young people mentioned that he would like the YIP to run 7 days a week. As a result of similar remarks from other young people, the YIP is now running 7 days a week.

Another example of the staff implementing young people's ideas is the VI (verbal intercourse) night. One young man recommended to staff that the YIP should have a discussion group. Two days later he came in and spoke with staff for half an hour about his idea. Staff then decided to implement a discussion group every two weeks. This is a direct result of one young person's idea.

4.8 Relationships with Young People

Many of the young people commented that one of the main reasons that they attend the project is because of the positive relationship that they have with the staff. Researchers asked the workers what characteristics or working methods they employ that they believe contributes to the positive relationship they have with the young people. Some responses by the staff were;

- Fairness
- Consistency
- Being approachable
- Challenging
- Leadership and leading by example
- Respect

4.9 Areas for Improvement

All staff believed that there was room for improvement. Additionally, all staff stated that there were two main issues which prevent them from having an even stronger impact on the young people in the area;

(a) size of the premises

(b) location

Staff commented that some of the young people socialise in groups and some of these groups do not get along with others. Thus if one group is attending the project, the other group will not attend, hence a reason for the low-level user involvement. Having a larger premises would not only enable the YIP to provide additional activities but would also alleviate the problem of rival groups.

With regards to issues around location, the YIP is slightly outside of the NDC boundaries. Some staff commented that due to this fact, some of *'the young people from our caseload in Plaistow North will not come all the way down here, especially in the winter when it gets dark at 4:30 p.m..'* Hence, a more central location would be beneficial.

Another area in which some staff felt could be improved are the activities for girls. Some staff thought the project would be better if they could manage to bring the boys and girls together during activities. One worker said that they try to do this *'in the summer but in the week (during school terms) it's predominantly for the boys so it would be beneficial for both groups'*.

GOOD PRACTICE

- ☑ The project manager had a very clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the project. He also had a reasonable idea of whether or not these targets were being met.
- ☑ Most staff made a clear distinction between a generic youth club and the YIP
- ☑ Staff recognised some of the ways in which the impact of the project could be improved and have taken steps to discuss this with senior management.
- ☑ Staff have been able to form and maintain positive relationships with the young people.
- ☑ The staff have created an environment where they are respected by young people. Given the nature of the programme, it is often difficult to achieve this in such a short time frame, but through activities and informal conversations, staff have developed a very good relationship with the young people which appears to be a result of personal characteristics and work ethics.

ISSUES

- × As stated above a 'theory of change' describes how a programme intends that its methods and courses of action will result in the achievement of its aims and objectives. Unfortunately, the NDC YIP's 'theory of change' was not clear to all staff. They were not able to articulate how their work with young people could make a difference to the behaviour and attitudes of the young people nor did all the staff have a clear understanding of the purpose of the activities.
- × While it is commendable that the NDC YIP is providing a variety of inter-active interventions, it appears that these activities have not been designed to address the risk and need factors of the top 40.
- × Not all staff were aware of which agency was measuring the YIPs objectives or how well the YIP was progressing in achieving its aims.
- × There have been some problems in obtaining and inputting basic monitoring information such as gender and ethnicity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✦ Staff could be provided with information on which agency is measuring the success rate of the aims and objectives of the project and how these aims and objectives are measured. A review of outcome measures could be conducted. This would enable staff to know exactly what they are trying to achieve and in turn help them develop ways in which to achieve positive outcomes. It would be beneficial if staff could also have regular access to the project monitoring information to enable them to be aware of their progress. This would aid the staff in determining whether the methods they are using are working.
- ✦ Increased multi-agency work with other initiatives in the area.
- ✦ It would be useful for the YIP workers to be aware of how the planned services/activities intend to bring about change in offending and anti-social behaviour and to implement activities which adhere to this model for change.
- ✦ It would be useful to conduct a training session with staff about the 'Theory of Change' approach to enable them to utilise this theory when planning activities for young people.
- ✦ It is useful to have a record of which agency referred the young person to the YIP as this could lead to increased inter-agency working.
- ✦ More effort could be made to ensure that basic monitoring information is consistently obtained and accurately recorded by both the YIP and UMIS.

5 PARTICIPANT LEVEL INFORMATION: THE EXPERIENCE & PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE USERS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the views and experiences of young people as told to researchers. Interviews were conducted with nine young people, all of whom were males between the ages of 14 – 16.

FIGURE 5.1 GO-KARTING RACE WINNERS



5.2 Engagement

Eight of the nine young people interviewed stated that they attended the YIP quite regularly. Below is a chart which reflects the number of days per week that the young people believed they attended the YIP. Cross reference with data from UMIS generally supports this. Further, most of the young people stated that each time they attend the YIP, they usually stay for the duration of the session, which generally averages four hours.

TABLE 5.1 LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Attendance: number of days per week	Number of young people ³⁰
2 - 3 days	2
3 - 4 days	1
4 -5 days	2
6 days	2

5.3 Impact & Change

When asked if the YIP has changed him in anyway, one young person said yes and went on to explain:

“Cause I’m not on the streets a lot – cause in my area if we’re hanging out people call the police, so we come here and nothing happens, and when we finish here, we don’t hang out on the streets anymore, we go home or our friends house.”

- age 15

Another young person said,

“...something to do rather than go out on the streets and cause trouble. I used to have a temper but don’t really have one anymore.”

- age 14

Interestingly, a young male aged 15, identified changes not in himself but in another young person, which in his opinion was due to the YIP. He was asked if he thought the YIP had changed him in anyway and he responded:

“...not me really because I’m not really a bad person. That boy inside (name withheld) has REALLY (said with emphasis) changed. When he first started coming here, he was really bad, but now he’s changed since coming here.”

One young male, who is currently attending College, described change in his life since coming to the YIP when he said,

“I’ve learned to become more reliable...because when they [the staff] tell me to do something or to take responsibility for something then I do it...I achieve what they set for me.”

³⁰ One young person did not answer this question and the remaining young person stated he only comes when the YIP is going on trips.

When asked why he thought the YIP has made him more reliable he said,

"Because of the staff's personality, because they respect us, they give it to us all the time so we give it back."

This young person went on to describe how the staff made him feel like they were being given respect:

"Its not like how some people act to people, it's the way they talk to us and treat us, so I know they respect us."

This young person told researchers that by coming to the YIP and doing the activities and going on trips they have learned to be responsible, 'to look after yourself' and 'to stand up and be a man'.

The majority of young people interviewed (66%) believed that attending the YIP has helped them to make positive changes, it should however be noted that 33% of the young people were currently attending other youth projects and 22% of the young people previously attended other projects. This attendance at other interventions (in addition to the different lives of the young people outside the projects) may have also contributed to this change.

5.4 Relationship with Staff

It appears that the good relationship that young people had with staff was consistently cited as one of the main reasons for attendance at the project. This is consistent with other research.³¹ The personalities of the staff were important to the young people. Most agreed that the staff were funny and nice. A number of them commented that if the staff were annoying or weren't funny they would not come to the project. The young people also said that they listen to the staff because *"they're like normal friends, they're different (from teachers) because they understand how teenagers are ain't it"*.

*"They're cool...they have a youthful mind and think like kids sometimes."
- age 16*

When asked how important is their relationship with staff, one young person said,

"It's very important I reckon, basically, if they weren't funny and they were all stuck up bastards, it wouldn't be that much fun coming here would it?"

³¹ The Youth Justice Board. *Persistent Young Offenders*, 2005.

5.5 Room for Improvement

Some of the young people were asked if the YIP could be improved. One young person thought it could be made bigger and another thought that the project should run on the weekend³². The young person who thought it should run 7 days a week went on to explain why:

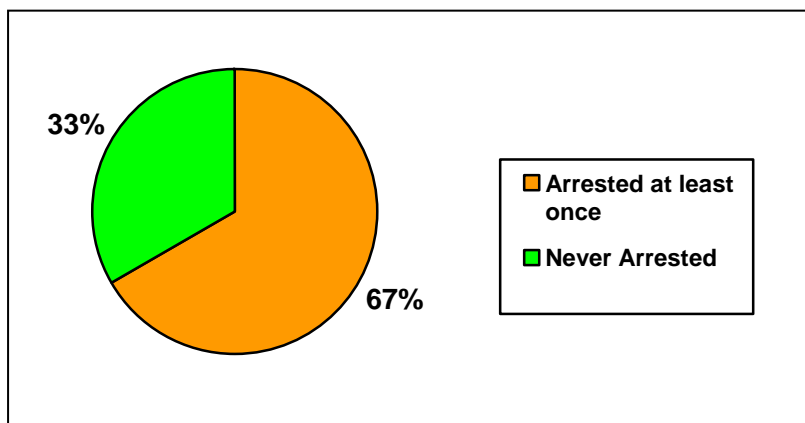
“...because on the weekends we’re bored as well. It should be open on the weekends, even if only for 3 hours on Saturday and Sunday. There are only 4 of us in my age group that we hang around. But on the weekend we hang around older people and sometimes we get in trouble...but we don’t see the older guys during the week because we’re here.”

In this case the young person has identified situations in which he finds himself in trouble and has also recognised the YIP as a possible solution to his problem of getting in trouble at weekends.

5.6 Participation in Anti-Social Behaviour & Crime

As one of the aims of the YIP is to reduce arrest rates in the top 40, the young people interviewed were asked if they have ever been arrested. The answers are represented in the graph below. We intended to compare this information with that held in their offending history files held on YOIS. Unfortunately, researchers were not provided with this information.

FIGURE 5.2 ARREST DATA FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWED



Six of the young people had been arrested at least once. These young people were asked if their offending behaviour has changed since joining the YIP. Table 5.2 reflects the diversity of their answers.

³² Since the interview with this particular young person, staff have consulted with the young people and the YIP is now running 7 days a week.

TABLE 5.2 OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Response	Number of responses ³³
Stopped committing crimes	2
Committed the same amount of crime	----
Committed less crime	2
Committed more crimes	----
Don't know	1

Both young people who said that they have committed less crime since joining believed the reason for this was,

“Because there is something else to do...rather than acting silly in the streets you can just come here and have a good time.”

- age 14

“Because not on the street all the time.”

- age 14

The one young person who stated that they have stopped committing crimes said,

“Because we're not on the streets walking up and down...because you can get in the wrong place...we could be playing, like throwing stuff, people think we're fighting and they call the police and question us.”

In contrast, a different young person commented that,

“...its not like it helped me. Coming here didn't calm my behaviour, [I] come here to keep me off the streets and not to do stupid things...”

When one young person was asked how many times they were arrested since joining the YIP he replied,

“6 or 7 in total...this (the YIP) don't change you getting arrested...coming here don't change that...”

Unfortunately, this young person did not give the reasons why he thought coming to the YIP would not stop him from getting arrested or engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. Additionally, a few of the other young people interviewed felt that the YIP did not change much in their lives.

Given the short-term duration of the research, it was not ascertainable from the interviews why these particular young people felt that attending the YIP did not have a positive impact on their offending behaviour. It would be very useful to conduct

³³ One young person did not wish to respond to the question.

more in-depth research into this issue as the findings would enable the YIP to take steps to counteract the reasons for this situation.

5.7 The System

One young person said,

“...I don’t mean to commit crime...don’t mean to get arrested...anyone can get arrested these days...even working people...the police are corrupted in this area...”

With an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour Dispersal orders in the NDC YIP’s surrounding area, it would be useful to conduct research to determine how much of the increase – if there is an increase – in young people’s ‘offending behaviour’ is a result of these new crime policies.

5.8 Subjective Definition of Criminal Conduct

Often, young people did not consider some of their acts as crimes. For example, one young person stated that he had been arrested 1 – 2 times since joining the YIP.³⁴ However, when he was asked whether he has been involved in criminal behaviour, he said, *“Never...I’ve never committed a crime, I’ve only stolen cars...”* If a young person does not recognise that they are engaging in criminal behaviour then it is unlikely that the project is going to have an impact on their offending behaviour.

Good Practice

- ☑ The activities that are planned for the young people, for example, quad biking, paint-balling and go-karting, are great incentives to the young people to attend.
- ☑ A few of the young people in mainstream education mentioned that staff sometimes help them with their homework. The results of this effort by staff have been identified and appreciated by the young people.
- ☑ Most of the young people held the project in high regard. Young people commented that the staff were fun to be around and were nice. Many were thankful for the project, stating that it helps keep them off the street and out of trouble.

³⁴ Obviously, being arrested does not necessarily mean a crime has been committed.

Recommendation

- ✦ It would be very useful to conduct more in-depth research with the young people who did not think that the YIP has helped them to make positive changes in their lives. It would also be beneficial to identify barriers, through information gained from the experiences of young people, which undermine the YIP's ability to effect change.
- ✦ The YIP would do well to reinforce that the YIP is a crime reduction initiative and to clarify with some of the young people that some activities that they are involved in constituted offences.

6. IMPACT OF THE YIP

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter quantitative data is used to assess the extent to which the NDC YIP is achieving its aims. Quantitative data is an indicator of impact but does not explain how and why change has occurred.

6.2 *AIM – TO REDUCE ARREST RATES IN THE TOP 40 MOST AT-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE BY 70% COMPARED WITH THE 12 MONTHS PREVIOUS*

Research has shown that young offenders often have a number of social issues affecting their lives. These sometimes include attempted suicide, bullying and drug use.³⁵ The NDC YIP has done well in incorporating activities, such as inviting guest speakers, which address some of these issues.

The first aim of the NDC YIP is to reduce the arrest rates in the target group by 70% compared with the 12 months prior. The research intended to assess whether or not this aim had been met. In order to do this, we required the offending histories of the young people on the top 40. Unfortunately, at the time of printing, essential data relating to the offending histories was still outstanding.

We had intended to analyse the rate and pattern of youth crime in the NDC YIP's area over the last three years. Unfortunately, statistics requested from the Metropolitan police had not arrived in time for this report. In any case, at this stage it would be fallacious to attribute any changes – positive or negative - in the local crime rate to the establishment and operation of the NDC West Ham & Plaistow YIP alone. Three reasons for this are:

- (1) the YIP, at its current premises, has only been in operation for less than two years,
- (2) the evaluation was undertaken over a relatively short period of time, thus the results are meant to reflect only a snapshot of time in the life of the project

and

- (3) there are a few other initiatives in the area and as said above, at this stage it is almost impossible to separate the impacts of one initiative from another.

6.3 *AIM – TO ENSURE THAT 75% OF THE CORE GROUP ARE ENGAGED WITH THE YIP PROJECT AND ARE PARTICIPATING IN AT LEAST 5 HOURS OF APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS EACH WEEK*

The YIP has not adequately engaged all of the top 40 young people. In the 10 months between Oct 2004 to Aug 2005 there were 22 young people with whom the YIP had only engaged with in three out of the 10 months. According to data from

³⁵ Farrington, D. P., 'Predictors, Causes, and Correlates of Male Youth Violence' in R. Loeber and D. P. Farrington (eds.), *Serious & violent juvenile offenders: risk factors and successful interventions*. Pg. 421 - 475. California: Sage, 1998.

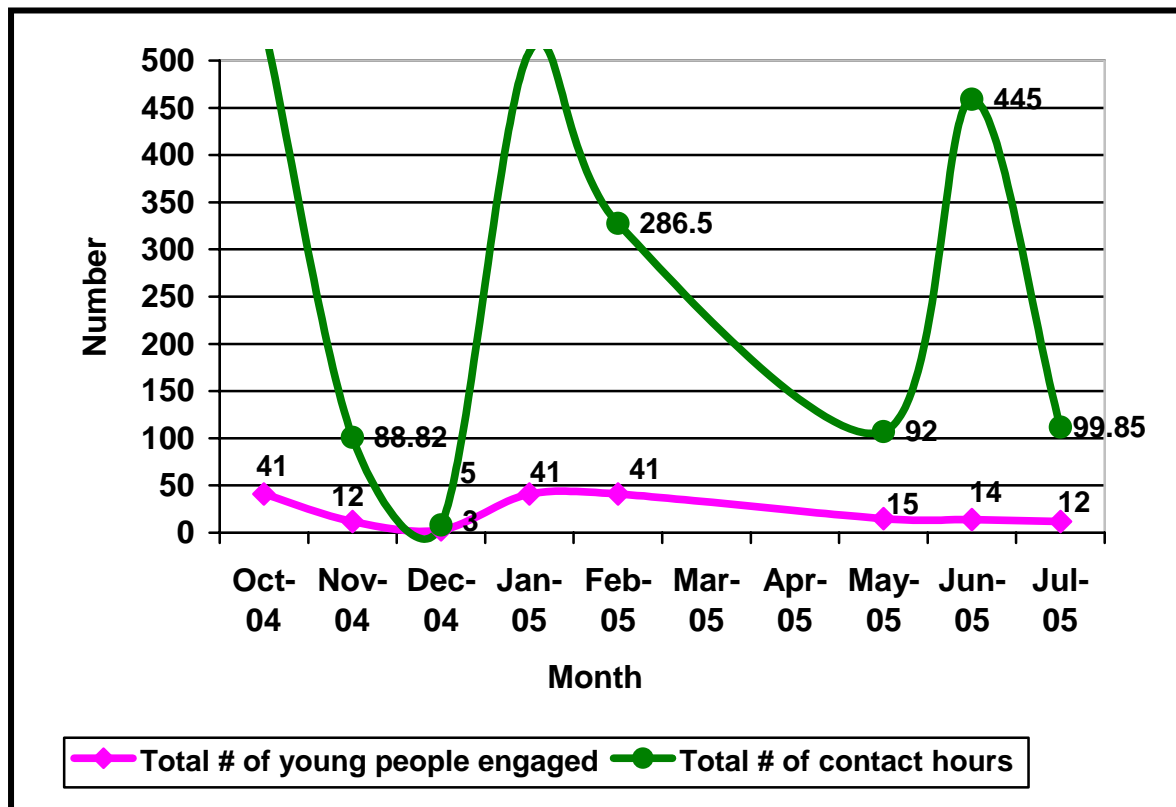
UMIS, 22 young people have not attended the project since February 2005. Furthermore, there are only four young people who have engaged with the YIP each month between May and August 2005. From the monitoring data, it appears that the YIP have had very little contact with many of young people on the top 40, as the graphs below illustrate.

The YIP is also underachieving with respect to ensuring that 75% of the core group are engaged and participating in at least 5 hours of appropriate interventions each week. If the NDC West Ham and Plaistow YIP were achieving this target then 32 young people should be attending the YIP weekly for at least 5 hours. This target is not being met. Only twice did the YIP achieve their aim of engaging 75 per cent (32 young people) for at least 5 hours per week – in the last week of October 2004 and the third week of Jan 2005. There were no special activities at this time. There have been a few other occasions where the young people have been engaged for more than 5 hours per week, but the number of young people doing so was far below the target 75 per cent.

There were some weeks where, according to data held on UMIS, no young people were engaged with the project. Additionally, in the months of March and April there were also no contact hours between the YIP and young people. Some staff believed one reason for this non-attendance was that the weather had got warmer and it was lighter outside for longer, so the young people preferred to be out on the street.

If the YIP was achieving its target it should have a minimum of 640 contact hours each month. Figure 6.1 shows that the highest number of contact hours the YIP has achieved was 497.5 in the month that the project started, followed by 468 hours in January 2005 and 445 in June 2005.

FIGURE 6.1 TOTAL CONTACT HOURS AND TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED BY MONTH



The data contained in the above chart was obtained from UMIS. The month of December had a very low number of contact hours as well as a low number of young people engaged. This may be due to the fact that most young people would have been on Christmas holidays. Interestingly, October – the month the project started – January and February to some extent had both a high number of young people engaged and contact hours. Again, there were no special outings or activities at this time.

There is not any systematic one-to-one work done at the project³⁶ and according to data held on UMIS, only 11 young people have attended the group activities on a consistent (more than 4 hours a month) basis in the last 4 months. This lack of attendance has been attributed by staff to a number of factors, including; the relatively small size of the premises and the non-central location.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 provide a breakdown of the average number of hours per week spent engaged in interventions per young person in attendance.

³⁶ Staff will however engage in one-to-one work if it is initiated by the young person.

FIGURE 6.2

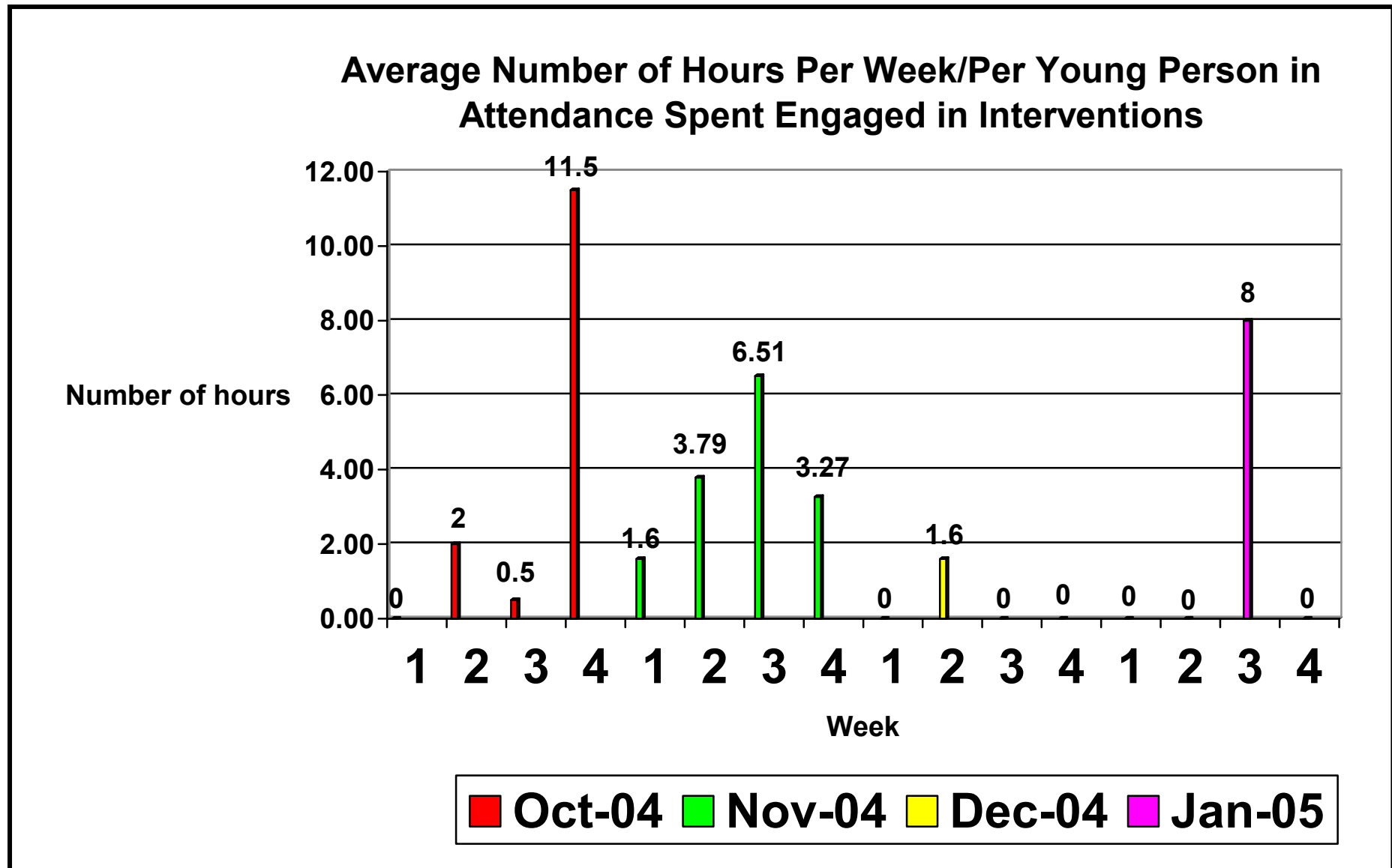
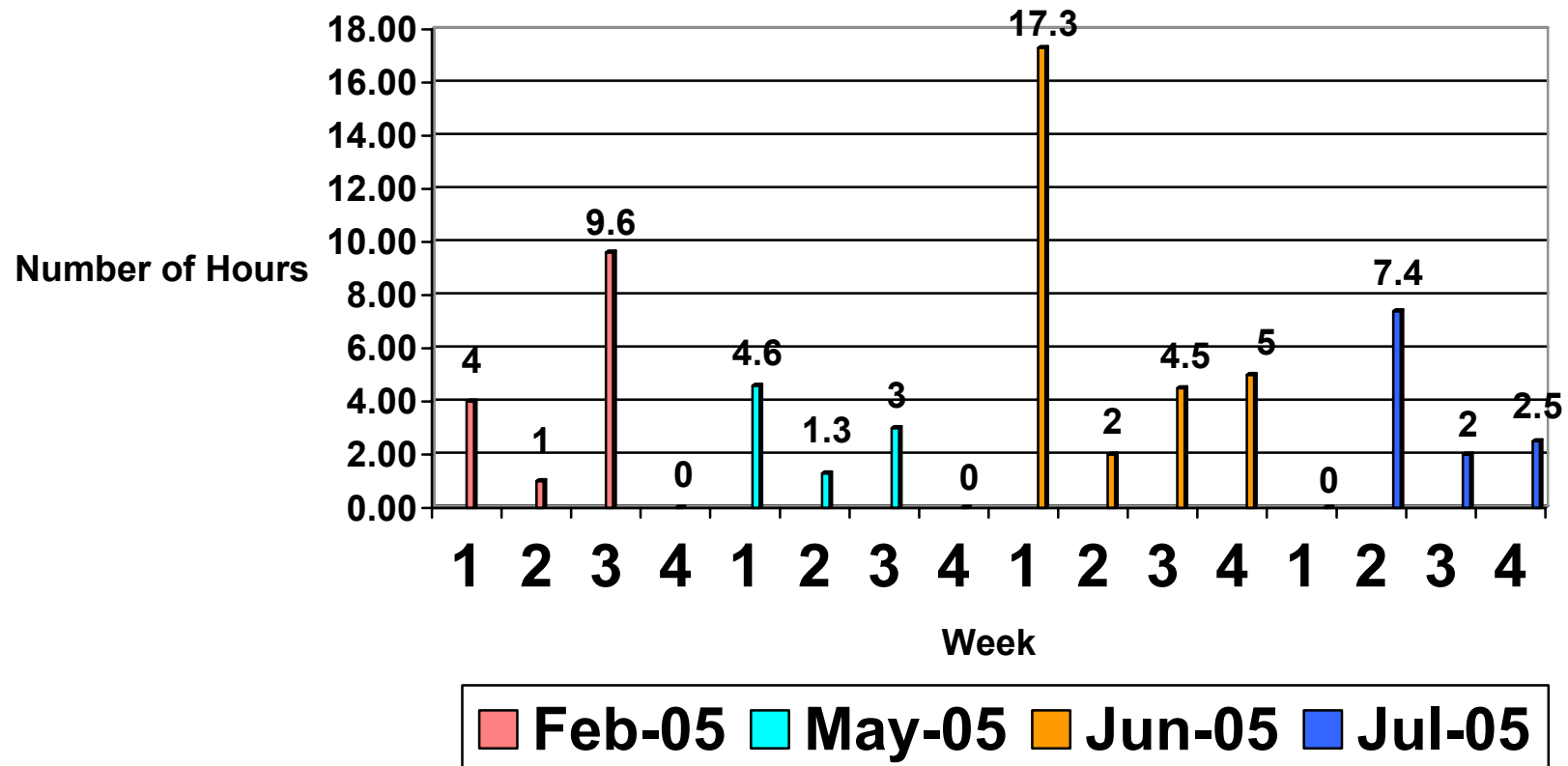


FIGURE 6.3

Average Number of Hours Per Week/Per Young Person in Attendance Spent Engaged in Interventions

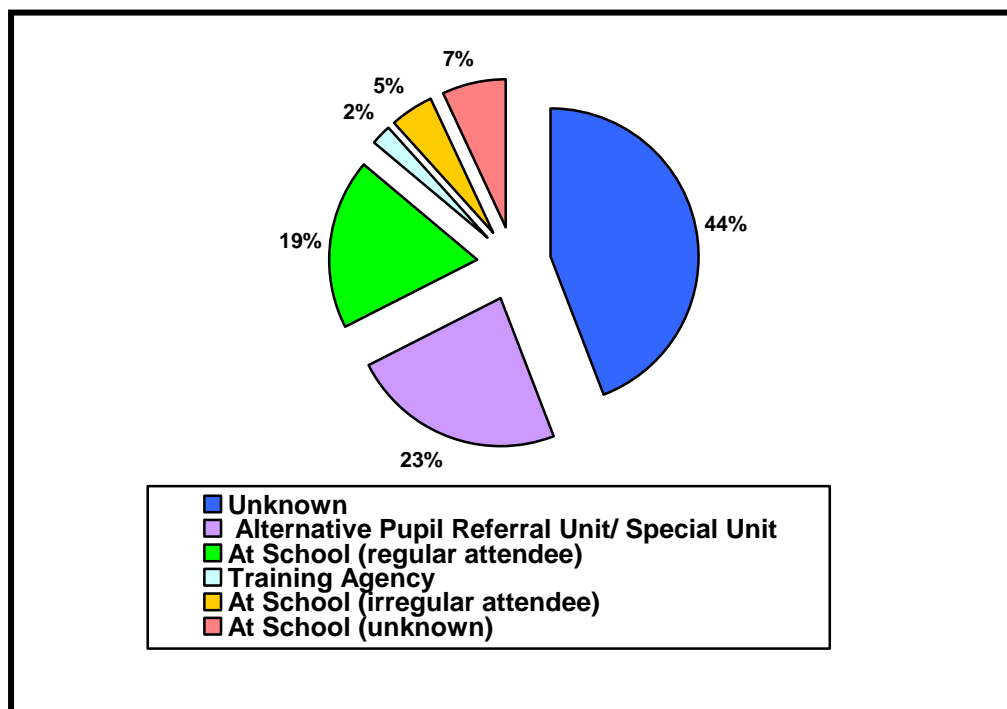


6.4 AIM – TO ENSURE THAT 90% OF THE TOP 40 ARE ENGAGED IN SUITABLE EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT

Most of the education data necessary to conduct an educated analysis, including information on school exclusions and truancy was unavailable, as the project did not have complete information on which schools all of the top 40 were attending. Thus, at this stage, we are unable to comment on the impact of the NDC West Ham & Plaistow YIP with respect to truancy and school exclusions as it would have been costly and required more time than was contracted to find out which schools the top 40 attended as well as their attendance and school exclusion records.

Data was obtained from UMIS on the education, training or employment (ETE) status of the top 40 young people (see figure 6.4). Again, record keeping practices have limited the scope of analysis. According to UMIS, the ‘ETE’ status of 44 per cent of the top 40 is unknown.

FIGURE 6.4 ETE STATUS OF THE TOP 40



At the time of the research, of the nine young people interviewed, five were attending school, three were attending the YIP's education programme and one young person was not in any educational alternative.

ISSUES

- × Attendance levels were not satisfactory. Although, attendance at the project is entirely voluntary except for those young people who have the NDC YIP as part of their court order, more could be done to raise the awareness of the YIP and engage more young people.

RECOMMENDATION

- ✦ In addition to increasing efforts to boost and maintain levels of general attendance, more could be done to contact and engage young women on a regular basis.
- ✦ Efforts should be made increase the consistency of attendance. One idea might be to provide incentives to encourage those already attending the YIP to attend more frequently. This could increase the impact of the project.
- ✦ The YIP and those who work with UMIS could work more closely together to ensure that both agencies hold the same monitoring data. This can be achieved by ensuring that data held by the project is given to UMIS and that information received by UMIS from the project or other agencies is uploaded onto the database.
- ✦ As can be expected, some aspects of the project were more successful than others. It would be advantageous to discuss the good practices that have been identified in order to maintain them as well as to discuss challenging aspects of the project so that they may be improved.

7. CONCLUSION

The research has indicated that the NDC YIP is having a positive impact on some aspects of the lives of the children and young people attending the core project.

Almost all of the young people interviewed enjoyed attending the NDC YIP and some were able to state how it has made their lives better. Further, project managers and workers have identified some positive changes in the behaviour and attitude of many of the young people since they began attending the YIP.

A number of areas have been identified where the NDC YIP is having a positive immediate impact or engaging in good practice. Some of these areas include;

- ✓ Good relationships between staff and young people
- ✓ Providing new opportunities and different ways of learning for young people
- ✓ Increased confidence in young people
- ✓ Reduction of anti-social attitudes in some of the young people
- ✓ Reduction in time spent with anti-social peers

It should be noted however, that these positive outcomes are only benefiting those young people that have been regularly accessing the NDC YIP and not those who have briefly attended but dropped out or those who have never attended. Additionally, there are a few other projects in the local area which are also targeting children 'at risk' which some of the young people at the NDC YIP also attend. It is likely that these have also made a positive contribution to the lives of the young people.

Recommendations have been stated throughout the report, however it is important to reiterate some of the most pressing issues:

- ✘ Increasing efforts to boost and maintain levels of attendance, particularly by those on the top 40 list.
- ✘ More effort could be made to ensure that basic monitoring information is consistently obtained and accurately recorded. This could be achieved if a database was created containing a list of basic demographic information on the children and young people attending project. This would greatly increase the accuracy of monitoring information, thereby increasing the value of future evaluations.
- ✘ Collect, collate and analyse relevant information to measure performance.

The findings have only identified short-term changes in attitudes and behaviour. It would be advantageous to conduct research into mid and long-term impact on young people who have attended the project for a year or more. Provided the good practice is maintained and recommendations are implemented, the NDC YIP has a real prospect of not only achieving its objectives but also having a wide-range of other positive outcomes.

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