

**A Protocol Between
Southwark Children's Social Care Services
and
Southwark Youth Offending Team**

1. Introduction

The following protocol clarifies roles and responsibilities where the activities of Children's Social care and the Youth Offending Team interface. It covers:

- ◆ Early intervention to prevent offending behaviour, and services to children in need.
- ◆ Children looked after and those young people involved in the Criminal Justice System who are eligible or relevant with respect to 16+ service provision pursuant to the Leaving Care Services Act.
- ◆ The provision of services to children under 10 years of age with respect to Child Safety orders.
- ◆ The provision of services to young offenders sentenced to custody.

These activities relate, in broad scope, to the Crime and Disorder Act strategy priorities S06 and S07.

This protocol will not specifically address issues concerning information exchange, which is subsumed under a wider protocol between the local authority and its partners. The respective duties and responsibilities of the YOT and Children's Social care concerning local Child Curfews, and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are dealt with elsewhere and will not be specifically addressed in this document.

2. Youth crime prevention

2.1 Traditionally, Youth Justice services have been delivered to young offenders being prosecuted at court. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA), however, clarifies the aim of the Youth Justice Service as being to prevent offending behaviour. This entails:

- ◆ Targeted intervention for young people at risk of involvement in criminal or anti-social behaviour, preferably at the pre-offending stage
- ◆ Early intervention before patterns of offending behaviour have become firmly established, i.e. schemes of diversion for young people receiving Reprimands/Final Warnings and, as of 2002, Referral order programme for young offenders pleading guilty at their first appearance in the Youth Court for offences not warranting custody

- ◆ Evidence-based interventions aimed at reducing the risk of re-offending for young people receiving Reparation orders, Community Penalties and custodial sentences.

2.2 The range of services provided or co-ordinated by the YOT with respect to Pre-offending intervention, Early intervention, and Confronting offending behaviour are outlined in the local annual Youth Justice Plan.

2.3 This protocol seeks to improve key areas:

- ◆ Broaden the definition of agency roles and responsibilities with respect to young offenders and their families.
- ◆ Increase clarity as to the role and function of partner agencies in the youth justice arena, and improve the shared understanding of the requirements of S17 1998 CDA.

2.4 The involvement of one agency in a case does not preclude the involvement of another. The emphasis should be placed upon delivering a 'joined-up' service, rather than segmented interventions. This process will require clear Case Management, and the active involvement of operational and service managers to prevent young people being left unsupported, inter-agency conflict or, alternatively, wasteful duplication of efforts.

This protocol provides a framework for working effectively in partnership to prevent offending, reduce re-offending and to address significant risk factors associated with involvement in crime and other aspects of social exclusion.

3. Work with children 8 – 13 years

3.1 The age for criminal responsibility is 10 years and, therefore, younger children cannot commit offences. However, many children misbehave in ways that would constitute an offence if they were aged 10 years or over. Research indicates that the early onset of such behaviour is associated with future persistent and/or serious offending.

3.2 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the Child Safety order to provide local authorities with the means to address effectively concerns relating to this age group.

3.2.1 A Child Safety order is available in the Family Proceedings Court upon application by the local authority, and the order is a Family Proceedings as defined by the 1989 Children Act.

3.2.2 The criteria for application are:

- i) Behaviour which would constitute an offence if aged 10 years or more
- ii) Evidence of being at risk of behaving in a way that would constitute an offence if aged 10 years or more.
- iii) Breach of a Local Child Curfew order.
- iv) Behaviour likely to cause alarm or distress to persons not living in the same household.

3.3 The order is of 12 weeks duration and may be accompanied by a Parenting order. A Parenting order requires the parent(s) to attend counselling/guidance sessions once per week for a maximum of 12 weeks. Additional requirements, such as ensuring their child attends school regularly may be imposed for up to a year.

3.3.1 The YOT provides a range of services for parents that may be appropriate under these circumstances, and is experienced in the process of assessing the suitability of a Parenting order, which may include intensive support to the whole family provided by the Family Intervention Project.

- 3.4 If breach proceedings are necessitated by the child's failure to comply with requirements without reasonable cause the court may consider Family Proceedings pursuant to S31 1989 Children Act. (The grounds for breach proceedings are set out in Section 7.4.3 of the National Standards for Youth Justice, with which all Responsible Officers must be familiar).
- 3.5 The process for identifying children at risk, determining the need for intervention and whether this can be delivered on a voluntary basis or requires the imposition of an order is set out below.
- 3.5.1 Concerns about children's behaviour in relation to the criteria outlined in 3.2.2 will enter the system by differing routes. Concerns relating to criteria *iv* may be conveyed to Children's Social Care and the YOT by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, who will have been alerted by Housing Management Services or the police. Breaches of Local Child Curfews, where applicable, will be notified to Social Care by the police. These two areas are addressed in specific protocols elsewhere. In most cases the YOT and Children's Social care will be notified via the police Merlin reports via the Public Protection desk, although the process needs to be sufficiently flexible to respond to concerns raised by schools, and parents themselves, and these may be routed through the Assessment Safeguarding and Family Support Services (ASAFs) or the YOT.
- 3.5.2 Merlin reports are sent to Children's Social Care and the YOT, where they are reviewed by the seconded police sergeant for concerns in relation to criteria *i* and *iv*, concerns relating to *ii* and *iii* are most likely to be identified by Children's Social care, and shall be conveyed to the operational manager (YOT) for Early Intervention Services. It is expected that a Child in Need Assessment will have been undertaken prior to notification so that concerns and possible interventions can be specified.
- 3.5.3 All Merlin notifications are entered on the YOT's database for reference. In the event of behaviour likely to result in prosecution, rather than Reprimand, if the child were aged 10 years or over, or a repetition of less serious behaviour, an assessment for intervention is indicated. An officer designated under the joint information sharing protocol will check whether the child is currently allocated to Children's Social care and, also, confirm the child's status with the education services.
- 3.5.4 All cases of concern, whether identified by the YOT or a partner agency with respect to children aged 8 – 13 years, will be discussed at a monthly multi-agency Youth Inclusion and Support Panel meeting. There are two Panels in the borough (North and South) with senior representatives in attendance from the YOT Early Intervention Team, Education, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. The Panels are currently chaired by senior managers from Children's Social Care.
- 3.5.4.1 The YISP will determine whether the threshold for an intervention has been met based on an assessment of the risk factors associated with future involvement in offending or anti-social behaviour (see separate YISP proposals document). If the thresholds are met, the YISP will identify a lead agency:
- Children's Social Care if a Child in Need, or where there are Safeguarding concerns.
 - YOT where risk of offending or anti-social behaviour is indicated.
 - On occasion other agencies can take on the lead role.
- The lead agency is responsible for agreeing an Individual Support Plan with the child, family and partner agencies, and the allocated worker will be responsible for co-ordinating and case managing the various agency responses, and reporting back to the YISP as indicated by the chair.
- 3.5.4.2 It is imperative that the plan is supported by rigorous assessment and it is expected that the YISP-specific Onset assessment tool will be used. This tool will always be used even

when Children's Social Care have already completed a core assessment as the Onset identifies the criminogenic risk factors to be addressed in an intervention.

- 3.5.4.3 It is a general requirement that children who are referred to the YISP should not be discussed unless there is parental consent. In certain circumstances where consent has not been given but the chair of the YISP takes the view that the concerns about a child or young person outweighs this the YISP will review the young person.
- 3.5.4.4 In some cases children and families may not engage voluntarily. The Panel must then consider the grounds for a statutory intervention with respect to the powers and duties of a local authority pursuant to the Children Act 1989 a Child Safety Order (see above) if the child is aged under 10 years, or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order if 10 years or above. If the grounds for an ASBO application are met, the YISP can fulfil the functions of a properly constituted ASBO conference without recourse to a further conference. All other powers available under the Children Act should also be considered.

4. Young people aged 10 – 17 years at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour

- 4.1 Joint working between the YOT and Children's Social Care depends upon a reciprocal flow of information, and the provision of appropriate support.
- 4.2 Children's Social Care will have numbers of young people in need, or looked after who may be involved, or at risk of involvement in crime. The YOT has a duty to prevent offending by young people and will offer an assessment and, where appropriate, an intervention to address evident criminogenic factors.
- 4.2.1 Children Looked After in other situations, or requiring individual work, and children deemed at risk of involvement in crime should be referred by the ASAFs or CLA Services (Team Manager) to the YOT for the attention of the operational manager (Prevention). The post holder will decide:
- a. Whether a YOT assessment (using Onset) is appropriate, and
 - b. On the basis of any assessment whether an intervention should be offered

These decisions will be taken in consultation with the referee, but will be based on the evidence of criminogenic risk factors.

The involvement of the YOT is predicated on the assumption of working in partnership and is not an alternative to continued Children's Social Care involvement (ASAFs.).

- 4.3 Notification of youths at risk will, ordinarily, be made by police, or the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The latter is dealt with in a separate multi-agency protocol.
- 4.3.1 As noted above, Merlin reports are analysed by the police sergeant seconded to the YOT. Youths identified as coming to police notice for criminal behaviour, but not Reprimanded, Warned, or Charged, or anti-social behaviour without reference to SASBU will be offered a YOT assessment after consultation with Children's Social Care and the LEA. Where the young person is currently allocated to Social Care joint working will be offered. If the young person is not allocated, the YOT will offer a service separately after due consultation. A young persons status in relation to ASAF or CLA services can be checked by YOT through access to the Care First database.
- 4.3.2 Where concerns arise, during an assessment or intervention process, relating to broader issues of welfare or child protection, the operational manager (Prevention) will make a referral to the Referral and Assessment Duty Service. It is imperative that action is not delayed through repetitive assessments of children and their families. It is, therefore,

required that the agency receiving the referral, responds within 1 working day of receipt of the referral. These requirements will apply also where young people are receiving a statutory service from the YOS and referrals will be made via the appropriate Operations Manager.

4.3.3 Procedures with respect to child protection concerns are detailed elsewhere. However, in the event of children and young people assessed by the YOT as appearing to need accommodation services pursuant to S20 1989 Children Act. R&A or the allocated team should accept the YOT assessment of need until the first review. The case manager should refer to the weekly YOS/ASAF liaison meetings to discuss whether an inter-agency referral is appropriate, and/or which services can be provided to mitigate the concerns (see 5.4.1). If the YOS case manager in consultation with their line manager considers that more immediate action is required, the line manager should consult with their counterpart in R & A. The necessity for prompt inter-agency action may arise in the following circumstances:

- Where the Court grants bail with a condition to reside as directed by Children's Services because parents/carers have refused to accept care responsibilities for the young offender, have not attended court and cannot be contacted, or the Court has imposed a negative requirement prohibiting a return home. Where subsequently, the parent or carer is contacted, every effort should be made to support a return home for the young person provided it is in his / her best interests, and bail conditions imposed by the court permit.
- In such cases, the Operations Manager (Court Services) will refer the case to the Referral & Assessment Service or the allocated team for appropriate assessment and intervention in partnership with the YOT supervising officer. The agreement to accommodate under Section 20 1989 Children Act must be made at the level of service manager within the ASAF.
- A young offender under the age of 16 years subject to supervision in the community by the YOT becomes estranged from their family. Estrangement from family at age 16 or 17 should be discussed with ASAF as they may be entitled to continuing support from Children's Social Care with respect to their vulnerability.
- In such cases, the case manager (Court Services) will refer to the YOS/ASAF weekly liaison meetings to enable the YOT and Social Services to joint plan an assessment and intervention. In the event that the situation has broken down without advance warning, the YOT and Referral & Assessment Service will co-ordinate an emergency response which will mobilise available resources to enable the young person to remain at home. Where this work proves unsuccessful, the Referral and Assessment Service will arrange for accommodation to be provided on the day of referral in consultation with the YOT as to the needs and supervision requirements of the young person. In this event, an inter-agency planning meeting will be convened within 2 working days to determine an agreed course of action.
- Young offenders under the age of 16 years who are estranged from their families at the point of release from custody (see below).

5. Pre-court services to young offenders aged 10 to 17 years

- 5.1 Young offenders in receipt of a Police Reprimand or Final Warning are immediately notified to the YOT. A Final Warning necessitates a YOT assessment and, in most cases, the offer of a 12-week intervention programme. Reprimands who are CLA/CiN, excluded from school, or have siblings who are offenders will also be offered an assessment and intervention.
- 5.2 The Operations Manager (Pre-Court and Prevention) will ensure that with respect to CLA/CiN details of offences and programmes offered will be entered onto the Care First

database within 2 working days of the bail-back meeting. The allocated social worker will be contacted by the YOT officer, and notified of outcomes and plans within 1 working day. Where cases are already open to Social Care the allocated social worker will be consulted in relation to assessment and planning, and will be regularly updated on progress by the YOS Triage worker.

- 5.3 The issues outlined in 4.3.2 will be managed as described in that note.
- 5.4 In order to reduce the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system the YOS in partnership with the police operate a Triage service. Based on an initial assessment and in consultation with the police young people committing low level offences and with no previous offending history may be diverted from caution or prosecution. This has impacted most significantly on the number of Reprimands and Final Warnings issued to young people. The diversionary programme involves 6 sessions covering issues consistent with the needs and/or risk of offending identified by the assessments.
 - 5.4.1 In some cases the assessment will identify issues relevant to need or safeguarding indicating a consultation and possible referral to ASAF as per 4.3.2 and 8.5. In the event of significant risk of concern or safeguarding concerns being identified, the worker should contact the Referral and Assessment Service without delay, to consider whether an immediate referral is necessary.
 - 5.4.2 However, in all non-emergency cases the concerns should be raised at the weekly YOS/ASAF liaison meetings to consider whether a referral to R&A is appropriate, what range of services may be appropriate and how they may be provided. If the decision of the meeting is that R&A involvement is necessary the inter-agency referral is to be considered as accepted from that point. In all other circumstances an inter-agency referral will be required, although this should always follow an inter-agency consultation at Practice Manager or Operations Manager/Team Manager level. The only exceptions to this are if a referral to R & A follows an instruction from the YISP or Risk Management Panel in which case R&A must automatically undertake an initial assessment.

The above principles apply to all young people supervised or supported by the YOT where Social Care involvement is indicated.

6. Young people appearing in court and young offenders made the subject of court-ordered interventions.

- 6.1 The YOT has responsibility for monitoring all young people appearing in court, recording outcomes, and advising the court of services available where appropriate. However, not all young people appearing in court require services provided directly or co-ordinated by the YOT, particularly where young people are remanded to appear on unconditional bail.
- 6.2 Where objections to bail are raised the YOT will provide an assessment, wherever possible on the day of the 1st hearing and, where practical, provide or co-ordinate a bail supervision programme. The bail assessment may give rise to concerns relating to the home circumstances that would warrant a discussion with R&A or the allocated team. This will be progressed via the YOT duty manager. In cases where Children's Social Care are already actively involved they are expected to retain their involvement, and the YOT caseworker will involve the Social Worker in the planning process, and vice versa. Clearly, open information exchange within the parameters of the information sharing protocol in line with S115 1998 CDA is required.
- 6.3 The court has the power to Remand into Local Authority Accommodation a young person under the age of 17 years appearing for an offence for which a custodial sentence would be available if they were an adult.

- 6.3.1 Young males aged 15 or 16 years will ordinarily be remanded into custody where bail has been refused. However, if assessed as vulnerable by the YOT officer in court, they will be remanded into local authority secure accommodation. Any young person aged between 12 and 14 years remanded for serious offences may be similarly remanded into secure accommodation. Young women may not be remanded into custody under the age of 17 years.
- 6.3.2 The YOT manages the Children's Social Care placement budget for remands and has responsibility for commissioning placements, either through Children's Services brokerage or, in the case of secure accommodation, through the Youth Justice Board.
- 6.3.3 Exceptionally, young people will be bailed with a condition to reside as directed by the YOT / Children's Services. This will occur where the offence does not warrant a remand into local authority accommodation or custody, but the young person cannot offer a safe address for the purposes of bail. In such cases the YOT will commission a placement where appropriate, but will automatically consult with R&A or allocated team, given the current estrangement from the primary carers. The case will transfer to the Children Looked After Service if the young person remains looked after at the time of the first review.
- 6.4 All young people RiC, RiLAA, or bailed with a condition to reside due to estrangement from primary carers will be allocated a YOT worker to manage the remand, and to liaise with Children's Specialist Services about the provision of services. However, all young people remanded into local authority accommodation will be notified to R&A by the YOT officer(s) in court at the point of the remand, and a social worker from R & A will be allocated within 2 working days. The social worker will be responsible for liaising with any accommodation provider in relation to a placement agreement in consultation with the allocated YOT officer, completing all Looked After Children documentation and ensuring compliance with timescales for statutory reviews in consultation with the Quality Assurance Unit. The R&A social worker will retain case responsibility until the first review at which point the case will be transferred to the CLA Service. The YOT and R&A worker will conduct a joint assessment prior to the first CLA review within 4 weeks, which the social worker will arrange in consultation with the Quality Assurance Unit. At first review a CLA social worker will be allocated for the duration of the looked after episode.
- 6.5 A critical function of the joint assessment, as well as identifying criminogenic factors, is to assess the possibility/desirability of a return home upon completion of the criminal proceedings. Where this is deemed unlikely or undesirable, the young person will be accommodated (S20 1989 C.A). If the young person can return home with support a joint referral will be made to ASAFs, Integrated Child Support Service, or Targetted Youth Support.
- 6.5.1 In cases where Children's Social Care are actively involved it is required that case involvement continue and be integral to the case planning and service delivery process.

N.B. *Where young people are already looked after, the allocated social worker is primarily responsible for ensuring the young person's attendance at court, and that the department is represented in proceedings.*

Where a pre-sentence report is required, this will be completed by the YOT, but details of the young persons Care Plan (or Pathway Plan) must be included.

- 6.6 Court-ordered interventions will be supervised by the YOT, in accordance with sentence requirements and National Standards for Youth Justice. This role does not preclude Children's Specialist Services remaining involved in a case, or becoming involved after an assessment of need prompted by a YOT referral. It would be appropriate for reviews of court-ordered interventions to be organized and chaired by a YOT manager, while

Child Care reviews are chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers. A single meeting can fulfil both functions if agreed by both services.

- 6.7 In the event of CLA/CiN being charged with an offence and prosecuted in court the following procedures will apply.
- The YOT will notify the allocated social worker within 1 working day of having received notification of the offence, court appearance, or PSR request. The YOT will continue to update the social worker. However, where the child is looked after, the functions of the YOT **do not** remove the imperative for the social worker to act in loco parentis as a responsible adult in the court proceedings.
 - In the case of Children Looked After, out-of-borough and committing offences, the social worker will notify the YOT of any proceedings within 1 working day of notification of charge, court appearance, or conviction to enable Southwark YOT to liaise with the home YOT as appropriate. In the final quarter of the financial year CLA services will provide the YOS Performance Manager with details of all CLA cautioned or convicted for offences whilst placed out of borough for the purposes of data verification.
- 6.8 If a child has been RiLAA until the first statutory looked-after review, arrangements must be made for the young person (CLA) to be transferred to the CLA Services. This must happen within five working days after the review (to be arranged by the allocated ASAFs social worker).
- 6.9 Assessment and intervention is a dynamic process and, on occasion, needs and/or safeguarding concerns will emerge post-sentencing while the young person is being supervised in the community. It is imperative that the case manager in consultation with their line manager/operations manager discuss the case with R&A, or if already known to Children's Social Care convey the information of concern to the allocated social worker both verbally and in writing. The level of concern will determine whether the case is discussed at the weekly joint meetings (see 8.5) or, if a case is open to ASAF/CLA, an arranged network meeting, or is escalated with a request for immediate action.

7. Joint procedures relating to young offenders sentenced to custody

- 7.1.2 The majority of custodial sentences for young people are Detention and Training Orders with a minimum sentence of 4 months and a maximum of 2 years. In general, half of the sentence is served in custody and the remainder served in the community under supervision of the YOT. Young people charged with an offence for which a longer sentence would be appropriate, are committed by the Youth Court to the Crown Court, where they can be sentenced to longer terms of imprisonment pursuant to S91 or 92 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. However, it is usually the case that the young person will be released into the community under the supervision of the YOT at the midway point of the sentence.
- 7.1.3 The facility exists for the Prison Governor, in both categories of sentence, to allow early release in response to good behaviour. The prison authority will inform the allocated YOT worker of the early release date and the mandatory release date in the early days of the sentence.
- 7.2.1 All young prisoners are the subject of a Training Plan agreed by the custodial establishment and the supervising YOT, which considers tackling offending behaviour, associated risk factors, education, well-being, and post-release arrangements and continuing supervision. The supervising YOT officer will invite an officer from the Quality Assurance Unit to the final Training Plan meeting held in custody with respect to any Child Looked After (S31 1989 C.A.), or who was looked after (S23 1998 C.D.A, or S20

1989 C.A.) immediately prior to sentencing and considered to require continuing support upon release from custody. **LOCAL AUTHORITY CIRCULAR LAC (2004)26**

In the case of Children Looked After whether pursuant to S31 or S20 1989 C.A, it is the Training Plan must be integrated with the local authority Care Plan. It is recognised that S20 1989 C.A status ceases upon sentencing to custody, but remains good practice for the former care authority to remain involved in the planning process. This may include plans to accommodate upon release, where the young person remains vulnerable.

Children Looked After allocated workers should maintain involvement unless and until a statutory review considers that planned objectives have been met, and that satisfactory arrangements consistent with the child's welfare and rehabilitation to the community are in place.

It is therefore expected that the CLA service will make arrangements for regular contact with any child who is looked after under a care order while they are in custody, whether by visiting themselves or by making arrangements with the local authority in whose area the YOI or STC is located. The responsible authority should arrange to maintain regular contact with the child and reviews of his care plan or pathway plan should continue. The responsible Team should also ensure that ongoing contact with siblings, where that is part of the care plan, is facilitated. When considering where the young person should live on release from custody, it will be necessary to make appropriate plans in advance of the end of the sentence. It will be important to assess the parental capacity to resume care of the young person or to plan for their move to a placement that is appropriate to meeting the needs identified in the care or pathway plan. Local Authority Circular LAC (2004) 6

7.3 In the event of a young prisoner being entitled to early release, the YOT is required to provide the Prison Governor with details of the intended address for the young person and its suitability for the installation of electronic monitoring. The Governor must receive this information 10 working days before the release date or early release may be denied. Children Looked After services will work with the YOT to enable the YOT to comply with these requirements by providing details of the post-release placement 20 working days prior to release to enable the premises to be assessed as suitable for the purposes of electronic monitoring.

7.4 Some complex cases may require a more flexible approach in relation to referral pathways:

- The domestic arrangements for young offenders supervised by the YOT in the community, whether as part of a custodial sentence post-release, or a community penalty either temporarily or permanently, and appropriate levels of support must be provided without the delay occasioned by repetitious assessment processes.

Therefore, in the case of:

- A young person aged 16 years or over eligible for a leaving care service (a period of Remand into Local Authority Accommodation is relevant to eligibility) the YOT must arrange a planning meeting with the CLA Adolescent and Aftercare service to consider what support can be provided to the young person. Continued service delivery will be monitored through the existing case review process. The YOT worker will invite the CLA Service to the pre-release Training Plan meeting to plan release arrangements, which may include the provision of accommodation under S20 1989 C.A depending upon the assessed vulnerability of the young person, although it is expected that plans will be well-advanced at the point of the pre-release meeting.
- A child under the age of 16 years may need to be accommodated by the Referral & Assessment Service or the allocated team pending joint assessment of need taking account of welfare factors and the risks of re-offending. Subsequent

assessment and review should be jointly conducted by R&A and the YOT. The YOS will refer to R&A at the point of sentencing to custody in the event that Social Care involvement with the family upon release, or estrangement from family requiring S20 accommodation, or immediate concerns are identified during the custodial part of sentence if not apparent prior to sentencing. The allocated social worker should attend Training Plan meetings in the YOI/STC with the YOT officer. If accommodation is to be provided by Social Care the YOT case manager must be notified of the details 20 working days prior to release to enable licence documentation to be completed and electronic monitoring, if appropriate, to be arranged.

8. Safeguarding concerns in relation to young people affected by gang activity

8.1 Safeguarding procedures can provide a key tool for all agencies working with young people in partnership to prevent their involvement with gangs either as members or victims of gang-involved offending.

8.2 The key principles build on those outlined in Working Together:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount
- Children who harm others are both perpetrators and victims of gang activity
- All decisions or plans for children should be based on good quality assessments (core assessments, Asset, Onset, etc), action taken must be proportionate and in the best interests of the child
- All agencies must work in partnership to safeguard young people

8.3 Young people engaged with the YOS who are gang involved as evidenced by a combination of Asset/Onset assessment tools, or intelligence (particularly from the police) will require the case manager to complete a Risk of Serious Harm assessment and, if of medium or higher risk, a Risk Management Plan to mitigate the risk of harm to others. In many cases the young person will also be vulnerable to harm due to the cyclical nature of the link between offender and victim, their own reckless behaviours including substance misuse, or sexual exploitation. In this event the YOS case manager must complete a vulnerability management plan.

8.5 As of May 2010 all cases of concern for the YOS will be reviewed at a weekly joint YOS/ASAF meeting led by the Service Manager for Court Services and their counterpart in Referral and Assessment to jointly determine the level of risk and/or vulnerability, the nature of safeguarding concerns and whether joint assessment and/or intervention is appropriate.

8.5.1 It will not be necessary to complete an inter-agency referral but the YOS should provide relevant assessment and case documentation 1 working day in advance of the meeting. ASAF will confirm whether the young person is known and, if so, provide any relevant information at the meeting. Concerns may not be restricted to young people directly involved with gangs as victims or perpetrators but may include siblings who may be drawn into the margins of gang-involved offending or may be the victims of reprisals.

8.5.2 The meeting should use the Risk Matrix outlined in Section IV of the Home Office Guidance for Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by gang activity, April 2010, as a reference tool for decision making.

8.6 The activity of the meetings will be reviewed in October 2010 following a thematic audit within the YOS of risk and safeguarding.

9. Further interface issues

9.1 This protocol does not include issues concerning:

- ◆ The interface between young sex offenders and the child protection process (procedures have been written under separate cover).
- ◆ Service obligations with respect to the investigation and intervention vis complaints of anti-social behaviour, and the application for orders in the Magistrates Court
- ◆ Applications for local child curfew schemes and the implementation of specified notices.

Such documentation will be appended to this protocol as is appropriate.

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICES

YOS is a multi-agency service, including Social Care, Connexions, Probation Service, CAMHS, Police and PCT, whose principal aim is to 'prevent young people from becoming involved in offending or anti-social behaviour'. This entails supervising young offenders subject to court orders and intervening to reduce the risk of re-offending, but also diverting young people at risk away from criminal behaviour and into positive activities.

The service is composed of a number of core elements:

COURT SERVICES

The YOT Court Services Team provides a duty service to the Youth Court. Providing staff on a rostered basis to undertake Appropriate Adult duties, supervise young people in the court environs and give oral evidence as appropriate to the circumstances. They are responsible for the preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports and the supervision of a range of Court-ordered interventions following a high quality assessment, in accordance with National Standards and the principles of Effective Practice to address offending behaviour, and the assessment and management of Risk of Harm to others, Safeguarding and the assessment and management of vulnerability.

Southwark is an inner-city borough with a number of high-risk young offenders and therefore we aim to provide high quality interventions and innovative solutions to the problems young people face.

[For further information contact Sharon Barton-Chambers or Jo Tattersfield]

GANG DISRUPTION PROJECT

The project aims to challenge young people's attitudes demystifying the appeal of gangs, and raising consciousness about the effects of negative behaviour.

Based within the Youth Offending Team, the Gang Project is working with individuals who are identified as either known gang members or those on the periphery of involvement, interventions are geared towards exploring the influences on young people, dissecting values and beliefs and assisting them to make more informed life choices.

We offer a 14 week programme that confronts young people on pertinent issues around violence, masculinity, identity, and peer pressure. Using a variety of mediums and sources from visual aids, video, photography, literature and interactive workshops, an emphasis is placed on empowerment and peer education. Where it is felt that individuals are unsuitable for group engagement, one to one work is employed to address issues relating to offending and re-integrating the young person back into society.

[For further information contact Maggie Gilbert or Sameera Khan]

EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

The Early Intervention Team (EIT) is part of the Youth Offending Team and is, along with a multi-agency network, responsible for delivering youth inclusion and support services. The team work with children and young people aged between 8 and 16 who have started to exhibit anti-social and disruptive behaviour and may be at significant risk of offending.

They provide support for parents/carers and young people through mediation and mentoring to help strengthen family relationships.

They support young people by providing group work programmes, one-to-one sessions and constructive leisure activities. They also give support to manage transition to secondary school and home-school liaison to enhance links between home and school. *[For further information contact Jenny Brennan or Vicky Agnew]*

YOUTH INCLUSION and SUPPORT PANEL (YISP)

Young people requiring support from more than one service to reduce criminogenic risk factors are referred to multi-agency Youth Inclusion and Support Panels who coordinate holistic intervention plans.

[For further information contact Vicky Agnew]

YOUTH INCLUSION PROJECTS (YIPs)

A YIP provides generic youth support for young people, including a range of magnet activities. Targeted support is provided for the 50 most at risk of involvement in crime in the targeted geographical area. This includes dedicated keyworker support.

There are 6 YIPs in the borough, 3 are provided by Kickstart (voluntary sector) and 3 by the YOT in partnership with Southwark Community Games.

[Now at Targeted Youth Support - For further info contact Hannah Edwards or Anna Lumley]

**A Protocol Between
Southwark Children's Services
Children's Specialist Services Division
And
Southwark Youth Offending Team**

ACCEPTANCE

I agree to the terms of the protocol as set out above

Signed *Date:*

Chris Domeney
Head of Youth Offending Service

Signed *Date:*

Rory Patterson
Asst. Director for Specialist Children's Services

Signed *Date:*

Romi Bowen
Director of Children's Services