



Improving outcomes for young offenders: an international perspective

Literature review

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Executive summary

This review of international approaches to education and interventions for young people in custody identifies differences between judicial systems, and in particular youth justice systems, across the world. It focuses on reoffending behaviour in these different systems and the methods these administrations employ to address the issue.

The review draws upon a series of case studies from a range of high-performing jurisdictions in order to exemplify institutions, interventions and programmes which have either been shown to have a positive impact on reoffending or indirectly contribute towards these acknowledged or proven high-performing systems.

Based upon these case studies, a number of key features of provision for young offenders in custody emerge which, within their own contexts, contribute to a successful approach. These include:

- Education is placed at the heart of an institution's focus.
- Interventions are personalised and targeted.
- Staff are given multidisciplinary training, often to graduate level, and custodial staff are also involved in the education of offenders.
- Institutions are relatively small, and are split into units which are even smaller.
- There are high ratios of staff to offenders.
- Offenders are assigned mentors who work with them up to 12 months after their release.
- Activities within the community are a key aspect of provision.
- Residential facilities are locally distributed, situated reasonably close to the homes of young offenders.

Building on this analysis, a number of recommendations are made in terms of the future of youth custody in England and Wales:

- **Education must be made central to all provision of custody for young offenders:** institutions should provide sufficient educational content for their residents; security staff should be at the very least multidisciplinary and at best a core part of the educational remit; and education should include social/life skills as well as academic learning (in particular numeracy/literacy).
- **Institutions must be sufficiently small in size to cater properly for their residents, with high levels of staff to residents:** they should be locally situated in order to maintain links between offenders and their families.
- **Reintegration into the community must be a focus from the outset of a custodial sentence:** staff and mentors should be linked to offenders both for their time in custody and for a significant period of time afterwards; and institutions should engage with their communities in order to secure education, training and/or employment for offenders upon their release.

Introduction

Around the world, there is considerable variation in both the treatment of, and attitudes toward, young people who commit crimes. The age of criminal responsibility ranges from as low as six in Mexico and North Carolina in the US, to 18 in other countries. In some jurisdictions 15-year-olds can be tried as adults and held in adult prisons, while others have essentially dispensed with the concept of imprisonment for under-18s altogether. Some countries provide innovative programmes of treatment, while others see the experience as largely punitive. Despite – or perhaps because of – these variations, the resulting outcomes for young people should be of critical interest to policy-makers in the field of juvenile delinquency.

In response to the UK Government's 2013 Green Paper – *Transforming Youth Custody* – CfBT has commissioned a rapid review of the international literature in this field, intended to highlight innovative approaches to the treatment of young offenders, with a particular focus on those young people who are held in custody. The review focuses particularly on the key outcomes – reduced reoffending and improvements to the life chances of incarcerated young people – in relation to the cost of running these programmes.

Our review is divided into three key sections. The first of these offers a cross-national comparison of approaches to juvenile justice. This section compares prison populations and reoffending rates, and gives a basic outline of the approaches adopted in a selection of countries to youth justice, and in particular, to custody for young offenders.

The second section of the review comprises a series of case studies from around the world, including a mixture of project-level interventions and the work of particularly effective institutions. These case studies represent examples of best or innovative practice in terms of outcomes.

The third section brings together a series of conclusions and recommendations drawn from the literature which focus on the key aspects of provision of youth custody, based upon the case studies and examples of successful practice internationally. It is hoped that stakeholders who are debating the future of youth custody in England and Wales will find this analysis informative and thought-provoking.



1 Cross-national comparison of approaches to juvenile justice

Cross-national comparisons of youth justice are fraught with difficulty, not least because approaches to youth justice are dramatically different across the world. This makes standardisation of even the simplest measurements problematic and requires significant hedging of all but the broadest comparisons. However, for the purposes of this review, it is important to provide some basic contextual information.

There is a lack of data which explicitly addresses the reoffending rates of young people. The UK Government is one of the very few to provide such information, revealing that 73% of young offenders who are released from custody reoffend within 12 months (Ministry of Justice, 2013c). While this appears to be a shockingly high figure, the lack of data provided by other jurisdictions means that a comparison of recidivism amongst this age group is virtually impossible.

The following section introduces some comparative statistics, primarily centring on the custodial populations of nine different countries, in particular the under-18 populations, and outlines some recidivism statistics based upon entire (all ages) populations. These countries have been selected as being broadly representative of a range of approaches and for their relatively close alignment with the UK in terms of socio-economic development.

Prison populations

Figure 1, below, details the entire prison population of nine different countries (shown as a rate per 100,000 inhabitants) and identifies how many of these prisoners are under 18 years of age. It also shows what proportion of the wider prison population that this figure represents. This table has been created with data from a range of sources and, as a result, is taken from different years. These figures represent the average population at any given time in a year or the population on a given day, as opposed to the entire number of people imprisoned in a time period.



Figure 1: Cross-national comparison of prison populations

Country	Rate of incarceration per 100,000 inhabitants	Percentage of prisoners under 18 years of age	Number of prisoners under 18 years of age	Year of data
Canada*	114	3.9	1,505	2011
England & Wales**	150	1.6	1,374	2013
Finland	60	0.3	10	2012
Netherlands	82	1.7	234	2012
New Zealand	194	0.7	60	2012
Northern Ireland***	99	1.6	28	2012
Norway	71	0.2	7	2012
Sweden	70	0.1	7	2011
USA****	716	2.7	60,861	2010

Figures are based upon data collected by the International Centre for Prison Studies (2013).

Where more up-to-date data has been available, this has been used, as indicated below:

* Figures for Canada are based upon Statistics Canada released statistics (Munch, 2012 & Dauvergne, 2012).

** Figures for England & Wales are based upon Ministry of Justice released statistics (2013a).

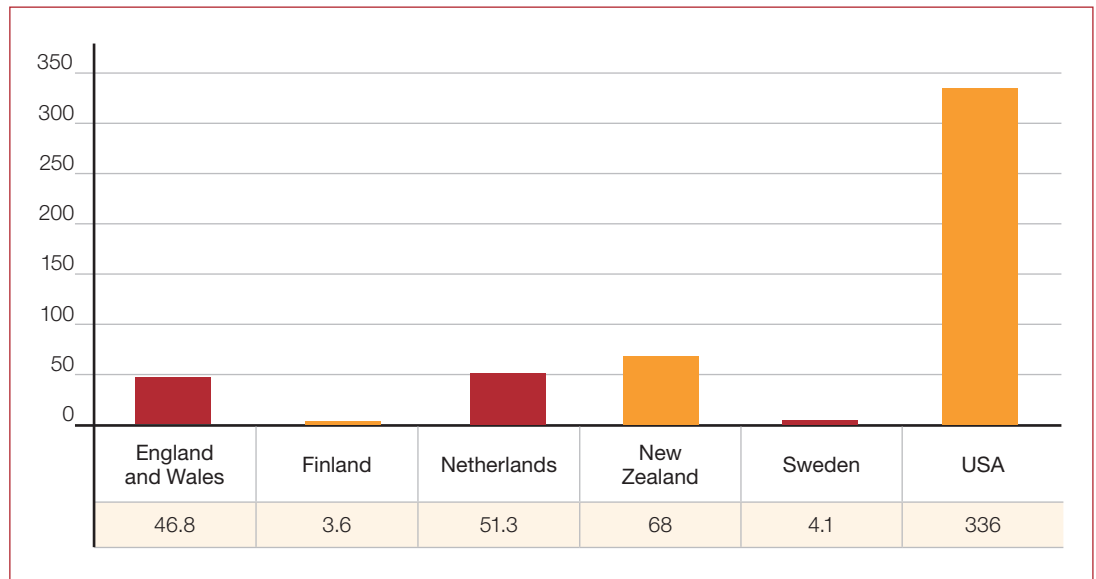
*** Figures for Northern Ireland are based upon Youth Justice Association released statistics (McAvoy, 2012).

**** Figures for USA are based upon the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (2010).



The following graph (Figure 2) from a report by Hazel (2008) compares a smaller group of these countries in terms of their rate of youth custody per 100,000 under-18 inhabitants.

Figure 2: Young people in custody per 100,000 of relevant population



Based upon data from a cross-national comparison of youth justice by the Youth Justice Board (Hazel, 2008).

Figures 1 and 2 clearly show the significant disparity in terms of individual countries' approaches to youth custody: the USA, for instance, sentencing a very large number and high proportion of young people to imprisonment, while some countries (e.g. Finland) lock up only a tiny minority of offenders.

Reoffending rates

In a 2010 publication, the Ministry of Justice in the UK suggested that 'raw reoffending rates should not be compared between countries, as there are major differences in measurement.' The inherent problems which warn against such comparisons are summarised by Wartna as:

1. Differences in judicial systems
2. Differences in sentencing practices
3. Differences in registration
4. Differences in methods and measures being used
5. Differences in offender groups
6. Differences in periods of observation

(Wartna, 2009)

Despite the pitfalls associated with such a comparison, Wartna does make an attempt to compare reoffending rates between a number of countries, shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3: General rates of recidivism across Europe

Country	Offender group	Definition of recidivism	% of recidivism after x years				
			1	2	3	4	5
Netherlands	Persons sanctioned for a crime	New conviction	18.6	27.7	33.4	37.4	40.4
Sweden	Persons convicted for offences	New conviction	22.0		36.0		
Norway	Persons charged	New charge	19.6	30.5	37.4	41.5	43.4
England & Wales	Persons released from prison or sentenced to a community penalty	New conviction		48.0			

(Wartna, 2009)

In light of the warnings about ‘raw’ data, it is important to pay close attention to the descriptors given in columns 2 and 3 of the table (‘Offender group’ and ‘Definition of recidivism’). It should be noted too that the figures compared above refer to the reoffending of all those charged and/or convicted and not just under-18s.

This lack of age-specific data is a recurring issue. We present in the remainder of the section some relevant comparisons which are not restricted by age.

The following data was compiled for the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and serves to highlight, amongst other things, the disparity between what different jurisdictions measure when releasing rates of recidivism. Of particular note is Norway’s high ‘headline’ figure of 54% which would seem incongruous with the data presented further below (Figure 6), but which actually measures reports of new crime over a period of three years (and hence is of much wider scope than the other ‘comparable’ figures listed):

Figure 4: Rates of recidivism amongst selected countries

Country	Rate	Notes
Northern Ireland	43%	Two-year rate of reconviction (2007)
England & Wales	53%	Two-year rate of reconviction (2010)
Norway	54%	Rate of report of new crime within three years (2006)
New Zealand	62%	Two-year rate of reconviction (2011), two-year rate of re-imprisonment was 39%

(Armstrong & McNeill, 2012)



A UK Ministry of Justice comparison which attempted to adjust individual rates in order to make them comparable (e.g. amending the data so that in each case reoffending within a two-year period is measured):

Figure 5: Comparison of reoffending rates adjusted in order to be comparable – proven reoffending within two years and six months

	England & Wales	Netherlands
Original data	54.7%	29.3%
Adjusted to be comparable	45.1%	38.0%

(Ministry of Justice, 2010)

With some caution, this data can be compared with the table below.

Figure 6: New Correctional Service Sentence within two years for all clients

Country	Rate of recidivism (released in 2005)
Finland	31%
Norway	20%
Sweden	30%

(Kristoffersen, c.2011)

While some patterns clearly emerge from the range of data presented in this section (e.g. the Nordic countries, and Norway in particular, seem to have low overall reoffending rates in comparison to England & Wales) it is also clear that at present, given the information released by individual justice systems, it is not possible to compare effectively recidivism across the world with any great certainty, and comparisons should be regarded as only indicative and not definitive.

Instead, the case study approach adopted later in this review (Section 2) may be a more appropriate method to begin assessing ‘what works’ internationally. Descriptive accounts of specific interventions, as opposed to entire systems which might in reality encompass a range of different interventions and institutions, provide a basis for discussion. The efficacy rates of many of the interventions – as applied in a variety of settings – are described within the research literature. When combined, these two perspectives provide key information needed to develop evidence-based policy.



Country-by-country approaches

The overarching policy approaches to juvenile justice are briefly described below for the nine countries included in this review. In each case, key legislation and approaches towards custody for young offenders are detailed.

Canada

The law and legislation relating to Canadian juvenile justice is centrally administered by the national government, but juvenile confinement, treatment and rehabilitation is devolved to provincial jurisdictions (JJCompare, 2012).

The 'Youth Criminal Justice Act' (YCJA) of 2003 is the guiding legislation in Canada in terms of dealing with young offenders. It specifically limits incarceration as a punishment to only those young people who commit the most serious and violent offences (JJCompare, 2012).

There is, instead, a focus on rehabilitation. The YCJA specifically enshrines in law the requirement that every period of custody should be followed by a period of supervision in the community: this means that every young person sent to prison is also given a specified community supervision sentence (Department of Justice, Canada, 2012). Prior to and while serving this community sentence, offenders are assigned a youth worker who will work with them to plan for their reintegration, which can include periods of 'reintegration leave' in order to prepare for their return to the community (Department of Justice, Canada, 2012).

Over the first five years immediately following the Act there was a drop of 50% in the number of young people who had committed property offences being sent to prison across nine Canadian jurisdictions and a 36% decline in young people sent to custody for any offence (Kong, 2009).

England & Wales

England & Wales has one of the highest youth populations in custody in Europe. This stems from a shift in the late 1980s within youth justice from a position of 'rehabilitation to [one of] societal protection' (McAuley, 2010). The Children Act 1989 (and its amendment, the Children Act 2004) remains a key piece of legislation guiding the treatment of children in custody, while the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is at the heart of youth justice in the UK currently.

The current youth secure estate is made up of three composite parts:

- **Young Offender Institutions (YOIs)** are the largest institutions which provide youth custody. There are currently 11 units in England & Wales, run by a mixture of private contractors and HM Prison Service. YOIs cost on average £65,000 per place per annum and have a 73% reoffending rate.
- **Secure Training Centres (STCs)** are purpose-built custodial facilities for 12–17 year olds. There are four STCs in England & Wales, all run by private contractors. These STCs provide 25 hours of education a week, cost on average £178,000 per place per annum and have a 70% reoffending rate.
- **Secure Children's Homes (SCHs)** are smaller facilities run by local authorities, providing 30 hours of education a week. SCHs cost on average £212,000 per place per annum and have a 76% reoffending rate.

(Ministry of Justice, 2013c)



Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) are the most common custodial sentence, which specify that half of the sentence should be spent in a secure facility, and half under supervision within the community (Ministry of Justice, 2013c). The average population within the secure estate has been steadily declining since 2008 (Ministry of Justice 2013b). An example of a specialist unit within a YOI is provided as a case study in Section 2.

Finland

The Finnish approach to youth crime is generally to avoid incarcerating under-18s (Justice Policy Institute, 2011), instead employing 'care orders' which focus heavily on welfare and the input of social services and support (Pitts & Kuula, 2005). These care orders consist of activities and programmes which are supervised and which are intended to improve the community skills of young people (Criminal Sanctions Agency, 2012). While young people can be committed to supervision for the duration of their punishment, they cannot be imprisoned as such (Criminal Sanctions Agency, 2012).

Instead of youth prisons there are currently six state-administered and two privately run reformatories in Finland offering residential care and education. Special Care Units within these reformatories are for particularly volatile and vulnerable children and, unlike other units within the institutions, place restrictions on their residents' freedom (Pösö, 2004).

Reformatory placement is regarded as a 'last resort' by the welfare services within Finland (Pitts & Kuula, 2005) and the welfare-led approach taken by the Finnish authorities is clearly evidenced by the low number of young people in custody in the country.

The Netherlands

While historically the Netherlands rarely gave custodial sentences to young people, there has been a more recent trend of imprisonment which has seen the number of young people incarcerated increase substantially (JJCompare, 2012). The juvenile custodial population rose rapidly in particular at the beginning of the 21st century (Van der Laan, 2006), with a stronger focus on punitive measures in response to crime.

Nonetheless, the Dutch government still places reform and education at the heart of its youth justice system. There are two types of detention facility in the Netherlands: traditional places of imprisonment; and treatment centres, which dealt with over 800 youths in 2002 (Boev, 2002). These treatment centres are a mixture of specialised and general facilities (the former dealing with treatment for drug addictions, or those with psychiatric illnesses) and focus on the use of non-traditional methods of education which centre on providing practical and social skills. These institutions, while being approved by the Ministry of Justice, are free to develop their own programmes and have a degree of autonomy (Boev, 2002).

Van der Laan suggests that alternative sanctions have been more effective in the rehabilitation of young offenders within the Dutch system when compared with imprisonment, noting that in the case of young people treated through the former route reoffending rates are lower and, when committed, offences are likely to be less serious (Van der Laan, 2006).

New Zealand

The youth justice system in New Zealand is largely based upon the idea of restorative justice (JJCompare, 2012), defined by Braithwaite as follows:

A process where all stakeholders affected by an injustice have an opportunity to discuss how they have been affected by the injustice and to decide what should be done to repair the harm.

(Braithwaite, 2004)

The key piece of legislation in the country remains the 1989 Children, Young Persons and Their Families (CYPTF) Act, which aims to 'promote the wellbeing of youths and their families' (Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand, 2012).

This legislation restricted the instances when young people could be incarcerated and urged courts to make use of community-based sentences where possible (Becroft, 2003). However, this has not stopped New Zealand having a comparatively high prison population amongst under-18s (see Figures 1 and 2).

The youth justice provision in New Zealand has largely shifted from one of central control by state agencies to management by private sector organisations (Becroft, 2003). A 2010 amendment to the CYPTF Act introduced a number of 'Fresh Start' reforms which included:

- creating tougher, more effective sentences for persistent and serious offenders, including longer residential stays and increased supervision requirements
- providing new powers for the Youth Court to order parenting, mentoring and drug and alcohol programmes, and
- widening the jurisdiction of the Youth Court to include 12 and 13 year olds who commit serious offences.

(Child, youth and family, 2012a)

Youth Justice residences are used when young offenders are deemed unsafe to be living in the community and are either on remand or have received a custodial sentence of between three and six months. On some occasions young people sentenced to longer prison sentences can serve part of their sentence in a Youth Justice residence (Child, youth and family, 2012b). An example of such a residence is provided as a case study in Section 2.

Northern Ireland

Juvenile justice in Northern Ireland is largely influenced by the Justice Act 2002, which established a number of alternatives to youth custody, including:

- reparation orders
- community responsibility orders
- custody care orders (combinations of custody/community supervision), and
- youth conferencing (a form of restorative justice).

(Youth Justice Agency, 2013)



Youth custody is restricted to those who have committed serious, violent or sexual offences. The population of young people in prison in Northern Ireland has significantly decreased since the authorities implemented the Youth Diversion Scheme (YDS) (O'Mahony and Campbell, 2006). The YDS aims to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime in the first place and attempts to avoid prosecution of offences where possible (Youth Justice Agency, 2013a).

All young people held in custody in Northern Ireland are now held in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. Newly created in 2007, this institution is targeted at care provision and the prevention of reoffending, with a particular focus on education and the inclusion of a learning centre within the facility (Youth Justice Agency, 2013a).

The Woodlands facility, in its most recent inspection report, carried out by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, was deemed to be fulfilling its legislative remit to 'protect the public by accommodating children ordered to be detained therein in a safe, secure and caring environment; and work to reintegrate children into the community' (Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, 2011). The Woodlands centre is discussed in more depth as a case study in Section 2.

Norway

Norway's approach to juvenile justice is centred on welfare and focuses on the needs of young people, their diagnosis and treatment (as opposed to purely punitive measures) (Hazel, 2008). In particular, it does not believe in 'locking up children' (Wolf et al., 2005).

In 2011 Norway proposed a new approach to reduce the number of young people in prison, introducing a newly created 'youth centre' for those aged between 15 and 18 who committed serious or repeat offences, ensuring that young people were not incarcerated alongside adults (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2011).

As well as including aspects of restorative justice (and the concept of youth conferencing) this 'youth centre' prioritises the implementation of rigorous community sentences, all with a focus on rehabilitation rather than imprisonment (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2011). The Ministry of Justice described the approach's purpose as being 'to increase understanding of the convicted person for the consequences of action for everyone affected' (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2011). As part of the care provided by the youth centre, measures such as social skills lessons, meetings with police and work/training will all be implemented. Victims will be involved in the process alongside a series of other agencies forming a collaborative network to treat, educate and reintegrate offenders (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2011).

Sweden

Young offenders in Sweden are classed as being between 15 and 18 years old (although all under-21s are treated distinctly from adult offenders if deemed necessary) and legislation in the country does not make a distinction between child protection and youth justice (Hessle & Vinnerljung, 1998), which specifically aims not to incarcerate juveniles.

Sweden has an exceptionally low prison population amongst young people, largely down to, according to Hazel, an approach which focuses on 'the needs, rather than the deeds' (Hazel, 2008).

The National Board for Institutional Care (known as the SiS in Swedish) takes responsibility for young offenders in Sweden; in general this board dictates that young people are treated in centres known



as reformatories as opposed to prisons (Sarnecki & Estrada, 2004). These reformatories, 'although officially for care and treatment' do nonetheless provide secure supervision for up to a hundred young people per year (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006: 275). Hazel compares these centres to the local authority secure children's homes in the UK, as opposed to prisons or the UK YOIs (Hazel, 2008).

The very small number of offenders who are held in custody for serious offences 'are under closed institutional "care", with an emphasis on welfare and treatment (for abuse issues etc), rather than detention or imprisonment' (Muncie, 2006). These offenders are held for an average of five months and are given individualised treatment plans. All residents are given education provision which as much as possible replicates that available outside of care (based upon the Swedish national curriculum) (SiS, 2012).

USA

The justice system for young people in the USA varies dramatically between different states, which are each able to determine their own laws and as a result operate very different systems (Murphy et al., 2010). In general the USA relies heavily on incarceration as a punishment, as can be seen from Figures 1 and 2 above, which show both the sizeable population of young people imprisoned in the country, as well as the proportion of young people this represents (Justice Policy Institute, 2011).

The variation across the USA means that, in some states, young people can be tried as adults, and children as young as six can be held criminally responsible, which is undoubtedly a factor in the high number of young people imprisoned.

To focus on one of the states which bucks this general trend – addressed in more detail as part of the case studies which follow – Missouri treats all those under the age of 17 as juveniles, who are dealt with by a family court. The Division of Youth Services (DYS) is responsible for these juveniles once sentenced.

Missouri closed all its 'residential training schools' in the 1980s and replaced them with 'residential centres'. Few children are held securely in these institutions, which employ a 'comprehensive series of non-residential programmes including day centres providing intensive education, life skills training, structured family work, and intensive mentoring supervision' (Whyte, 2004).



2 Individual case studies of approaches and institutions

Canada: Halifax Youth Attendance Centre

The Halifax Youth Attendance Centre (HYAC), in Nova Scotia, Canada, is specifically aimed at medium- and high-risk young offenders (as deemed by factors such as a history of serious violence, seriousness of offence, impact on community or staff safety) who are under court order (Nova Scotia Justice Correctional Services, 2012). Uniquely the centre is run by the Department of Justice in close collaborative partnership with the departments of Education, Community Services and Health and their various service providers (Government of Nova Scotia, 2012).

The centre is designed for up to 20 young people, who receive educational and/or employment preparation. Candidates for the centre are interviewed and must meet a number of criteria in order to be taken on, including showing a desire to make positive change and a commitment to improving their level of education (Nova Scotia Justice Correctional Services, c.2012).

There are a number of features of the HYAC which demonstrate its holistic approach to reducing reoffending: two mental health clinicians are part of the staff at the centre (Murray, 2010); classes which focus on anger management, substance abuse and recreation are offered; and amongst others the following programmes are available:

- **Academic education:** based upon the national (education department) curriculum this programme 'aims to address education deficits and strengths while providing growth opportunities with respect to civic, social and moral responsibility'
- **Career development:** a programme which 'helps youth to discover, explore, develop and acquire knowledge and competencies that enable them to participate' in their community and equips them for the job market upon completion of their sentence
- **Experiential education:** a programme which focuses on the development of personal goals through activities centred around problem-solving, leadership skills, and transferable skills amongst others, and
- **Cognitive-based life and social skills:** programmes which are targeted at young people's interactions with their family, school and community, enabling them to develop skills and confidence in the 'safe setting' of a controlled environment.

(Nova Scotia Justice Correctional Services, c.2012)

Although formal evaluation is not available, feedback from parents of young people at the HYAC is positive and a strategy report by the provincial government noted that the centre has 'seen young people make the transition back into regular school programming, find employment, and participate in activities such as a Kiwanis leadership camp' (Government of Nova Scotia, 2008).

England & Wales: The Keppel Unit

The Keppel Unit opened in 2008 within HMYOI Wetherby in Yorkshire. It was set up for those young people who were deemed unable to cope with the mainstream YOI. It offers specialist and individualised support, but maintains close links with the support offered at the Wetherby main site so that young people can move between the two without disruption.



As a specialist unit there are certain key differences:

- **Multidisciplinary team:** all staff have to complete a 10-week training programme so that, while all staff are specialised, they are also trained in a wide range of disciplines appropriate for the needs of the young people. This multidisciplinary approach extends to joint briefing sessions and an active effort to break down barriers between staff groups (including bringing security officers into the classrooms)
- **Higher ratios of staff to young people:** there is a minimum of 1 member of staff to 6 young people on evenings and weekends and 1: 4.5 during the core day (compared with 1: 10 at the Wetherby main site)
- **Design:** the Keppel Unit was designed to be different from Wetherby and 'less institutional' (Youth Justice Board, 2011) in feel. It has more open spaces and natural light, along with soft lighting and artwork. It was designed with smaller wings, no bars on windows, and a shower and toilet for every bedroom. There is also a central multi-purpose area on each floor, as well as facilities for specific functions.

While these innovative approaches have met with praise, the 2011 evaluation of the unit, carried out by the Youth Justice Board, noted that a lack of follow-up or refresher training was a key weakness which needed to be addressed (Youth Justice Board, 2011).

There have been positive responses to these differences.

- Both staff and young people offered positive feedback in relation to the building and design (Youth Justice Board, 2011).
- The staff seems to have benefited from their multidisciplinary training. For example, 83% of officers who worked on the Keppel Unit 'strongly agreed' that they trusted other professionals, compared with only 53% of officers on the Wetherby main site (Youth Justice Board, 2011).
- There is also evidence that the young people are responding better to the intervention available at Keppel: they were more likely to attend education 'often' than those at Wetherby and they spent more time in education, training and personal development than in other male YOIs (Youth Justice Board, 2011).
- Young people reported feeling safer in the Keppel Unit (Berelowitz, 2011).

The Keppel Unit is more expensive than other YOIs, although cheaper than secure training centres or secure children's homes, at approximately £90,000 for an annual place. This is approximately £30,000 more expensive than a place at a mainstream YOI (Harrison & Wilson, 2011).

Finland: Youth RiSe and PoMo (Path with own mentor)

The 'Youth RiSe' scheme in Finland ran from 2002 till 2005 and targeted young offenders being released from prison as well as young offenders at an early stage of the 'reoffending cycle' (Arola et al., 2002). The project's fundamental aim was to prepare young people for the labour market and find approaches to help them manage their daily life (Osmani & Pagels, c.2008).



The programme cost €1.68 million (approximately £1.4 million) with the intention of involving two groups of people: a group of 20 young people who had just been released from prison, and a group of 50 who were at an early stage of reoffending (Arola et al., 2002). A formative evaluation of the programme at its midway stage found that of the 50 young offenders identified as being 'at an early stage of reoffending', 23 had signed 'cooperation agreements' to take part, of which 16 had actually participated (Rise (Criminal Sanctions Agency), 2003).

The project's resettlement programme provided a close, confidential relationship with an adult in order to provide support. During the early period of release, when reoffending is most likely, the adult spent entire days working with the young offender (Arola et al., 2002).

At the midway point of the project – after 18 months – only two (9%) of the young people involved had reoffended (Rise (Criminal Sanctions Agency), 2003). Although a small sample size, this nonetheless represented a significantly lower number than would be expected. Furthermore, three out of five of those on the programme noticed positive changes in terms of their interaction with others and their problem-solving abilities (Rise (Criminal Sanctions Agency), 2003).

The PoMo (Path with own mentor) project, also initiated in Finland, was an extension of Youth RiSe, based upon lessons learnt from the earlier programme (EQUAL, 2006).

PoMo allocated a 'mentor' to youths either recently released from custody or identified as being at high risk of reoffending based upon partnerships between a huge range of services, including the probation service, the police, courts and prison services, the prosecutor, housing departments, social work/employment offices and youth work offices. This partnership of agencies would meet bi-annually at conferences in order to ensure that all those involved in the programme were being properly catered for (EQUAL, 2006). The PoMo project had a similar budget to Youth RiSe of between €1.5 million and €2 million (EQUAL, 2005).

The Netherlands: Immigrant Youths in Detention

The Dutch 'Immigrant Youths in Detention' project was founded by the Brabant Special Youth Care Group in order to address the issue of immigrant youths being more likely to reoffend after their release from custody (European Urban Knowledge Network, 2005).

The project works with newly-released young offenders and at its heart focuses on providing support and counselling for ex-detainees for a year immediately after their release (European Urban Knowledge Network, 2005). In particular the scheme worked with Moroccan and Turkish offenders who had committed their crimes under the age of 18. The programme specifically:

- resocialised youths who had spent a significant amount of time in detention
- provided personal coaching for the young people, with initial contact being often and regular, and gradually decreasing over the year; personal coaches are available 24/7 for their charges to contact and a relationship of trust is built up between the former detainee and the coach
- offered specific support over issues such as debt repayment, job searching and housing
- facilitated communication between the young people and wider networks (e.g. their friends and family) in order to ensure ongoing support.

(European Website on Integration, 2013)



Jonkman and Vandenbroucke's evaluation of the programme suggested that the recidivism rates of graduates of the programme were 10% lower than national recidivism rates (Jonkman & Vandenbroucke, 2009). Although long-term effects cannot yet be judged given the relatively small-scale nature of evaluations till now (European Website on Integration, 2013) anecdotal evidence from the Moroccan and Turkish community in the region trialling the programme suggested that mentors/coaches working with young offenders had become increasingly known and trusted (European Urban Knowledge Network, 2005).

Jonkman and Vandenbroucke believed that the programme was an 'excellent way for young people from ethnic minorities to rehabilitate' and suggested that the clear goal and targeted intent of the programme were its key strengths (Jonkman & Vandenbroucke, 2009).

New Zealand: Korowai Manaaki Youth Justice Residence

An example of a Youth Justice Residence, Korowai Manaaki is located in South Auckland and can accommodate up to 46 residents (housed in four smaller units). It can take males and females, from 14 to 17 years old (Child, youth and family, 2009). Along with the other four Youth Justice residences in the country, to better aid reintegration, it aims to house offenders as close to their local community and family as is possible (Child, youth and family, 2012b).

The Ministry of Education provides school services on site at the residence, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy programmes. In addition there are vocational training courses and rehabilitative programmes which are provided by staff from within the centre itself (Child, youth and family, 2009).

Of particular note at the residence are the social/life skills sessions that are part of the core offering to residents, covering a wide range of topics. 'Careers days' which include highlights from a range of different career options (including the local fire department, the New Zealand Army and Air Force and a music/audio institution) aim to raise aspirations, while courses which focus on skills such as the management of money and personal finance help young offenders when it comes to reintegrating into their community (Child, youth and family, 2009).

Gaining employment has been seen as a key focus for the centre in terms of turning the lives of its residents around and helping them move back into the community. As well as career days, residents also learn how to write a CV and interview techniques while completing their sentence. The centre works with local employers in order to prepare and subsequently support the employers if they take on former offenders (Ministry of Social Development, 2010).

Northern Ireland: Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

The Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) opened in 2007, with the intention of replacing all previous youth custodial facilities in Northern Ireland and providing a single, central institution which deals with all those juveniles deemed to require continual supervision away from the community. As of 2011 there were still some young people being held in Young Offenders' Centres (YOCs), although this figure has been in gradual decline and is predominantly made up of those 17-year-olds who have already had multiple admissions to the JJC (Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, 2011).

Comprising six residential units, an education and learning centre (known as the school), medical/dental facilities, and recreational facilities, the Centre sets out to:



- provide a safe, secure and caring environment
- tackle reoffending
- address development, health, educational and recreational needs, and
- prepare young people for their return to families and communities with a reduced risk of offending.

(Youth Justice Agency, 2013b)

Education provision at the Woodlands centre is focused on facilities actively described as ‘the school’. The school operates a full timetable of eight periods a day, five days a week, teaching a wide range of academic subjects (including English and maths) and offers examinations in these subjects (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012). In addition, the centre also incorporates weekend activities and has a clear timetable for the entirety of an offender’s residence (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012).

In addition to formal education which reflects mainstream provision, Woodlands also provides programmes which deal with specific issues (such as offending, anger management, alcohol and substance misuse etc.) and encourages offenders to practise daily life skills, including preparing meals with staff, keeping their units tidy etc. (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012).

Between 10 April 2010 and 11 March 2011 there were a total of 551 admissions to the centre, of which around half were on remand. The centre can accommodate up to 48 residents (including eight girls) (Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, 2011). The unit is funded by block grant at a cost per place (if full) of £150,745. However, given its average occupancy rate this actually translated to a cost per occupant of £267,991 during 2010/11 (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012).

In terms of educational outcomes, of those young people who attended education provision for eight consecutive weeks or more, 83% gained one level in literacy and 50% gained one level in numeracy (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012). While the inspection report recommended continued development of both the centre and the training of staff, it was nonetheless positive in its evaluation of education provision at Woodlands, noting in particular strong student satisfaction, good levels of attainment and good leadership and management (Youth Justice Agency, c.2012).

Norway: The Fossum Collective

The Norwegian Fossum Collective is a collection of institutions and treatment centres which focus on rehabilitation and treatment for young people with drug and alcohol dependencies. As well as accepting self-referred admissions, the Norwegian courts can place people within the centres’ care under child welfare law or in place of prison sentences (Fossum Collective, 2013).

Although now a series of centres in a number of different locations, when visited by the Council of Europe in 2000 the Fossum Collective was based around just one centre, located in a rural area, in a farmhouse and surrounding buildings. Staff were housed on site and the report from the Council of Europe described the centre as ‘exceptionally positive, tranquil and home-like’ (Council of Europe, 2000).

The substance abuse programme undertaken at the centre was based on six phases which ‘allowed for a progressive acquisition of privileges (including an increased allowance) and responsibility on the part of the minors’ (Council of Europe, 2000).

There are no separate 'custodial' staff at the Fossum Collective and instead all security issues fall under the remit of 'child welfare educators' who are specially trained (having completed a three-year Higher Education programme) and are responsible for the guidance, treatment and care of the young people in residence (Council of Europe, 2000).

It should also be noted that the activities at the Fossum Collective are not entirely undertaken on site, but instead there is also a programme of activities which take place within the community (including drama/plays and sports) (Martynowicz, 2009).

Martynowicz noted that the Fossum Collective was singled out on the Council of Europe visit as an example of best practice in terms of providing custody and treatment for young offenders (Martynowicz, 2009). Meanwhile, Boesen confirmed that the treatment at the Collective had a positive effect on youth affairs (Boesen, 2008).

According to the Council of Europe, many of those held involuntarily at the centre chose to extend their stay for up to another year voluntarily in order to complete their treatment (Council of Europe, 2000).

Norway, Sweden and Denmark: MultifunC

MultifunC is a treatment programme currently used in Norway (six facilities), Sweden (three facilities) and, more recently, in Denmark. It is based on a series of 'Principles of Effective Treatment' (Andrews et al., 1990), which, in a meta-analysis of 134 studies of juvenile offender programmes, were found to increase effect size (Dowden & Andrews, 1999). The principles are:

- 1. Social service:** Did the programme provide any treatment, as opposed to only criminal sanctions?
- 2. Risk:** Did the programme provide the most intensive services to the highest risk offenders?
- 3. Needs:** Did the programme target needs such as alcohol abuse, associated with increased likelihood of reoffending?
- 4. Responsivity:** Did the programme adapt the intervention to individual characteristics, such as strengths, motivations, preferences, personality, age, gender, and culture?

Critically, the programme applies the intervention and its intensity proportionately to the level of various risk factors displayed by young people. For example, those young people who are low risk but given high intensity intervention show little or no change, positively or negatively. Risk factors identified included a history of anti-social behaviour, family background or low levels of educational, vocational or financial achievement (Andreassen, c.2005). In response to these risk factors and following cognitive behavioural approaches and social learning practice, certain methods of intervention are prescribed.

Practices considered vaguer and less holistic interventions were considered less suitable. Examples of these interventions include measures to increase self-esteem without simultaneous reductions in anti-social thinking, feeling or peer associations; or attempting to improve neighbourhood-wide living conditions without addressing the criminogenic needs of higher-risk individuals and families.



The MultifunC programme was designed to incorporate these findings and ensures that:

- the intensity of intervention is aligned with the risk level, so that young people who are high-risk offenders have the highest intensity of intervention
- the young person's antisocial behaviour is assessed so that intervention is targeted at the particular risk factors that person displays, and
- intervention could include, but is not limited to, motivating for change, aggression replacement training and cognitive behavioural therapy.

To allow such personalised and targeted intervention, the units are very small, holding only eight young people in each unit.

In order to target the risk factors of a young person's peer and familial situation, the programme has a heavy focus on ensuring a continuity of support, with:

- a careful sequence of support, including preparation for the transition between residential and aftercare support
- emphasis on including family in the intervention; this means that families are also included during the residential stage and are given parental management training during this stage and at the young person's home visits, as well as heavy support during the aftercare, and
- a location near to community services so that young people are integrated into the community as much as possible to promote pro-social peer relationships. Successful programmes therefore rely on good community support and connections.

The programme has a 70% success rate in ensuring no violent or anti-social behaviour, no substance abuse and improved relationships with adults and parents, compared with a 30 to 40% success rate where other interventions are used and a 20% success rate with no intervention (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2013).

In terms of expenditure the MultifunC programme was estimated, in Denmark, to cost 1.7million Danish Krone (approximately £192,000) in order to put a participant through the programme in its entirety (which was very similar to other residential treatment programmes on offer) (Nørbæk & Møller, 2012). The programme includes a six-month residential stay, but lasts in total between 10 and 12 months, including aftercare (Andreassen, c.2012).

USA (Missouri): Division of Youth Services

Since converting from a system of residential training schools in the early 1980s, Missouri has consistently been highlighted as an effective alternative to many other US states' more punitive regimes. The Missouri Division of Youth Services (DYS) provides a broad range of non-residential programmes (e.g. day treatment programmes) and a continuum of residential facilities with varying levels of security. Residential facilities are small (housing a maximum of 50 young people) and locally distributed, ensuring young people are able to maintain regular contact with their family.



These varying levels of security comprise:

- **Secure Care:** In accommodation housing about 30, young people who have committed the most serious offences receive education, vocational guidance and counselling in treatment groups of 10–12. Accommodation is generally open-dorm, and the facilities are locked within a perimeter fence.
- **Moderate Care:** For young people who have committed less serious crimes and do not pose a threat to the community, facilities are staffed by full-time teachers and operate with no perimeter fence. Some moderate care facilities are located within state parks.
- **Group Homes:** These 10–12 bed facilities are staffed around the clock, but young people access a programme of treatment, education and community interaction within and outside the facility. Situated in residential neighbourhoods, integration into society is supported through jobs and community projects.

For all young people, the programme emphasises the importance of meeting individuals' educational, psychosocial and medical needs within a structured programme of therapy. Communication and social skills development, conflict resolution, empathy and self-esteem improvement are all common areas of focus.

Each young person is assigned a case manager (typically with a caseload of 15–20), supported to carry out intensive case supervision in the community by Social Service Aides (Trackers). The case manager completes an Individual Treatment Plan (ITP), which defines the particular treatment for each young person. It is a comprehensive account of their treatment within their contract with the DYS, aimed at laying out solutions to the delinquent behaviour, education, family relationships, addiction and health-related issues, life skills etc.

Performance is excellent: the DYS has been described as a 'model for the nation in juvenile corrections' (Missouri Juvenile Justice Association, 2003). Compared with other states, costs are relatively low for such a resource-heavy programme (see Figure 10) – California spends almost double the amount per capita. This is partially driven by the relatively low cost of living in Missouri State, which in turn reduces staff costs.

Figure 10: Residential programme costs FY2012

Programme	Per day	Annual per bed
Group Homes	£117.34	£42,829.38
Moderate Care	£121.94	£44,508.42
Secure Care	£161.24	£58,852.20

(Missouri Department of Social Services, 2012)

Figures converted from US dollars to pounds sterling at a rate of \$1=£0.65

While recidivism rates are notoriously difficult to standardise, the rates of reoffending in Missouri are clearly very low. After one year, reoffending (any contact with the justice system) is 16.4%. Even after three years, this has only risen to 32.9% (Missouri Department of Social Services 2012).



3 Conclusions and recommendations

While the individual contexts of the case studies above do not allow for the possibility of a reliable international comparison between them in terms of cost and benefit, it is nonetheless possible to identify recurring factors which appear to have contributed to the success of each programme or institution. Key aspects of provision that have emerged from these examples of good practice include:

- Education is placed at the heart of an institution's focus (an overriding aspect of virtually all the initiatives described here, which marks it out as the key factor in providing youth custody which properly caters for the needs of young offenders).
- Interventions are personalised and targeted (such as within the MultifunC programme that is used in a number of the Nordic countries).
- Staff are given multidisciplinary training and custodial staff are also involved in the education of offenders (such as at the Fossum Collective in Norway, which does not employ separate custodial staff at all, but instead charges its 'child welfare educators' with providing security as well as care and education).
- There are high ratios of staff to offenders (such as at the Keppel Unit in England, which has 1 member of staff to every 4.5 residents during the core day) providing a high level of attention and subsequently care/education.
- Institutions are relatively small, and are split into units which are even smaller (such as at the Woodlands JJC in Northern Ireland which has approximately 40 beds, split into four units of 10).
- Offenders are assigned mentors who work with them for up to 12 months after their release (such as within the Immigrant Youths in Detention project undertaken in the Netherlands, which assigns a specific mentor to each offender, who is easily contactable and who maintains strong links with the offender and their community for a year after release).
- Activities within the community are a key aspect of provision (such as in New Zealand, where the Korowai Manaaki Youth Justice Residence creates strong links between local employers in the local community in order to better enable residents, on release, to find and keep a job).
- Residential facilities are locally distributed, reasonably close to the homes of young offenders (such as in Missouri, USA. The DYS in the state provides a number of small residential centres which are located within communities across the state in order to maintain contact between offenders and their families).

The cost of the interventions and institutions assessed in this review varies dramatically. However, it is difficult to make definitive comparisons as some of the programmes include residential care and its associated costs, while others are non-residential treatment sessions. Although the former have higher costs, the opportunity to provide a holistic approach means that they may not need to be supplemented by other interventions or programmes. This is in contrast to some of the non-residential programmes, which may be used as part of a much wider treatment plan not accounted for in their individual costs.

Furthermore, given the lack of a consistent measure for recidivism across the various countries involved, measuring impact in terms of a reduction on reoffending is also problematic. While many of the programmes have been able to measure themselves against former reoffending by their participants, this is often on a small scale over a short period of time.

Recommendations

Based upon the key themes identified above, there are a number of recommendations which can be made in terms of the future of youth custody in England and Wales:

- **Education must be made central to all provision of custody for young offenders.** Institutions should provide sufficient educational content for their residents; security staff should at the very least be multidisciplinary and at best a core part of the educational remit; and education should include social/life skills as well as academic learning (in particular numeracy and literacy).
- **Institutions must be sufficiently small in size to properly cater for their residents, with high levels of staff to residents.** They should be locally situated in order to maintain links between offenders and their families.
- **Reintegration into the community must be a focus from the outset of a custodial sentence.** Staff/mentors should be linked to offenders both for their time in custody and for a significant period of time afterwards; and institutions should engage with their communities in order to secure education, training and/or employment for offenders upon their release.



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