

## **Review of Programmes in Youth Training Centres**

### ***Part 2: Consultation and Recommendations***

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for the Guardian for Children and Young People

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## Foreword

The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People promotes and protects the rights of children and young people under the age of 18 years under the guardianship, or in the custody of the Minister for Families and Communities. The position of Guardian was established in an amendment to the *Children's Protection Act 1993* proclaimed on 1 February 2006.

Young people in custody for remand or detention, by nature of their captivity, are highly vulnerable to the philosophy, policy and practice of youth justice as expressed in their immediate social and physical environment. In South Australia there are two youth training centres, at Cavan and Magill in Adelaide. I have previously reported on the inadequacy of the physical infrastructure of the Magill Youth Training Centre. Both centres are now to be replaced in 2010 with a combined improved facility.

The Youth Justice Directorate in Families SA, Department for Families and Communities, is undergoing significant reform including reiterating their primary role in rehabilitation. Programmes provided to young people who have offended are critical to reducing the likelihood of re-offending. To my knowledge there had been no independent review of programmes available in secure custody in South Australia and I had heard mixed views on the quality of programmes on offer.

In July 2007 I commissioned the Centre for Applied Psychological Research in the School of Psychology, University of South Australia to conduct this review. The researchers' report was delivered in January 2008. The primary researchers were Associate Professor Andrew Day and Dr Sharon Casey. Ms Linda Davey was involved with the collection and analysis of data from young people. I thank them for a thorough and highly professional job and for their commitment to the broader purpose of the review. The report that follows is their report to me and I endorse the conclusions and recommendations.

I also thank all of the participants in the review and the Families SA Youth Justice Directorate, particularly the managers and staff at the training centres, for their cooperation and contribution. The Director Ms Julie Gunn, and her team have approached this with openness and awareness. The young people who participated demonstrated sincerity and insight that was highly valuable in framing the recommendations.

The recommendations have been accepted by Families SA. I look forward to their implementation and the consequent focused approach to delivering high quality programmes in youth justice.

Pam Simmons  
Guardian

## Executive Summary

Over the last five years there has been much discussion in South Australia, and other parts of the country, about the ways in which government agencies can, and should, respond to the needs of those young people who are considered to be at risk, particularly those who are considered to be at risk of offending or re-offending. It is well known and widely accepted that young people who are categorised in this way are likely to have particularly high levels of unmet need across multiple areas of functioning, with ongoing difficulties related to substance use, mental health, family functioning, educational attainment, as well as specific needs in relation to their offending behaviour. The development of age and culturally appropriate services to meet this diverse range of needs in a timely manner presents a considerable challenge to government agencies and other service providers.

Each Australian state and territory manages young offenders in a slightly different way. In South Australia, responsibility for the provision of juvenile justice services (remand, detention and the administration of all youth justice dispositions from the court) lies with the Department for Families and Communities, and specifically Families SA. There are two youth training centres in South Australia, Cavan and Magill, accommodating children and young people from the ages of 10 through to 18. In 2006-07 there were 1011 admissions to secure care representing 500 young people. Families SA has the lead responsibility for the provision of programmes to young offenders, through the relatively recently established Youth Justice Directorate. Since its inception the Directorate has shown a strong commitment to the delivery of interventions that are both needs focused and effective in preventing re-offending in the context of meeting its obligations to young people under the *1993 Young Offenders Act*.

This report has been prepared at the request of the Guardian for Children and Young People in South Australia. This is a statutory position that reports to the Minister for Families and Communities, and has a mandate for intervention that extends to all children and young people under guardianship or custody orders, including those in secure care on youth justice orders. The Guardian has an important role to play in informing the development of services in this area, and thus commissioned this review of programmes offered in youth training centres in South Australia. The need to review and develop programmes has, however, also been identified by the Youth Justice Directorate as a key improvement area in the Training Centre Action Plan, and by others such as the Social Inclusion Unit, and the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Youth Justice System (SA).

Part 1 of this report is dedicated to a comprehensive review of the scientific literature relating to theories and practice in youth justice. This review has been written to provide an up to date account of the current status of evidence relating to programmes that are offered to clients of the Directorate that are intended to reduce the risk of further offending. In any organisation that aims to be 'evidence-based', it is important that decisions around the structure, management, and delivery of programmes are made in the light of what is currently known about programme effectiveness. Evidence can take two forms: theories and models about how to understand the reasons why young people offend, and hence their likely need for intervention; and evaluations and trials of programmes that have been used with juvenile justice clients. Developmental theories of crime consistently suggest that antisocial behaviour is the strongest underlying causal factor for criminal behaviour. These theories stress the socialisation process and subsequent social bonds that the young person forms as being paramount to the development of pro-social behaviour and, in our view, are particularly appropriate theories for accounting for juvenile offending.

Part 2 of the review reports the findings of a series of consultations with a range of stakeholders, both government and non-government, about the current provision of services and programmes to youth justice clients. Representatives from a range of services and agencies (identified through discussion with the Guardian and the reference group) were invited to take part in the review. These included the Families SA Directorate of Youth Justice, Kumangka Aboriginal Youth Services, Victim Support Services, Social Inclusion Unit Department for Premier and Cabinet, Justice Strategy Unit Department of Justice, Breaking the Cycle (Families SA), Central Community Legal Services, Youth Affairs Council of SA, and Service to Youth Council. In addition focus groups were conducted with residents of both the Cavan and Magill Training Centres, and centre staff members were invited to respond to a questionnaire about the social climate of the centres.

Whilst the primary focus of the consultations was on the provision of programmes and services within the youth training centres, it was immediately apparent that broader issues relating to the availability of community programmes, the legal context underpinning any work in youth justice, and the range of services offered by external agencies, were all of direct relevance to the types of programmes that might be both possible and appropriate within the centres.

The term ‘programme’ as used in this report requires some clarification. It is used to refer to specific forms of intervention which aim to meet particular objectives, particularly those relating to the reduction in risk of re-offending. Programmes are therefore distinguished from ‘activities’ which are not necessarily goal directed. This definition is somewhat narrower than that proposed by Families SA in its draft Subprogram Development and Implementation Guidelines (November, 2007) which describes programmes as those services provided or co-ordinated by the agency as a result of the requirements of the juvenile justice system (although we note that one of the aims identified in the Training Centre Action Plan is to ‘engage children and young people in programmes and interventions which challenge and reduce their offending’).

## Findings

The consultations revealed uniformly high levels of dissatisfaction with the way in which programmes are currently structured, and respondents both internal and external to Families SA expressed strong support for renewed efforts to improve the quality and range of programmes that are offered in the youth training centres. The endorsement of a new case management system and the building of a new centre were seen as providing major opportunities for the Youth Justice Directorate to deliver services that adopt a much stronger focus on rehabilitation, and to implement national standards in relation to programming and transitional care.

External agencies were, however, largely unaware of the policy directions of the Directorate, and had little information about the programmes that are currently offered in the training centres. In part, this may relate to the lack of a coherent framework articulating how different programmes might complement each other, and in particular how youth justice staff members and external service providers can deliver integrated programmes that work towards common goals.

Discussion around differentiated responses for low and high risk young offenders in South Australia appears to be in its infancy. The introduction of the new case management system should, again, allow this to happen, although concerns have been raised about how the system will operate in practice. A particular issue here is the training of staff to case manage

in the way demanded by the new system. Staff training is also a significant issue in programme delivery, and there is a dearth of professionally qualified staff currently working in this area. The development of a specialist youth justice intervention team (comprising multidisciplinary professional groups) to oversee, supervise, and deliver programmes is, in our view, essential if a coherent whole of service-based response to programming is to be developed. The effective implementation of a case management system will depend, to a large degree, on the programmes that are available to meet the case goals.

An issue of particular local importance is the development of appropriate and high quality programmes for Indigenous young people. Whilst there was a general recognition that mainstream programmes tend to serve Aboriginal clients poorly, it was unclear from the consultations whether specialist cultural programmes should be regarded as either alternatives to, or as adjuncts to, more offence-focused programmes. In this respect intensive case management and support programmes were generally regarded as having much to offer Indigenous young people who are released from the training centres. There are still questions, however, relating to how such services might best be integrated into a co-ordinated set of youth justice rehabilitative responses and it is recommended that further consultation take place to establish how this might work in practice.

The type of programmes offered should, in our view, be informed by the research literature, in line with the principles underlying evidence based practice, and the particular needs of the South Australian youth justice population. The research literature suggests that the most effective interventions are those that target offenders with the highest risk of re-offending, and seek to change individual needs that are directly related to the criminal behaviour (that is, criminogenic needs), and it is concluded that these principles can, and should, be used to inform the development and accreditation of programmes offered to youth justice clients in South Australia. There is persuasive, though not conclusive evidence, that specialist programmes for those young people who have committed serious violent offences are likely to be effective. In addition, this review suggests that substance use, cognitive and social skills programmes, and interventions to improve family functioning and educational/vocational attainment should form the core of any comprehensive and evidence based approach to service delivery. The views of both residents and staff of the youth training centres suggested that for any programme to be effective it needs to be delivered in environments that are perceived as safe and supportive (by both staff and young people).

In conclusion then, marked similarities can be found among the views of all of those consulted in the course of this review, be they from within the Youth Justice Directorate, from the wider Families SA, external agencies, or clients or staff of the youth training centres. What emerged was a consistent view that significant re-development of youth training centre programmes is required. There would appear to be a need to professionalise the processes and structures that support programme delivery, such that youth justice staff members, young people and their families, and members of the community, can be confident that Families SA is responding to the harms caused by juvenile offending in a way that both meets the needs of those young people who are detained and, importantly, also leads to improved community safety. The interviews with young people who are detained in youth training centres suggested to us that they see themselves as caught between hoping that the centres will make a difference in their lives and believing that they won't. For programmes to be effective they need to promote optimism and hope in both young people and those involved in their delivery. Again this suggests a need for professionally managed, adequately resourced, and effective programmes. When young people come to believe that detention is primarily a tool of social exclusion by a society that has rejected them, the possibilities for change are severely limited.

# 1 Introduction

Often the first steps in initiating change involve not direct action, but creating a framework for understanding what is happening and how things might be different<sup>1</sup>

Over the last five years there has been much discussion in South Australia, and other parts of the country, about the ways in which government agencies can, and should, respond to the needs of those young people who are considered to be at risk, particularly those who are considered to be at risk of offending or re-offending. It is well known and widely accepted that young people who are categorised in this way are likely to have particularly high levels of unmet need across multiple areas of functioning, with ongoing difficulties related to substance use, mental health, family functioning, educational attainment, as well as specific needs in relation to their offending behaviour. The development of age and culturally appropriate services to meet this diverse range of needs in a timely manner presents a considerable challenge to government agencies and other service providers.

Each state and territory of Australia manages young offenders in a slightly different way. In South Australia, responsibility for the provision of juvenile justice services (remand, detention and the administration of all youth justice dispositions from the court) lies with the Department for Families and Communities, and specifically Families SA. There are two youth training centres in South Australia, Cavan and Magill, accommodating children and young people from the ages of 10 through to 18. Cavan accommodates 15-17 year old males on remand or detention orders, or both. Magill accommodates young men of all age groups in three units and all the young women in a separate unit. On average 44% of the residents of Magill and Cavan are on remand but this proportion varies significantly as does the total number of residents on any one day and the length of their stay. In 2006-07 there were 1011 admissions to secure care, representing 500 individual young people. Of the admissions, 14.7% were under the Guardianship of the Minister. Of the admissions, 79.8% were male, 20.0% female and 0.2% unknown. More than one in three (36.5%) were Aboriginal. Despite the large number of admissions, the centres are, by national and international standards, small and rarely filled to capacity. At Magill with 58 places the average daily occupancy for 2006-07 was 33.82 and at Cavan with 36 places the average daily occupancy for 2006-07 was 31.03.

Families SA, Department for Families and Communities, has the lead responsibility for three distinct areas of service delivery: care and protection, anti-poverty, and youth justice. Many of the services offered to youth justice clients are delivered through district centres, and until relatively recently, there was a generic regional approach to community service provision. Approximately two years ago, however, a decision was taken to create two separate Directorates – one with a responsibility for guardianship and alternative care, the other for youth justice. This re-organisation has had major implications for the delivery of programmes and the funding of a range of different community based youth programmes. Youth training centre services and programmes are now managed through the Youth Justice Directorate.

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1. McCleod (2001, p.256). The politics of counselling. In McCleod, J. (Ed.), *An introduction to counselling*. London: Open University Press.

2. Some respondents felt that the number of young people age 18-22 has increased over the last year, possibly as a result of recent legislative changes, current policing practices, and court delays.

The new Directorate has developed a set of principles and standards, a manual of practice (which is nearly completed), and a new case and order management system<sup>3</sup>. It has expressed a strong commitment to the delivery of interventions that are both needs focused, and that can be shown to be effective in preventing re-offending. Indeed, as a provider of specialist justice services to young people, the goal of reducing re-offending has emerged as a Directorate priority in the context of meeting its obligations to young people under the *1993 Young Offenders Act*. At the same time, the Directorate has always had a limited capacity to manage caseloads involving those young people who are not on orders, but who are identified as 'at-risk', or those who have completed orders, or for whom areas of need remain unmet. It is, however, now less likely to accept responsibility for this broader level of service provision, focusing resources on those who are facing criminal charges, or who are serving orders. As a consequence the capacity of the Directorate to provide either universal or targeted prevention programmes has become severely limited, despite a widely acknowledged need (and desire) to offer services to the 11, 12, and 13 year age group, who may not need intensive case management from care and protection, but are nevertheless thought to be at risk of offending.

One of the defining features of the *Young Offenders Act (1993)* is the emphasis that is placed on 'individual' rather than 'general' deterrence<sup>4</sup>. The court is, as a consequence, obliged to carefully consider the effect that any proposed sanction will have *on the individual child*. Given that detention is not typically regarded as in the interests of (m)any young people, it is typically used as a sentencing option of last resort. However, there are other circumstances in which a young person may be detained, such as, for example, when s/he is considered to be in breach of bail when no fixed address is available. In this circumstance young people have to be detained in a youth training centre until a placement is found (usually in foster care or in a residential unit)<sup>5</sup>. Some significant changes in the way the Act is applied may, however, be imminent given that the *Statutes Amendment (Young Offenders) Bill 2007* has now been passed by both Houses and is currently awaiting assent. Amongst other changes, the Amendment allows the Youth Court to declare a young person a 'recidivist young offender'<sup>6</sup>, and apply a different set of rules governing conditional release for such offenders through the proposed Youth Parole Board.

The Guardian for Children and Young People in South Australia is a statutory position that has a mandate for intervention that extends to all children and young people under guardianship or custody orders, including those who are detained on youth justice orders. The Guardian thus has an important role to play in informing the development of services and programmes offered to young people in the youth training centres. Service providers have, however, also identified a need to review and develop programmes. In 2006, a new single secure care facility was announced which, when built, will combine the existing youth

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3. Changes to the Directorate structure have been introduced during this project in relation to metropolitan and country service provision.

4. Concerns have been expressed about this principle being eroded in the *Statutes Amendment (Young Offenders) Bill 2007*. In particular, the Amendments to the Act require community safety to be taken into consideration when dealing with young people.

5. This situation of detaining young people in secure custody because of lack of community accommodation options was considered to be unsatisfactory by all of the service providers interviewed in the course of this review.

6. The criteria by which terms such as 'recidivist' and 'appreciable risk to the community' are to be operationalised are currently unspecified.

training centres on a single site. One of the seven key improvement areas identified in the Training Centre Action Plan, the document guiding the development of the new centre, is in the area of *intervention models and practice*, an area of increasing importance given recent proposed legislative changes (including Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and mandatory sentencing) which it is widely believed, will lead to a significant rise in the number of young people who are detained. It would, therefore seem timely to review the existing programmes that are offered to young people in secure care settings and gauge a range of different perspectives on how services and programmes might be further developed.

What is clear from any review of the literature into programmes for young offenders is that programmes do work. The reductions in recidivism associated with programme completion for young offenders have been reported to be as high as 60%, although a figure of around 30-40% is probably more realistic for programmes that are appropriately designed and delivered by well trained and supported staff. Reductions in recidivism of this magnitude are socially significant in terms of the costs to the community that are associated with responding to and repairing the harm caused by offending. Indeed it has been shown that any financial costs associated with programme delivery are more than offset by the savings to the community associated with reductions in offending. There is, therefore, a strong case for significant investment in programmes that reduce the risk of young people re-offending.

The aim of this review is to provide direction on how programmes in the two South Australian youth training centres might be improved to better meet the needs of young people, to stimulate discussion and action on how existing programmes might be adapted and new programmes introduced, and to identify potential improvements to the environment in which programmes are offered. The purpose of the review then is to provide an overview of current service delivery issues facing programme providers, the perspectives of key stakeholders, and offer direction as to the further development of services and programmes. The term 'programme' is used in this report to refer to specific forms of intervention which aim to meet particular objectives, particularly those relating to the reduction in risk of re-offending. Programmes are therefore distinguished from activities which are not necessarily goal directed. Programmes in secure care have a relatively long history, dating back at least as far as 1993 when a drug and alcohol programme was first developed, trialled, and the outcomes documented.

The review was undertaken over a five month period from June to November 2007. It is comprised of four parts: first, a review of the literature relating to the current evidence base for interventions for young offenders (published as a separate report, but summarised here); second, a series of interviews with identified key stakeholders, both from within and outside the Youth Justice Directorate; third, focus groups with residents of the two centres; and finally a survey of centre staff relating to their attitudes about the environment in which programmes are offered. Ethical approval to conduct this project was obtained from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee and the Families and Communities Research Ethics Committee, Department for Families and Communities. A series of observations are made about the current status of programmes in the youth training centres, and the report concludes with a set of recommendations for consideration by Families SA and other stakeholders.

## 2 Literature review

Part 1 of this report, which is published separately, is dedicated to a comprehensive review of the literature relating to theories and practice in youth justice. This review has been written to provide an up to date account of the current status of evidence relating to programmes that are offered to clients of the Youth Justice Directorate that are likely to reduce the risk of further offending. It provides the context for this report and as such readers are recommended to read this in full.

In any service that purports to be 'evidence-based', it is important that decisions around the organisation, structure, and delivery of programmes can be made in the light of what is currently known about programme effectiveness. Evidence can take two forms: theories and models about how to understand the reasons why young people offend, and hence their likely need for intervention; and evaluations and trials of programmes that have been used with juvenile justice clients.

The literature review concludes with the observation that the youth justice practitioner's task is a complex one that involves trying to integrate what theory has to offer with what is known to work, and then use this information to design and deliver interventions that target specific causes of crime. While developmental theories of crime take different approaches, the factor most consistently shown to be causal in terms of crime is antisocial behaviour. Moreover, there is consistency<sup>7</sup> within these theories in terms of how antisocial behaviour develops: the theories stress the socialisation process and subsequent social bonds that the young person forms as being paramount to the development of pro-social behaviour. There is a strong body of empirical evidence to support this theory, with the established predictors of recidivism being (1) antisocial values, (2) antisocial peers, (3) poor self-control, self-management, and pro-social problem-solving skills, (4) family dysfunction, and (5) past criminality.

The next question then is how programmes can be designed to target these predictors. As a starting point, we now have a clear idea of what does not work. Research has shown the following approaches do little to reduce offending/re-offending: boot camps, punishment-oriented programmes (for example, 'scared straight' programmes), control-oriented programmes (for example, intensive supervision programmes), wilderness programmes, psychological interventions that are non-directive or insight-oriented (for example, psychoanalytic), and non-intervention (as suggested by labeling theory). Programmes that target low-risk offenders or target weak predictors of criminal behaviour (for example, self-esteem) have also been shown to be ineffective.

The research literature suggests that the most effective interventions are those that target offenders with the highest risk of re-offending, and seek to change individual needs that are directly related to the criminal behaviour (that is, criminogenic needs), and it is concluded that these principles can, and should, be used to inform the development and accreditation of programmes offered to youth justice clients in South Australia. In addition, there is persuasive, though not conclusive evidence, that specialist programmes for those young people who have committed serious violent offences are likely to be effective. For other youth justice clients, the

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7. With the exception of Moffitt who takes a biological approach to its manifestation.

review suggests that substance use, cognitive and social skills programmes, and interventions to improve family functioning and educational/vocational attainment should form the core of any comprehensive and evidence based approach to service delivery.

The conclusion to be drawn from the literature review is that programmes for young offenders do indeed work. Well designed and well delivered programmes have been shown to produce reductions in re-offending that are not only impressive in size, but also economically defensible. When the costs associated with programme delivery have been calculated in relation to the costs associated with re-offending, the financial savings have been shown to be as high as \$15,000 for *each* programme participant. This provides a strong rationale for significant investment into high quality programmes that adhere to the best practice research described in the literature review.

## 3 Consultation

### 3.1 Programmes in youth training centres

The organisational and legal context in which programmes are offered has important implications for the type of programmes that should be offered within the youth training centres. Given that the Youth Justice Directorate now has a primary responsibility to deliver services that meet the requirements of the legal system, it is immediately apparent that the primary aim of programmes should be to manage the young person in ways that, where possible, minimise the risk of conditions being breached or further offences being committed. As such the focus of this review is on those programmes that seek to rehabilitate young offenders rather than on other types of programmes, such as primary and secondary prevention programmes for adolescents considered to be at risk.

This section of the report describes the views of those interviewed about programmes that are currently offered in the two youth training centres. It is important to note that respondents had differing levels of familiarity and engagement with the secure care system, and the programmes that are offered in the centres. This report largely captures the *perceptions* of a range of stakeholders. Whilst many of the comments made were quite critical of the current status of youth training centre programmes, it was apparent that all respondents were committed to the development of high quality programmes that meet the needs of youth justice clients. It is also important to note at the outset that whilst some respondents were very critical, a number made specific comment on what they saw as the high levels of motivation and commitment of youth justice staff to deliver and implement programmes within the organisational and operational constraints that exist in the centres. A review of the programmes and activities that have been offered in the centres also reveals that despite some of the operational difficulties in delivering programmes in secure environments, considerable activity has occurred in both centres over the last year.

#### 3.1.1 Case management

Case management refers to the social or administrative context in which interventions take place. It is widely recognised that an effective case management system is critical to the effective delivery of programmes. Case management provides the structure in which programmes are delivered and thus provides the assessment and case planning activities; it sets the objectives, tasks, activities, and plans the sequencing or scheduling of any required tasks or interventions (both individual and group based) for implementing the plan and managing the sentence. The reverse is also true; that an effective case management system relies upon the delivery of programmes that are successful in meeting the goals of the case plan.

Many of the respondents interviewed in the course of this review expressed the view that the current case management system was inadequate to support the delivery of programmes. Indeed, the lack of a justice case management system and experienced professional staff to implement it was identified as one of the most significant barriers to the implementation of a suite of high quality programmes. One respondent commented that ‘there never has been a rehabilitation process in the institutions’ and that ‘it’s very, very ad hoc and, you know, people try and do the best that they can’. Another respondent commented that ‘a lot of what we do is subjective’ and that ‘what we have had to do is just improvise in the best way that we can’.

Such comments point to structural and managerial issues underpinning the current case management system, without which coherent programme delivery is unlikely to be possible.

The Directorate management, however, described themselves as ‘absolutely committed’ to the introduction of a new case and order management system. It is hoped that this system will not only ensure that programmes are developed and delivered to match the needs of clients, but also that it will connect all of the different areas of youth justice business and integrate the number of different liaison teams that are currently involved with an individual client. The aim of the Directorate then, at least when the primary focus for work relates to a justice issue, is to manage the young person in the entirety and co-ordinate different agency responses.

Underpinning the new framework is the notion of ‘differentiated case management’ whereby resources are targeted at those young people who are regarded as at the highest risk of re-offending, and whose offences causes a high level of harm to others. Thus, in order to implement the framework there is a need to separate those young people who have engaged in, and are likely to continue engaging in, extremely serious offending from those who have engaged in repeat, but low level, offending. The programming needs of this latter group are likely to be distinctive and these young people may require a different approach to intervention (for example, from the young person who re-offends in order to get back into one of the centres because of the aversiveness of their circumstances in the community).

Families SA statistics<sup>8</sup> suggest that the general probability of the young person being known to re-offend within six months is around 67%, with the proportion rising to close to 100% when they are tracked over four years, although for many the re-offending will be low frequency and relatively minor in terms of the harm caused to others. In practice, estimates suggest that only around 10% of young offenders commit offences that cause high levels of harm (offences against the person), with property and driving offences being the most common. It is this group (that is, violent offenders) who warrant more intensive intervention under the new case management system, and already some programmes such as ‘Breaking the Cycle’ are being trialled to provide intensive services to these young people<sup>9</sup>. At present, however, there is no established process in place across the system by which to establish which young people might warrant such intensive services.

When a young person is received into one of the centres a detention planning meeting is organised by the Unit supervisor at which all stakeholders should be invited (including community agencies). However no formalised assessment process is followed to establish the young person’s level of risk and dangerousness, or assess needs in a way that might directly inform referral decisions into programmes. There is a weekly case management and review meeting to discuss every resident, although again these meetings do not have a specific focus on programmes that might effectively manage the risk of future re-offending. Indeed one respondent commented that staff members would often not have any information about the offences a young person had committed<sup>10</sup>. The respondent said that much more could be done here: ‘There’s not a lot done around case planning, assessment and linking like an assessment to a case plan’. There are plans, however, to change this. The draft

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8. As reported by one respondent.

9. ‘Breaking the Cycle’ is not a dedicated programme for violent offenders and currently offers services to a wide range of offenders.

10. This appears to apply equally to external stakeholders – one external service provider reported that they had been asked by DFC/DECS staff not to speak to residents about their offending during the course of programmes.

guidelines developed by the Youth Justice Directorate as described in the draft document Section 12 Subprogram – Development and Implementation, offers a ‘general guide’ to matching levels of risk and need to programme intensity, such that, for example, young people identified as Tariff 1 (high risk) with high or moderate to high levels of need should attend group programmes for between four to eight hours per week over a minimum of ten to fifteen weeks. The identification of those young people who are at higher risk of re-offending is something that should be based on a structured, rather than clinical, approach to assessment. The risk assessment component of the new case management instrument allows for this, but requires validation with the South Australian population such that appropriate risk classifications can be determined. These analyses should also include cut-off scores for age-related groups, and exceptional offender groups (for example, sex offenders, violent offenders).

### **3.1.2 Conditional release**

The aspect of the legal process that is perhaps most relevant to programming in the training centres is when young people are subject to detention and conditional release orders. Day release has also been used to allow detained young people to attend community based programmes<sup>11</sup>. Whilst it would be unusual for someone to be detained for the purpose of receiving an intervention or programme (given the focus in the Act on deterrence), requiring young people to attend a programme as part of a community order (for example, as a condition of a suspended sentence) is relatively common. This can be as either a specific condition, or more commonly, as a result of a broader directive when a young person is placed under the supervision of the Youth Justice Directorate and attends those programmes which are directed by the district centre worker.

Under the conditional release system, the court is able to place conditions on a young person’s early release from detention. Often the conditions imposed are relatively standard, typically involving a residency condition and a condition to report to a district centre. An important service that is currently offered at Cavan is the provision of information sessions to young people about the conditional release system, to help clients understand the obligations that are placed on them. In the past the main purpose of reporting, at least from the perspective of the judiciary, has been to monitor the young person. Conditions for conditional release may also include a specific requirement to attend a programme, and it is quite common for a condition to be imposed that requires a young person to attend the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) Flexicentre, an alternative schooling programme for young people who are unlikely to successfully engage in mainstream schooling. This is one way of ensuring that the young person is monitored very closely (conditional release is revoked following non-attendance), as well as meeting statutory obligations in relation to education.

Other types of conditions are less commonly applied. For example, specific conditions relating to substance use are not common, in part because there is currently no effective means to monitor or police this (unless on home detention, when urine analysis is possible). Conditions relating to who a young person is allowed to associate with, although clearly relevant to the risk of further offending, were described as ‘an exercise in futility’, given that most youth justice clients would be likely to quickly breach any conditions imposed (this then

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11. This has, however, become relatively uncommon in recent years following an incident when one young person re-offended whilst on day release. Despite this there was almost universal agreement that day release is a valuable initiative.

creates a difficult situation in which a decision has to be made about whether a breach is considered sufficiently serious to revoke the conditional release order). Rarely were conditions made involving interventions with family units. Generally this was seen as ‘something that just happens coincidentally rather than as a response to any court directive’. Again, whilst the court does have the power to require parents or carers to enter into some sort of undertaking, this isn’t seen as a very practical or realistic option. One final issue with the current system of conditional release arises in circumstances when a young person is regarded as presenting a serious risk of re-offending, but is due to be released anyway within a few months having served the full order. The general response here is to grant, rather than deny, conditional release (with tight conditions) rather than release later without any support or supervision in place, even when there are concerns that it may be unsuccessful.

These observations highlight the central importance of through-care to the effectiveness of youth training centre programmes, suggesting an important role for conditional release and day release in facilitating programme attendance and engagement.

### 3.1.3 Programming

Underlying most effective systems of programming is a clearly articulated policy framework. A framework at the very least describes the purposes of any interventions that are offered, the type of interventions that are likely to meet these purposes, and the roles and responsibilities of those involved in programme management and delivery. At the time of writing no policy framework was available detailing these issues, although one is currently under development. The draft guidelines developed by the Youth Justice Directorate<sup>12</sup> propose that responsibility for programmes should be delegated to a ‘Programme Committee – Youth Justice’ comprising (as a minimum) a Senior Youth Justice Officer, a Senior Policy Officer (or delegate), and a Senior Aboriginal Youth Justice Officer.

A general view that was expressed by several respondents was that programmes have been developed to meet the needs of the current case management system rather than in ways that might be consistent with good practice in this area. The process for introducing new programmes is not articulated, although external service providers seeking to deliver programmes in the centres are asked to submit a written statement outlining the aims and objectives of their programme, the target group, and method of delivery. One respondent commented: ‘whoever’s got the loudest voice at the moment gets up’; another that ‘it’s up to individual case workers and supervisors to work out what’s right and to try and manage this avalanche of pressure that’s there’. One person summarised the situation as follows: ‘there’s been a history of people doing their own thing really’ and, with some notable exceptions, programmes in both centres were generally described as being fairly superficial in nature, and low in both intensity and integrity. At the same time there appears to be limited resources for delivering a broad suite of programmes. The budget for programming was described as both limited (‘we have to do everything within a small budget’) and inadequate (‘we need a psychologist, a psychiatrist, different counselling services. We don’t have any of those people, and to try to get them is very difficult and there are high costs associated with it’). A view was expressed that opportunities to provide one-to-one counselling were not fully utilised at the present time. In addition, the Client Services’ teams in the centres have responsibility for a number of different areas of practice, such that specialisation in programming is unlikely to occur (‘I think the people in the positions do the best that they can with what they’ve got’).

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12. As described in the draft document Section 12 Subprogram – Development and Implementation.

The process by which programmes are currently managed can be characterised as follows. At the start of each term, a programme timetable is developed that fits in with the school timetable. An attempt is made to schedule what are considered to be core programmes such as victim awareness, challenging offending, and drug and alcohol misuse. Programmes are run in line with the school day (that is, the first lesson is 9.00 until 10.30, then 11.00 to 12.15, and 1.00 until 2.30), and are typically completed over a two to three day period. One person commented: 'there can be problems with finding the time to run programmes because there are other activities that the youths are involved in, they have school during the day then when they come back to their units and usually there's a lock down period and they go out and do some recreation, they go to the gym or in the warmer months go for a swim. It's very difficult to find the time just where are you going to slot in this activity so as you're not necessarily taking away from something else'. Another person also considered the priority given to educational programmes to be problematic, given that many residents are not motivated to attend programmes after a day at school ('A lot of our young people don't want to do programmes after school hours'). Most programmes are voluntary, relying on the motivation of both young people (and staff) for them to be delivered. As a general rule girls and boys are not mixed in the same programme, but there are some exceptions to this which are determined on a case by case basis.

The programmes themselves are typically delivered by a Programmes Officer and a Senior Youth Practitioner who is largely responsible for the recruitment of participants. It would appear that selection is based primarily on the availability and motivation of those people who are in the centres ('Its pretty much who's here on the day'), rather than on any agreed needs documented in the case plan. Current programmes were described as 'old and outdated' and in continuous need of updating or adapting for use with specific groups (for example, simplified for those with insufficient literacy skills to participate, or requiring new materials and exercises to be developed for programmes that are perceived as too basic and boring for participants). Generally, respondents saw a need for the development of more offence focussed programmes (for example, 'I don't think there is enough focus on the offending side of things'), in the context of other programmes that meet the range of other needs with which young people present. Some concern was also expressed about the capacity of programme providers to meet the needs of those serving longer orders who may have already completed the suite of programmes on offer. In addition it was felt that there was a need to ensure that older clients receive age appropriate interventions and where possible not be transferred into adult facilities<sup>13</sup>. In addition respondents felt that particular consideration should be given to the development of programmes for young women, who are regarded as having a different set of needs from young men, primarily in relation to mental health issues and substance use.

There was some cynicism expressed about the Directorate's commitment to develop new programmes that are aligned with best practice. One respondent suggested that 'talking about evidence based practice is fine as long as we don't have to actually put in too much in the way of effort, time, resources and actually collecting some of that evidence', and that 'evaluation is regarded as not as valuable as being at the front line and being directly involved in providing services. It is really [seen as] something of a luxury - time permitting fine, but really generally we're under resourced we really don't have a lot of time for this'. Another

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13. There has been some discussion in the UK about the possibility of targeting services towards a 'young adult' age group, age 18-24, prompted largely by concerns about the immaturity or vulnerability of young adult offenders in mainstream adult prisons. Juvenile offenders are more likely to report physical, psychological or verbal forms of bullying than young offenders and, it has been suggested, may be 'contaminated' through exposure to more criminally entrenched and sophisticated offenders.

commented, given the lack of evaluations that have been conducted that 'I'm personally skeptical about the rigour of the programmes that they offer'. It would also appear that when evaluations have been conducted (for example, STAR, victim awareness programmes) the results have not been used to inform decisions about programme provision, and programmes are adapted or changed (for example, reduced from ten to five sessions) when no evidence exists to support the delivery of the shorter programme. Whilst this probably reflects the pressure felt by programme staff to deliver some service, especially when practical constraints (for example, relating to the number of potential participants or staff availability) limit what might be possible, it does potentially undermine the efficacy of programmes. One respondent noted that 'I can also understand that they want to do something and at times there's considerable pressure to be seen to be doing something, the question of effectiveness is somewhat to one side... ..but who knows whether they're effective'. At the same time, however, feedback about programmes is routinely sought from participants, is generally very positive, and is used to inform the way in which subsequent programmes can be delivered in more responsive ways. Such issues underscore the importance of developing ways of assessing and improving what has been referred to as 'programme integrity'.

Some respondents made particular comment about the environment in which programmes are delivered. It was suggested by one person that 'security rather than programming drives the system', possibly, in our view, because of the explicit focus in the *Young Offenders' Act* on deterrence and punishment, rather than rehabilitation. Somewhat unsurprisingly most regarded the facilities at Magill as woefully inadequate, not only for programme delivery purposes, but also for visits. One external person commented: 'I don't know what they call the room but the kids have actually painted up the room and that's where they have their family visits but they've still got to sit across the table... ..they're not allowed to have a hug. I understand, you know, let them have a hug from their mum or their aunty or their grandma if they're the only person they've got on the outside world'. Another noted that: 'It's ridiculous they leave that education unit they go out the door they get searched with the metal detector, their hair gets searched so they don't have a pencil in there'. Others made comment about the social environment of the units, and the apparent focus in the centres on problems and deficits rather than strengths. One respondent spoke about a perceived lack of optimism from some youth workers who 'wait for them [residents] to stuff up' and 'write people off'. In addition, comment was made about the importance of other activities (for example, whole of centre sporting events; board games) in promoting a culture in which change is both encouraged and supported.

Finally, there are clearly practical issues that restrict what is possible in terms of programming. For example, the large proportion of remandees at Magill make it difficult to offer more intensive programmes that address criminogenic need; the small number of young women in detention makes it difficult to find programmes that are developmentally appropriate for all those on the unit given the range of ages of the young women. However, the lack of cohesiveness between the education timetable and other programmes remains the most significant issue, and whilst it is clear that every effort is made to accommodate programming needs within the school curriculum, a more integrated approach would enhance the likely effectiveness of those programmes that are offered.

### 3.1.4 Education

Currently one school operates across the two centres, delivering core curriculum to young people under the age of compulsion (currently 16 years in South Australia). At Cavan young people over the age of 16 are also encouraged to attend school. Efforts are made to make the school environment as close as possible to mainstream schooling, and the school is well-resourced in terms of equipment and technology. They are also able to have assemblies at least once a term (run by the students) and a Student Representative Council. Every morning starts with physical education for thirty minutes, which is then followed by lessons in literacy and numeracy. As soon as is practical (usually after a few days) the education staff develop a 'personal learning plan' which documents those areas of curriculum considered appropriate for each student.

A lot of negotiation and consultation has to occur with the education staff to ensure that programmes are scheduled when young people are available to attend. Generally relationships between Youth Justice and Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) staff appear to be very good, and timetabling difficulties are usually successfully resolved. There has, however, been some discussion about how programmes and schooling might be better integrated in the new centre (a 'structured work day'), where programmes are offered in five week cycles allowing groups of young people to attend programmes as a group, with minimal disruption to their education. There have also been some examples where teachers have co-facilitated programmes with youth justice staff members (notably the recent Plus Plus programme) and this appears to have been a successful arrangement<sup>14</sup>.

A number of vocational training courses are also offered by DECS, although some respondents felt that given the particular value of these more could be done, especially in terms of funding young people to pursue different pathways. Vocational training programmes are tailored as far as is possible to meet the needs of the individual student. These include short courses in tyre fitting, forklift, hair and beauty, drivers license, and building. Where possible these programmes are accredited (through the Introductory Vocation Education Certificate), and indeed the school pursues any other opportunities to formally recognise learning (for example, points are available in SACE for the development of a 'personal learning plan'). A number of youth workers have been trained for Certificate 4 accreditation purposes, allowing attendance at programmes to be accredited. Education is also available for those in the community through the Flexi Centre and DECS fund teachers to work in other programmes (such as Special Programmes for Youth), and other outreach programmes (for example, the federally funded Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM), and more recently, Connections). In addition external agencies (primarily Service to Youth Council) work closely with the school to engage young people whilst they are resident in the centre and identify a vocational and employment pathway for them after release. This would appear to be a strong model of collaborative service provision, although one which is primarily embedded within the education services, rather than the Youth Justice Directorate. Again, whilst in practice difficulties rarely arise and communication between agencies is good, there is no formal process to ensure that the case plans and programmes offered by these providers are consistent with the centre case plans.

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14. One advantage of co-facilitation is that programme learning can be transferred back into personal learning plans (and therefore contribute to SACE outcomes), although teachers typically have little training in delivering therapeutic programmes.

The following vignette highlights some of the difficulties inherent in integrating educational and vocational services within a youth justice case plan:

A young boy got his forklift license with us in Cavan the other day. I was interviewing him for something and I said 'what do you think - you're out in a week or two?' and he said well my main problem is I'm really scared about whether I'm going to stay off the drugs. He was really saying to me if you put me into something where it's going to be so hard and stressful then I won't be able to keep off drugs.

In this example, the education staff, whilst focusing on vocational training became aware of how their involvement may influence other areas of need, highlighting the need for good communication between different service providers (DECS, Youth Justice, and drug and alcohol service in this instance). Limits on the extent to which information can be shared across agencies has restricted multidisciplinary working, although significant progress appears to have been made in this area in recent years.

There were differing views about the value of education ranging from the view that basic literacy and numeracy was critical to reducing the risk of re-offending through to pessimism about the effectiveness ('I know they do wonderful things... but I don't know that I see real, major outcomes'), and the value of programmes, (such as work experience) that don't necessarily lead to vocational pathways. Such comments highlight the critical importance of close working relationships between training centre and education staff. Whilst these appear to be reasonably strong in terms of case management, there was a perception that educational needs are often given priority in the case plan, with other programmes having to fit around the school timetable. This reflects a more general view that programmes are not given a high enough priority in both of the training centres.

### **3.1.5 Staff training**

There was general agreement about the lack of investment in staff development and training in the youth justice arena. For some this reflected a view that the work is in some way less sophisticated or important than other areas of Families SA business. Consistent with this view, Directorate management commented on the ongoing need to create a new discourse within the agency that youth justice service represents a distinctive area of activity that requires a specialist skill set, knowledge base, and skill competencies.

Several respondents expressed frustration at the generally low level of training and qualifications in areas relevant to programme delivery, particularly for those staff members who are responsible for programme delivery. One person identified the lack of professionally qualified staff working in the Youth Justice Directorate as a major issue, with current staff, particularly psychologists, having little or no day to day presence in programme delivery and very limited availability to offer consultancy, support, or supervision services to programme providers. Support for youth workers in the general management of the young people from professionally trained staff would also be welcomed ('Staff need help around the behaviour management of kids. A lot of staff are reluctant to 'consequence' kids for fear of where it is going to go'; 'A lot of staff are jaded, and that shows in their attitudes and the language that they use around them [young people]').

Training more staff in programme delivery is, however, not likely to be a simple solution. One person commented: 'we've trained hundreds of staff on how to run anger management programmes, for example more than two hundred - how many of them ended up running

anger management programmes? about three'. The point made here is that many of the people who have been trained do not have the right background to run programmes. An additional issue is that programme delivery is not a protected role for non-specialist staff who often experience constraints in the time they have available to prepare and deliver programmes. Delivering programmes therefore becomes an additional duty ('most staff will probably tell you that they're already so busy with doing whatever it is they have to do that taking on additional tasks is that's fine but then take away something that I'm already doing rather than just giving me more to do').

One of the most pressing challenges for the Directorate is to train staff members in the new case management approach. The Directorate also plans to implement a new competency framework to ensure that staff members are inducted into the approaches that underpin the new case management framework. One person did, however, express doubts that even with training the new assessment would not always be conducted as thoroughly as it should be. It was noted that in Victoria, where the case management model was originally developed, the assessment is administered by community services workers all of whom are professionally trained with tertiary qualifications. Another commented that the new policies may not translate into changes in practice ('you can have the leadership of the organisation pronounce a policy direction or organisational commitment that's not embraced by the rank and file workers').

### **3.1.6 External agencies**

In working with clients with multiple needs, issues of interagency working and the sharing of information between service providers are paramount to the delivery of effective services. For some, recent police activities with young offenders (for example, 'Operation Mandrake') have focused attention on how information is shared, and the levels and types of information that can be used to inform service delivery (that is, information that provides a mandate for the involvement of youth justice services). Historically, governance arrangements underpinning the relationship between Youth Justice and other government agencies have been poorly articulated, although once again significant progress is reported to have been made in this area in recent years. Indeed Directorate management described the connections and relationships with other government departments as 'good', although acknowledged that issues still sometimes arise in relation to the interface between Care and Protection and Youth Justice within the Department.

In part improved communication with other agencies appears to be related to a greater clarity about the objectives and aims of the Youth Justice Directorate. There is now a clear primary focus on the administration of court orders and provision of services as a justice agency. This has provided some boundaries for the work of Directorate staff. Service level agreements with different agencies that are specific to the needs of the Youth Justice Directorate have, however, not been developed. As a consequence there are no documents to determine which services might be provided by external agencies and what youth justice staff might expect for their clients. Somewhat surprisingly, no service agreement with the Education Department is in place, despite the close working relationships that exist between DECS and youth justice staff, both inside and outside of the youth training centres. As a consequence, one respondent commented that 'it is all done on good will and the personalities of people involved and you run around negotiating every little decision about rooms and who's there and who's going to find them'. In addition, the lack of formally

articulated agreements leaves programmes vulnerable to staffing changes and unsustainable over time. It would appear that if key programme staff members left, then the agency would find it very difficult to sustain the current levels of programme delivery.

Training centre staff reported being largely unaware of the services in the community that might be available to their clients: 'Staff could spend hours telephoning around those areas because we're not in the community we don't know what services are there.. ...the workers here do the report to the review board, but it's just madness that we don't know what services we can tap into'. Another commented on the restricted range of services and programmes that are available in the community, particularly for older clients ('There are less and less opportunities to put people into programmes when they get out, especially for older kids'). In other cases, services are available but not always responsive to the needs of young people: 'I've had young people have been released here where they've met their district centre worker once or twice and the onus is on that young person to go and meet with them rather than there be any relationship and the worker taking some responsibility around that relationship, and you know a 15 year old Aboriginal boy is not going to go into a district centre - it's not going to happen yet that's what our system expects'.

At the same time external agencies know relatively little about what is offered inside the youth training centres, often assuming that young people are released without any attempt made to address their needs ('I'm not actually aware of any programmes [offered in the centres] that look at the causes of people's offending and attempt to address those causes, those reasons'). One respondent commented that: 'In our experience it has been difficult to get information about what they're doing' and that as a consequence 'there's not a lot of accountability about how they manage and rehabilitate in the centres'. There was a view expressed by some that Families SA have in the past, and to some extent still do, not see the value in working collaboratively with external agencies ('they have a view that only they are qualified to deal with young people.. ...as a general principle that's where they are coming from'). At the same time most external agencies expressed a willingness to become more involved - in the words of one agency: 'I think that one of the things that has been expressed by the sector very recently is that there does need to be more involvement of the services [in the centres] who will be working with young people after their release'. Although there appears to be scope for external agencies to provide programmes in the centres (by application to the Client Services Manager) ('we want external agencies to come and work with our people'), some felt that opportunities were limited, despite a desire to significantly increase their involvement ('I think there would be a lot of demand from NGOs [to deliver more programmes]').

In other circumstances when attendance at a particular community based programme is mandated as part of a conditional release order, issues arise when external service providers are obliged to report back to the court (via the case manager) when a young person is not attending or participating, or indeed if they become aware that the young person is in breach of the order in any other way. It was clear that the youth agencies felt uncomfortable about any requirement of this kind. It was described as a 'moral bind' for agencies to work from a basis of absolute client confidentiality and voluntary participation, and yet be required to report any behaviour that might constitute a breach. Invitations to participate in conditional release arrangements were thus described as 'an impossible deal for many NGOs to accept'. This difference in approach between client-centred and justice focused agencies further illustrates some of the significant difficulties involved in developing genuinely collaborative working practices between the youth sector and the youth justice service provider.

In conclusion, there would appear to be much scope to co-ordinate services with external agencies more closely, and to develop much closer and more collaborative case management methods. However, this needs to be done within the context of the aims of the different organisations, and agreements reached about issues such as the role of different agency input and the levels of confidentiality that are offered to young people.

### 3.1.7 Aboriginal young people

The biggest single issue identified by the Directorate in these consultations was poor outcomes for Aboriginal<sup>15</sup> youth. There is a view that if the Directorate is able to 'get it right' for Aboriginal clients they will 'get it right for all' and there appears to be a strong commitment from Directorate management to support and develop the delivery of programmes and services for this group. A number of culturally specific programmes<sup>16</sup> are currently offered in the centres (for example, Journey to Respect; the Healing Room; the Grannies Group). These were regarded as valuable and well-received by the clients. At the same time, however, there was an apparent lack of integration between those culturally specific programmes that are offered and the broader approach to case management and integration with other areas of activity.

For many respondents the key to effective working with Indigenous young people lies in the ability of services to maintain or strengthen connections with family members and support systems, especially for those young people who move in and out of the training centres. There was less clarity, however, on what working with families might actually involve, with some respondents suggesting that support programmes were likely, by themselves, to be insufficient to meet the complex problems experienced by these young people. One agency expressed the view that access to young people (particularly at Cavan) was very restricted, advocating for a process of 'agency visitation' where external agencies could visit young people in the centres and talk confidentially to residents in relation to issues of concern and offer help.

Again, an obvious issue that arises here is the communication between different service providers and the potential for overlap in the roles adopted by external service providers and youth justice staff. One community Aboriginal youth service commented: 'we've sat down around the table with them all, with the young person with the family, and it may even become necessary to co-manage a process where we do the supervision and they maintain the case management, and therefore we are then required to go back then to them on a regular basis to bring them up to date with the progress of the situation'. This example shows how collaborative working between Youth Justice and external agencies is possible.

There was general agreement that youth justice services need to be much more flexible in their approach to working with Indigenous young people and, for example, have the freedom to follow up on issues as they arise (such as meeting at a family member's house, or in a shopping centre, or school), as well as being able to respond to crisis situations. In short, there was a widely held view that youth justice staff are constrained or restricted in the types

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15. Note on terminology: In this report, the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal have been used to include both the Aboriginal peoples of Australia and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In recent years, Indigenous has become more widely used, but there is no universally accepted term for referring to those Australians who are the descendants of peoples who lived on this continent prior to European colonisation.

16. These may, however, be as short as a single session.

of service that they are able to offer, and that this impedes their ability to work effectively with Aboriginal youth. One person illustrated this in the following way: ‘You’ll get a kid saying all I need is the bus fare to get home and it might be 10.30 in the morning. If they can get home then you can guarantee they’re not going to get arrested that night so you give them the train ticket, the bus ticket, the bus fare, or go and buy them the bus ticket. Families SA social workers will say well that’s not in our budget so we can’t do that, and then you can guarantee the next morning they will get a phone call saying, you know, Johnnie has been picked up’.

It was also considered essential that young people know what’s happening in the family when they are detained. In the words of one respondent: ‘the biggest frustration for young people in those detention centres is family’. Another respondent suggested that youth justice workers were not always reliable in following up with families, sometimes offering to look into a matter but not getting back to the young person. Similar problems occur in the community, where Aboriginal young people often appear to have great difficulty in accessing mainstream services, particularly if the young person experiences multiple problems. One respondent felt that ‘a lot of social workers realistically did not want to have any real intervention with long term high profile recidivist offenders and used to put them into the ‘unallocated’ section and respond only when another issue occurred. They all tended to want to deal with the passive stuff all the time’. Whilst this is probably an over-generalisation it does raise issues to do with caseloads, the capacity of individual workers to respond to high levels of needs, and possible confusion about the role of the community worker in youth justice. Again it would appear from such comments that there is little by way of a process to ensure that case plans are implemented and that programmes and services that are identified as important are actually delivered.

A particular problem in working with Aboriginal clients is the low levels of trust that exist between Aboriginal people and public servants. In the words of one community service provider: ‘very few kids have real trust in governments and I can assure you of that’. As such culturally specific programmes, both government and non-government funded, were regarded as essential in engaging young people with services. There was a general acceptance that these programmes should be managed and delivered, wherever possible, by Aboriginal people.

### **3.1.8 Strengths and weaknesses**

Each interview concluded with stakeholders being asked to identify three strengths and three weaknesses of youth justice programmes. These responses illustrate the overarching feelings of a wide range of stakeholders towards youth training centre programmes, and are intended to provide a flavour of the comments made in the course of the interviews. The first set of comments related to the organisational and legal context in which programmes are offered. A number of strengths were identified here, including the clear policy directions in which the Directorate is heading (‘there is a real commitment to change from the top’; ‘[the Directorate is] looking at frameworks which will deliver on equity and quality and deliver, you know, on what works and an evidence base’), the structure of services (‘it’s a separate system so [young people are] still treated as young people not as adults and I think that’s really important’), and the *Young Offenders Act* (‘the Act is a good Act that we have to work with and it does look at young people as individuals, not as a general deterrent scenario’). The proposed case management system was seen as a major strength, allowing for the collection of data about the needs of the population and improved sharing of information between agencies. Without exception respondents felt that the small numbers of young

people detained in the youth training centres was a significant strength of the South Australian system.

In terms of weaknesses, comments were made about the profile of the Directorate ('we haven't got a really clear understanding [of youth justice] at a government level'), the lack of resources in regional and rural areas ('the minute you're outside of the metro area well then things are very different'), and limitations of the legal system ('there's still a lot of young people that go through the court process without being represented'; 'there's a fairly limited range of options [for the courts] - you either lock someone up or you don't lock them up, if you don't lock them up you put them on a suspended sentence or an obligation and then you get them to hopefully engage in programmes, so... ..you're making fairly blunt decisions in a way'). Concerns were also expressed about transition planning and the follow up that occurs after the completion of an order ('they don't get the appropriate level of follow-up post detention').

Programmes were described as being generally well-received and responsive to the needs of young people ('the kids do enjoy them [programmes]; you know they participate in their evaluations and appear to have good outcomes'; 'we are able to introduce new programmes'; 'I think there's real positive benefit... ..in some of the literacy programmes work that's done with individual youths'). Flexibility in programming was considered to be essential 'I think its certainly the flexibility and the intensity and the frequency of how often we [Breaking the Cycle] see young people because it is really about that engagement, the relationship we have with them'), as were inter-agency relationships ('a strength is the partnerships [between DECS and Youth Justice] and there is potential, there are partnerships'; 'I believe that outside agencies coming in - I reckon that's a strength and a weakness too in that if they're planned and have a purpose for that group of young people they're a strength, if they're done because they're just always coming they're a weakness').

The main weaknesses of programmes related to their possible lack of effectiveness. ('I am skeptical about the effectiveness of most of the work that's done for youths'; 'its still very much a welfare approach - get him [her] into school, get a mentor so they're busy'; 'young people can go in the system and out the system and then nothing much has really changed for them apart from having that penalty'; 'I think a lot of the time a lot of those programmes can become very tired, a lot of people working in those programmes can become very tired and set in their ways'). Others spoke of the matters relating to programme management ('policy not in place; no framework'; 'we don't want to be re-inventing the wheel we want to be able to sort of bring in and use what's already available'; 'the big negative is the lack of assessment tools'), and integration and throughcare ('there's not enough outside services that are there geared up to support young people'; 'the main weakness is when we [DECS] are seen as a service rather than as a partner'; 'from what I can see there isn't that sort of follow on in terms of what goes on in there'; 'lack of inter-agency programmes').

Views of the staff working at the youth training centres ranged from the very positive ('Magill is an awful place physically but I was very impressed with the level of commitment of the workers at both Magill and Cavan. I think their level of commitment and concern for the young people was outstanding, yeah virtually without exception'), to concerns about training and skills ('the lack of trained staff is the biggest problem'; 'I mean have we got the right people working in these positions doing the right things?'; 'Not a lot of workers talk about building relationships with the young people'; 'Absolutely no one has any idea about adolescent development you know'; 'there's no minimum qualification so people don't have the theoretical knowledge or the link to research').

### 3.2 The views of youth training centre residents<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of this aspect of the project was to elicit views of young people in Magill and Cavan about their perceptions of the therapeutic environment of these facilities and the programmes offered to them during their stay. That is not to say that what follows is necessarily an accurate (or inaccurate) reflection of what happens in the youth training centres, or indeed a reflection of issues that were current in the centres at the time at which the groups were conducted, rather that they reflect how the particular young people we spoke to felt at the time of the interview.

Two focus groups with residents within secure care in two institutions were conducted, each of approximately 80 minutes duration. The discussion was recorded for analysis purposes. The young people had been selected by the institutions and both client and parental/guardian consent had been attained. The ages of these young people ranged from 14 – 20 years, and included one young woman and those who identified themselves as from an Indigenous cultural background and young people who were under the Guardianship of the Minister. All participants had been in secure care for longer than one month, some for over two years, and many had been detained on previous occasions.

We encountered a marked sincerity in the attitude of the young people to the exercise. At Cavan, the young people spoke freely and at length about their perceptions of the institution and their experiences of secure care. Although their participation was known to the staff (they were selected by the institution to participate), they were not under any obvious supervision during the focus group. Their responses showed a degree of consideration for the dynamics and requirements of the system in which they found themselves and a degree of insight into the needs of young people in secure care. At Magill, the young people appeared to speak less freely and their responses were less expansive. This may be due to their age (this was a slightly younger group). They were also aware of being under supervision through a large observation window and were clearly able to see various staff outside the room where the interview was conducted<sup>18</sup>.

The young people presented both positive and negative views of their experience. The young people were respectful and courteous both with each other and with the consultants during the process. They appeared pleased to be heard on a number of issues and were keen to gain feedback.

The following areas emerged as important for the respondents. Where possible, the voices of the young people have been used to exemplify each area, however at times, more lengthy discussions have been summarised.

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17. Focus groups were conducted by Linda Davey and Andrew Day. This section of the report was prepared by Linda Davey.

18. We understand that this is consistent with the visits policy in operation at the Magill Youth Training Centre.

### 3.2.1 General perceptions

For both groups, the immediate response in unison to the opening question, 'what's it like to spend time here?' was 'boring'. This theme was pervasive throughout the discussions and emerged as the defining aspect of their experience of secure care.

It's the same activities every day...we can wake up in the morning knowing everything what we're going to do from 9 o'clock until bed time.

Their experience of boredom was paired with a degree of cynicism towards the possibilities for change, both for the secure care system in which they found themselves and for their lives as a whole.

No its just the same old same old stuff.

Been here too long - there's no best thing and no worse thing - it's just the same old thing.

Its meant to be a training center to do training so when you get out you might be able to do things differently and you're not coming back but it really doesn't really help at all.

The young people felt a degree of frustration that they were wasting time and that that they would emerge from secure care further disadvantaged.

So if you come in here at 16 and then you leave here at 18 technically you're an adult and if you come in here at 16 you've been in and stayed all the time until you're 18 you get out you don't know how to pay bills, you don't know how to like get work or help anything to do with money, housing.

However, they also experienced the institution as relatively safe, and acknowledged that, whilst limited, the training centres were providing them some level of opportunity and safety that was greater than what they had experienced on 'the outside'. It seems that the level of impoverishment and risk for these young people in the community is so great that any improvement, however limited, is viewed as positive.

Its good because we're not just sitting in here, we get fed, we get our meals, we've got electricity, we get money.

And we're not just locked down.

We get an education, sort of.

Most notably, the residents were aware that training centres provided a respite from drug and alcohol misuse.

There's good food and it gets you off drugs and alcohol.

Well in this case here you can't drink and you can't take drugs, so its keeping you away from that, and if you're in here long enough hopefully when you get out you know you won't think about drugs or alcohol.

As one female respondent explained, the pressures and consequences on the outside for her were much worse than those in detention. Perhaps most concerning of all was the young people's perception that the primary aim of the youth training centres was to keep them away

from the community. When asked what they thought was the aim of secure care, they responded:

I don't see there is an aim.

I see they chuck you in here, you do your time, you get out see you later that's it.

They just chuck us in to get us away from the community, they don't really see how to help us.

Yeah they don't care um and I feel the government they just put you in here to get you away from what you do on the outside and yeah.

In many ways the young people portrayed themselves as rejected by a society that doesn't care, some saw themselves labeled as criminals, and all seemed to exude a pervasive sense of hopelessness as to their future prospects in a society in which they believed they had no place.

What I think the community thinks of us is we're all a bunch of little shits, and all they want is just for us to be locked up, and that's it, the key thrown away, leave us in here - every little criminal. They just don't want us. They don't give us a second chance or anything, that's why it's so hard for some boys to get jobs when they're out, because they've got like a minor maybe, a bit of a shop lifting thing on their criminal record or a stolen car, and the employers go 'no sorry you're not trustworthy, you've got a criminal record, see you later', then they go on the dole and then they're stuck on the dole, and then just loops around and around and around.

### 3.2.2 Programmes

In speaking with these young people it would seem that their definition of a 'programme' is somewhat broad and that the term is loosely applied to most activities. From their discussion it appears that activities such as sports and crafts, welfare and life skills courses, as well as offending-related sessions, all considered 'programmes'. Participants felt that the availability of these programmes was largely determined by provision by outside agencies or by those generated by internal staff interest. Typically such programmes are not intensive, nor compulsory, and participation does not appear to be determined by any analysis of need.

Generally speaking the young people were positive towards the provision of programmes. They felt that currently there were insufficient programmes and expressed a desire for a greater variety of programmes that would hold their interest. They perceived those programmes on offer as often repetitive and irrelevant.

I don't know just more. More, better programmes, because you do the same programmes every couple of months.

I did [a programme] for a fair few weeks and I ended up finding out the same information I had been finding out before,

You need like different programmes - something more interesting, something we haven't had in here yet.

School holidays were experienced as particularly boring. Residents in both locations were critical of the organisation of activities and programmes during school holidays. Even though

there were some interesting activities on offer such as sports competitions ('I think they also put on canoeing, rock climbing, make go-karts, kite making and stuff like that'), the residents expressed frustration at the amount of time that they were not actively engaged during the school holidays:

We get two lessons each day throughout the school holidays...so that's just nothing much really for us to do just sit in the unit for almost 24 hours 7 days a week doing nothing.

Its just the same programme over and over again - for the whole school holidays you're stuck with the same residents - you see the same faces every day.

Programmes appeared to consist of activities (sports, crafts etc), skills development and well-being sessions (Indigenous, health related, life skills) and some offending-related programmes (anger management, victim awareness, cognitive skills). Somewhat surprisingly, the most well received programmes were those that might be called offending-related programmes. This was especially so for the 'Plus Plus' programme - an intensive, offending-related cognitive skills programme. The Cavan residents we spoke with who had participated in the Plus Plus pilot, were quite well informed about this programme, were articulate about its content and aims, and were quite positive about its value.

A programme from England that's just come over here and it's called the Plus Plus Programme, and it helps you to solve problems and reflect on stuff - and like before something happens you can stop, you can think about it, and then make a different choice. And just heaps of problem solving skills with like different life circumstances - like if I was to come up and say 'you owe me money', how would you deal with it and stuff like that. Just everyday stuff.

I thought it was quite helpful.

Yeah it's very benefiting.

Because you don't just, like, its not on impulse. Most of us do a lot of things on impulse. That programme helps you think before you do it, so 'I don't want to do that'. You look at the consequences.

Yeah just trying to work out why you did it and what you got out of it and what you could have done instead, and have different circumstances in the end.

The young people also spoke positively about the intensity of this programme and found that the longer and more intensive programme was helpful:

The good thing about the programme - it was like intense. Not like some other programmes - there's only one like two days a week - but this one's every day every day of the week for about four weeks.

Yeah 20 sessions.

An hour and a half as soon as you wake up in the morning...the first lesson first hour and a half was BANG! Plus Plus Programme, and then after that was normal school work and that actually stuck with the boys a bit better.

The young people at Magill also spoke positively about a Victim Awareness programme which included a visit from a woman who told her story about being a victim of a home invasion. Once again, these young people seem quite prepared to do offence-related work - this time victim awareness. From our discussions, it is unclear how much they gained from this programme, however it is clear that they remembered her story, found it interesting and felt some form of empathic response to her story.

Residents also mentioned safe driving courses, challenging offending behaviour and anger management courses.

On the negative side, it would appear that the rehabilitative benefits of the offence-related programmes were perceived by the young people to be occasionally inhibited by staff response back in units which was contrary to programme content:

The programmes and that some of them are alright but you know you try to keep it in mind, but when you go back and the staff are playing power trips - your mind's somewhere else yeah.

### 3.2.3 Education/schooling

There was a degree of ambivalence surrounding residents' views of education and training within the institutions. On the one hand, opportunities for fulfilling educational requirements and extending exposure to new areas and new opportunities were appreciated.

You get more opportunities that you wouldn't get on the outside because you wouldn't have the money and stuff to get to go to the TAFE or something, so yeah, you find something you're interested in, like open access and stuff.

On the other hand, schooling within secure care was seen by others to be irrelevant and poorly matched to individual needs. This was largely due to the perception that schooling within secure care was compulsory regardless of age.

I'm 20 next month and they're saying rules apply to everyone.

There was also marked frustration expressed about the lack of relevancy:

Like we're in groups now - the group I go around with, like every second day we get literacy and numeracy, and I'm like up to year 11 year 12 literacy and numeracy skills, and they try and teach me back down to year 7 literacy and numeracy stuff. I just get really annoyed, saying why have I got to do this - I'm past this - and they go 'just do it, just do it', and I just end up doing it otherwise you go to your room, and I get so annoyed I have the same argument every second day.

Yeah and we virtually get forced to do it, if we don't do it we go back to doing it even though its too easy for us we still have to do it and virtually not learning anything.

Yeah like even if you're too old to go to school like me.

It would appear from these descriptions that individual educational needs are inadequately accommodated, reinforcing some residents' perception that they are being held back from moving on with their life:

I'm wasting so much time in here. I could be doing metalwork, woodwork. Actually working towards getting a job on the outside instead of sitting and doing year 7 work, which is ok for some of the boys because they're not quite up to the same level as me, because they haven't had as much help at school because like family life, but like I'm wasting so much time.

The residents were particularly focused on the need for vocational training. They appeared eager to receive any vocationally oriented training that would result in increased opportunity to gain pro-social employment. They placed a high value on recognised certificates and expressed some frustration with any impediments to gaining work related skills:

Yeah the same with the metal workshop, I want to try and get all my welding in but they won't let me do a certificate here so I spend half my time wasting my time because I'm not going to get a welding certificate.

Like, say they want to become a carpenter when they get out, they can do a course in here but it only gives you a little bit of the course, it doesn't actually give you the hours.

Something you can actually get when you walk out of here like certificates - more certificates.

Give us proper certificates.

The residents not only saw vocational training as desirable to provide opportunities for employment, but viewed it as the way out of their situation, as the major path towards rehabilitation.

And what I see is jobs are something that keeps like boys and some young adolescents out of trouble because they're doing something eight hours a day. Out of that eight hours they're learning something on the job and after work they'll be too tired they'll go home and yeah they'll just stay out of trouble.

If this was kind of like a training centre, like full training centre, like one part was you're trained to be a welder, another part you're trained to be a carpenter, another part you're trained to be a mechanic, if it was like that, a lot of people would leave this place with jobs and might do something good.

And plus they're earning their own money - they don't need to go and steal for money like they earn their own money - they can go buy themselves a feed or buy themselves clothes or shoes or whatever they need, they don't have to go out and steal it.

When asked what they would choose to do in secure care if they could make a choice, they responded:

Work and earn money.

Do a lot more training courses.

These do not seem to be young people that by choice wish to lead unproductive lives, given optimal rehabilitation opportunities. There were positive comments regarding any trade courses with qualifications that had been offered which assist employment prospects such as the Hospitality Certificate 1, 2, and 3. Even amongst the younger residents, work-relevant courses and certificates were valued, seen both as relevant to future employment and as a token of rare experiences of achieving:

The girls did a baby sitting class...like we did it from 9 o'clock in the morning till like 5 o'clock at night and like went for hours and we got a huge certificate for it.

In accordance with this desire to develop employment prospects and opportunities, residents spoke of the benefits of day leave privileges so that job placement could occur.

Q: So you used to go out and do a placement somewhere?

Yeah, it would be good to get that again.

They were aware that these privileges had been recently withdrawn, but did see them as beneficial.

Be able to get day leave so you can go get a job and like earn some extra cash instead of the 11 dollars a week.

### 3.2.4 Staff

The residents' perception of staff was varied. There was some marked ambivalence in resident attitudes to staff - expressions of trust and confidence were mixed with a deep sense of conflict and mistrust. In the light of the importance of every day relationships of carers who are in constant close proximity to the young people, the quality of these relationships is significant.

Yeah some of them actually work with you but some of them just work against you.

Some really help the kids out you know yeah they really know what they're doing.

Hate the place got a couple of smart arse staff here and they try to scare me.

This ambivalence was a feature of all the group discussions of resident-staff relations. It was also indicative of both the degree of need in this incarcerated population and consequential imperatives regarding resourcing and training of staff.

Negative perceptions of staff are to be expected within most controlled settings, however problematic relationships within juvenile settings can produce particular obstacles to intervention with young people in need and the rehabilitation of young offenders. Although, the young people were often critical of staff, they also showed some insight into the nature of the problems and were aware of differences in response between staff members.

The residents appeared particularly sensitive to any perceived unfairness or lack of respect by staff. Interactions that were experienced as excessively controlling or inhibiting autonomy received negative comment.

Because I get picked on and that from the staff. Um then I just go off my head yeah, especially at the staff.

Attitude, power trip, some of them are on a major power trip, they think because they've got a radio and a set of keys they can treat you like nothing like they try and be your parents.

Most of the time they try and treat you like little kids, knowing that you're actually legally an adult.

It's a pain in the butt getting told what to do all the time.

The groups seemed to regard some staff as manipulative and gave examples of staff members provoking incidents. In the eyes of the young people these incidents were intended to give the staff some 'time out' by locking down units, as a 'power trip' or as 'entertainment'.

Some staff pick some residents out that they know is going to fire them up and cause lock downs and stuff like that so they don't have to work and shit, so they get their like half an hour or hour break.

Yeah they provoke it - most staff do.

According to these accounts, incidents between staff and a resident would escalate, the resident would attack the staff member and be locked in his room for long periods. On release the issue would not be discussed or resolved. The group identified a need to change the way these incidents were resolved.

Like even if the staff just sat down with you one-on-one, like the problem resident and the problem staff just sat down and said 'alright this is the problem, how can we go about it without making it escalate into a bigger picture?' so that everyone knows what's going on - to try and keep it small.

These same staff members were also criticised for focusing on punishment rather than communication or problem solving when difficulties arose.

I don't think - some of the power trip staff don't - they sort it out by consequences but they don't sort the problems of the kids out by helping them.

There was particular criticism reserved for inconsistency in rules, with some of the young people interpreting inconsistency as disrespect or over-control.

They just make up rules as they go along.

Different staff have different rules, yeah.

Some always think they know it all, like you just ask them a question they go 'oh no um you know you can't do that' or even if you can do that - you know but they just like putting that power trip on you.

Sometimes inconsistency was experienced as confusing:

Or different teams, like they have different teams and then you have different orders ,so every time a different team comes on its just like it changes all the time - so if they have similar rules you don't get mixed up and that.

They're like all serious when they're restraining someone, they grab them by the neck and all that but after a person's in the cabin you can hear the staff laughing and joking like it was a big joke - and they lock the boys in the cabin lock down - and you see them laughing - it you know sort of stirs in your mind, your mind's going 'what are you thinking, what are they laughing at?' And our unit our cabin, it was right next to the office so you can see them laughing and joking about it.

The issue of trust in resident-staff relations appeared important to these young people, and despite stories of conflict and perceived manipulation, there were many expressions of trust:

Q: And do you trust the staff there?

No.

I suppose.

Oh, I do trust one staff.

I think the majority of us do feel safe around the staff like I think all of us here get on well with the staff and can talk to the staff and stuff like that.

Issues of trust were closely linked with good communication and behaviour management skills. Residents appeared to value these skills in staff and saw deficiencies for some in this area:

Staff members I trust I talk to about the problems of stuff on the outside which are going on and some other staff member I wouldn't.

Yeah some they don't have no idea how to communicate a lot, and they don't have no idea how to communicate when there's problems - there's just one option when there's the group problem - gone and solved it their way, and they go and have their coffee. But there's staff members that take you outside and have a one-on-one talk before the problems get worse - but there's staff that just yeah look at him like he's going in his room.

Residents were aware of deficiencies in staff training, particularly in the area of communication skills, and that this has an impact on the ability of staff to assist residents. When asked whether they find the staff helpful:

They try to I suppose I don't think they know how to.

and they identified incidents where problems escalated through poor communication:

Q: So what would the staff need to be trained in?

How to get along with the boys.

They would have to be trained in how to deal with minor little situations just say one of the boys doesn't want to eat their dinner because they can't eat that certain something or other and he wants something else to eat, someone will go 'no you can just eat that' and the boy just says 'no no no I can't eat that' it goes back and forwards, back and forwards - and then the boy gets chucked away and then gets locked down and then the whole unit gets locked down and its just back and forwards.

Ultimately, it seems that the young residents perceive a cultural and psychological divide between themselves and others, including the staff. One young man quite profoundly urges staff to try to understand residents and to take time to find a middle course:

Yeah because we weren't brought up like them you know, that's what they've got to understand. Well they don't understand like the way we work and not just the way they want us to work - you know like we're all different and stuff you know - and they've never sat down and like asked us sort of like 'what do you think would work?' They might ask us, but they never try it out.

### 3.2.5 Plans

The young people did not seem to have a clear idea of what if any individual detention or case plans were in place for them. Any plans that they discussed appeared to be focused on educational requirements. It would seem that the plans that are made are constructed on arrival, loosely followed' and lack a thorough review process. The young people generally considered the idea of plans to be positive but were concerned that the plans that were in place were often not followed through.

Yeah they try and work out the best plan - how to get whatever you needed accomplished - like it starts off well and then over time it starts to just drop and drop until you're just doing the same stuff and not doing what you need to do.

The lack of review and maintenance of plans seems to reinforce the residents' cynicism about the possibilities of success of their own rehabilitation and of the system in which they find themselves.

At the time they're good, and then you sort of start off with a lot of high hopes and better things happen and then it all fizzles out pretty quickly.

I thought yeah I'll get into wood and metal work courses and get into the school, yeah that I will be alright one day, I will get into TAFE. And it never happened, yeah everything sort of died down – it's all yeah you know 'we're going to do this we're going to do this' but it doesn't. Yeah all falls apart, the only plan I reckon that works 100% is the release plan.

They also believed that the plan is not modified over time according to the young person's changing needs.

Well they stick to it but they don't change it. Like, say I've done this certificate number one in welding, I'll do that again and again and again. They won't go 'oh you've done number one, let's try and help you do number two, number three, four' and so on and so on.

### 3.3.6 Psychological well-being

The young people held the view that there were few professional counselling services that catered for their psychological needs. When asked whether the centre could offer much help with difficulties that were going on for these young people on the outside they replied, 'not really' 'nothing'. The young people recognised the value of confidentiality in services which were independent of staff youth workers.

There's no like counsellors here or anything like that like they have on the outside.

It would be alright if you could talk to someone that doesn't talk to the staff - you know confidential - but when you talk to anyone...they go and tell the staff straight away.

In terms of areas of concern, these young people considered that their families played a central role in the difficulties that they themselves had encountered. The young people in the groups were keen to address family issues, however one young man felt that his family situation had not been considered by the youth justice system.

Yeah the part of the reason why I always get locked up is I'm always like on my way back to my family or like trying to do something for my family you know? I'm trying to see my family you know - they don't understand that you know.

Another young man regretted that the centre would not contact his father.

No they don't really talk to my father. Because they think he still does the shit he does - but he doesn't you know - because they haven't even tried to talk to him or nothing like that.

### 3.2.7 Other residents

With some degree of insight, the young people interviewed seemed to view youth training centre residents as falling into two groups: one group which were ready to move on with their lives, who would be involved with programmes, and the other group whose level of readiness for change was low, and who needed different intervention.

The matured ones would think how we think but there's some here they just don't care.

No they just use it as a revolving door they come in and get their three meals, bed, shower and TV and go out do what they did - party hard, get in trouble and come back - it goes on and on.

We just had one boy this morning at the school, he's about 14 and he's still a little baby inside his head.

Some of the residents stated that other more immature residents were difficult to live with and made living in the centres stressful.

The worst thing is just different people coming in that you don't like.

When asked what they thought would work best for the group that 'doesn't care', some answered that 'nothing' would work, and others thought that more intensive intervention was needed:

Some more intense training for them, like intense so its one-on-one staff sit down and work through or just talk to them what their problem is and what they think will help them.

It was their general perception however that there was little will to assist those who were most difficult.

Yeah some of the boys they don't really care and that - not like more the mature ones. It's like people in here don't want to help them, you know like your staff and those youth workers don't really want to help them.

### 3.2.8 Physical environment

Whilst the young people appreciated the cleanliness of Cavan and Magill and residents enjoyed the sports facilities, most of the young people found the institutions cramped, lacking in privacy and facilities. Magill residents complained that they did not have TVs in their rooms and found the lack of autonomy and control over their shared living environment difficult.

The young people were particularly critical of the space available for visits at Cavan, and the restrictions on movement and privacy during visits. It would appear that there have been restrictions on contact during visits due to contraband entering the centre, although contact visits are currently allowed.

In an adult facility you can actually walk up hug and kiss and do whatever, in here its like you can't even do that - its like shake hands, wow. Your mum that comes in - and you haven't seen her in a couple of weeks and you want to give her a hug you pretty much can't. Like at the moment there's too much stuff floating around apparently, which there isn't anyway, the staff think oh yeah we'll just screw it up for the boys. Some of the boys don't even see their mums for months and they still can't give them a hug, and they have to sit from like me to you away and talk with everyone else listening into a conversation.

I hate it when there's like um like someone right next to you.

They listen to what you're talking about.

Yeah and I get a bit like you know ...

And as you come down with your mum and that um they run across to you and then the staff they want to talk to you after 'You know the rules!' and that.

Especially when my little brother and his nephew comes, they're really energetic and don't know what its like - It's like big brother, like they can't even give their own brother or uncle a hug<sup>19</sup>.

This did not seem to be an issue for the group at Magill. They were able to have contact during visits and were pleased that they could have visits on two days per week.

### 3.2.9 Client suggestions

The focus groups of residents made the following suggestions during the course of their discussions. These suggestions have been summarised (and in doing so have been re-worded). It should be noted that these are the suggestions of the young people and are not recommendations of this report. However, although some of these suggestions are indeed 'wishful', the consultants were struck by the insight that these young people had about the needs of the institution.

In relation to programming and training, there was a request for more intensive offence-related programmes ('why we're here'), more interesting programmes, and less repetition. There was a view that programme participants should be selected according to their readiness to benefit ('trying to pick the right people who are going to sit there and not muck around and do it'). There should be more vocationally-oriented courses leading to certificates/qualifications that assist employment prospects. Opportunities to work whilst at the institution and earn money, as well as developing life skills (such as financial/budgeting skills, finding employment and housing) were considered important, as was day leave in order to take up job placements. The young people identified a need for more staff training, especially in the areas of communication, the consistency with which rules are administered, and listen to residents, involving them more in problem solving.

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19. We understand this policy has now changed.

### 3.3 The views of youth training centre staff

Although a number of youth justice staff members were given the opportunity to contribute to this report, either as an identified stakeholder or as a member of the reference group, there was insufficient opportunity within the constraints of a review of this nature to extensively consult with those staff members who work in the youth training centres. Clearly the views and comments of this group in response to this report would be valuable. We did provide centre staff, however, with an opportunity to comment through an anonymous survey of their perceptions of the social climate.

Investigations into the experiences of those in secure environments reveal that residents typically report a range of concerns. These include a subjective sense of failure, powerlessness, and the impairment of social identity as a result of detention, concerns about surveillance and the over-regulation of their behaviour, and worries about personal safety (see the comments of young people, above, although issues of personal safety did not emerge in the focus groups).

Many of these experiences can be understood as a reflection of the social and emotional environment in which programmes are offered. This is commonly referred to as the therapeutic climate, a term used broadly to refer to the extent to which a unit is conducive to therapeutic change. The interaction between the therapeutic climate and programme outcomes is quite remarkably under-investigated given the long history of anecdotal and ethnographic observations relating to the nature of secure unit cultures and their possible deleterious effects.

In understanding the social climate of a unit, attention should be given to client factors (such as levels of well-being, social support from peers and families, motivation to change, and perceptions of the extent to which treatment has been coerced). People who feel unsafe or unsupported, for example, may be less likely to form the type of relationship with staff and other residents which allows them to make therapeutic change. For example, they may be reluctant to disclose important information about their offences, seek help when experiencing stress, engage with programmes, or seek social support from others. Staff resources to respond to the needs of clients may be influenced by characteristics of the job that are not directly client-related, such as time pressure and the availability of support from colleagues and supervisors. Youth work is recognised as amongst the most stressful of professions, with staff commonly feeling under-resourced to meet the demands of their role. Thus, staff ratings of the manageability of job-related demands and the adequacy of job-related resources may be expected to be related both to their own levels of stress, and to staff and client perceptions of the therapeutic climate. Finally, factors related to the institution itself include its size and purpose. Staffing levels are also likely to be important contributors to the therapeutic climate of a unit.

The physical environment is commonly identified as an important determinant of the social climate, and there is evidence to suggest that the design of a facility will influence the types of management that are possible and the level and quality of interaction that can occur between staff and residents. This is a factor that has been widely acknowledged as constraining what is possible at the Magill Youth Training Centre in particular, providing a rationale for the building of a new centre. However, physical design is not the only factor influencing social climate, and untherapeutic climates can easily exist in units that have been designed to support programme delivery.<sup>20</sup>

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20. See for example the UK investigations into abusive behaviour at the High Security Special Hospitals in the 1990s.

For the purposes of this review, youth training centre staff members were invited to complete a modified version of the prisons and corrections version of the Essen Climate Evaluation Schema (EssenCES<sup>21</sup>). This is a short self-report instrument which purports to assess staff perceptions of three dimensions of climate: Client Cohesion (level of mutual support amongst ‘inmates’), Experienced Safety (versus threat of aggression and violence), and Hold and Support (the effectiveness of the unit to hold and support residents). Each subscale consists of five items scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. As such scores for each subscale could range from 5 to 25<sup>22</sup>. Descriptives for each climate variable across all units are reported in Table 1.

*Table 1*  
*Climate Means and Standard Deviation for both youth training centres*

	<i>no.</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>standard deviation</i>
Client Cohesion	22	11.73	3.38
Experienced Safety	22	9.84	2.77
Hold & Support	22	19.14	2.54

Using a mid-point of fifteen to interpret each scale, these findings reveal that across both youth training centres, at least as rated by staff members, client cohesion was moderately low, experienced safety was very low, while hold and support was moderately high<sup>23</sup>. The standard deviation shows that most of the responses received were around these scores, suggesting some consistency in the responses. Descriptive statistics for each climate variable for each unit are displayed in Table 2.

21. See Appendix 2.

22. Assessment of the reliability of each subscale for this report revealed that Inmate Cohesion had an acceptable level of reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .86$ ), while the reliabilities for Experienced Safety and Hold and Support were low: (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .60$  and Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .55$  respectively).

23. Analysis of the findings by facility revealed that for Cavan, Client Cohesion, Experienced Safety, and Hold and Support were moderately low, very low, and moderately high respectively. Magill produced similar findings with Client Cohesion reported to be moderately low, as was Experienced Safety, while Hold and Support was reported to be moderately high. It should be noted, however, that half of the sample failed to indicate which unit they worked in. However, these respondents reported similar findings: Inmate Cohesion was considered moderately low, Experienced Safety very low, and Hold and Support moderately high.

*Table 2*  
*Climate means and standard deviation for each centre*

<i>Unit</i>		<i>No.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Cavan	Client Cohesion	2	11	2.83
	Experienced Safety	2	8	1.41
	Hold and Support	2	18	2.83
Magill	Client Cohesion	9	11.56	3.94
	Experienced Safety	9	10.22	2.49
	Hold and Support	9	18.61	3.12
Unspecified	Client Cohesion	11	12	3.26
	Experienced Safety	11	9.86	3.18
	Hold and Support	11	19.77	1.99

Some caveats need to be raised before interpreting these results. First, only 22 staff members responded to the survey (out of a total population estimated at around 80-90), so their responses may not be representative of all staff members. Second, there are no reference points from which to interpret the meaning of the scores. Comparative data from other juvenile justice centres, and indeed from residents, would be useful in determining whether these centres are in some way distinctive.

However, the apparently low levels of cohesiveness amongst residents and perceptions that the environments are not particularly safe are both factors that potentially impair the effectiveness of programmes that are offered in the centres. For programmes, which are typically delivered in groups, to be effective, participants need to engage not only with programme facilitators, but also with other participants. Further, although young people in the focus groups did not identify threats to personal safety as a concern for them, it may be that staff perceive these threats more acutely than residents, and thus dedicate more time and energy to promoting safety in the units. A potential consequence of this is that security issues become the focus of service delivery rather than programme delivery.

This data thus offers a limited insight into the staff perspective on the environment in which programmes are delivered and it is recommended that further consultation take place with staff groups to identify ways in which the climate might be improved. In addition, there is also an opportunity to re-administer these questionnaires to assess whether changes occur over time. This would be particularly interesting following the opening of the new centre, given the potential constraints that the physical environment places upon the development of a strong therapeutic climate.

## 4 Conclusions

It is probably relatively uncontroversial to observe that within juvenile justice in South Australia there has been a history of confusion concerning what is care and protection work and what is youth justice, a failure to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in custody, a lack of a good case management system that is supported by a skilled workforce, and poorly articulated systems of programme implementation. Indeed there was universal agreement from those who participated in this review that it is now time for Families SA to focus on improving the quality and range of programmes that are offered in the youth training centres. There was a general perception that programmes are both under-valued and under-resourced, and that the absence of coherent systems for organising and managing programmes constrains the possibilities for effective programme delivery.

The re-organisation of Families SA youth justice services under a discrete Youth Justice Directorate has provided a firm foundation for this development. There appears to be broad agreement within the Directorate that the primary aim of the services that are delivered by Families SA is to administer court orders and implement programmes that are likely to prevent the re-offending. Furthermore the endorsement of the new case management system and the building of a new centre provides further opportunities for the Directorate to deliver services that adopt a strong focus on rehabilitation, and to implement national standards in relation to programming and transitional care arrangements.

External agencies appear, however, to be largely unaware of the policy directions of the Directorate, and have little information about programmes that are currently offered in the training centres. A lack of awareness about what young people have received over the course of a period of detention (or previous periods of detention) can lead to the duplication and repetition of programme material, and a lack of collaboration between different service providers. In part, this may relate to the lack of a coherent framework articulating how different programmes might complement each other, and in particular how youth justice staff and external service providers can deliver integrated programmes that work towards common goals. In our view, the development of specific policy regarding programme development and implementation (such as the development of programme standards) should be a high priority for Families SA and the Youth Justice Directorate in particular (an example of the information required to assess the quality of programmes is attached to this report as an Appendix).

The implementation of the new case management system is likely to be made much easier if staff know how the assessment process will lead to the delivery of meaningful and effective programmes for young people. There is also a need for programmes to be able to make a strong case for their effectiveness, their sustainability over time, and their quality, before they are offered to youth justice clients. The type of programmes offered should, in our view, be informed by the research literature, in line with the principles underlying evidence based practice, and the particular needs of the South Australian youth justice population. The research literature suggests that the most effective interventions are those that target offenders with the highest risk of re-offending, and seek to change individual needs that are directly related to the criminal behaviour (that is, criminogenic needs), and it is concluded that these principles can, and should, be used to inform the development and accreditation of programmes offered to youth justice clients in South Australia. In addition, there is persuasive, though not conclusive evidence, that specialist programmes for those young people who have committed serious violent offences are likely to be effective. In addition, this review suggests that substance use, cognitive and social skills programmes, and interventions to improve family functioning and educational/vocational attainment should form the core of any comprehensive and evidence based approach to service delivery. Programme development should, however,

be developed from within a broader planning process which identifies the intervention needs of the youth justice population. The new case management process will assist significantly with this task, but basic descriptive data on the type and seriousness of offences, numbers of young offenders, geographical locations in which they reside, and dynamic risk factors that characterise this population is currently not available in a form that can be used to inform decisions about the types and intensity of programmes that are needed.

Discussion around differentiated responses for low and high risk young offenders appears to be in its infancy. The introduction of the new case management system should, again allow this to happen, although concerns have been raised about how the system will operate in practice. A significant issue here is the training of staff to case manage in the way demanded by the new system. Staff training is also a significant issue in programme delivery, and there is a dearth of professionally qualified staff currently working in this area. There is a need for all staff who support the delivery of youth justice programmes to receive training in the new case management system and the types of risk factors that are associated with re-offending for different age groups, as well as specialist training in the actual delivery of programmes. The development of a specialist youth justice intervention team (comprising multidisciplinary professional groups) to oversee, supervise and deliver programmes is, in our view essential if a coherent whole of service-based response to programming is to be developed.

An issue of particular local importance is the development of appropriate and high quality programmes for Indigenous young people. Whilst there was a general recognition that mainstream programmes tend to serve Aboriginal clients poorly, it was unclear whether specialist cultural programmes should be regarded as alternatives to or adjuncts to offence-focussed programmes. In this respect intensive case management and support programmes were generally regarded as having value in responding more effectively to the needs of Indigenous young people who are released from the training centres. There are still questions, however, relating to how such services might best be integrated into a co-ordinated set of youth justice rehabilitative responses. We would suggest that Families SA and the Youth Justice Directorate formally consider how this might be achieved.

The focus groups suggested to us that young people who are detained in youth training centres are often caught between hoping that the centres will make a difference in their lives and believing that they won't. For programmes to be effective they need to promote optimism and hope in both young people and those involved in their delivery. Again this suggests a need for professionally managed, adequately resourced and effective programmes. When young people come to believe that detention is primarily a tool of social exclusion by a society that has rejected them, the possibilities for change are limited. In some ways support for these perceptions comes from the survey of staff. This suggested that staff members see levels of mutual support amongst residents as low across both centres, and the centres as relatively unsafe places. At the same time staff reported that they were generally able to offer the support that residents needed.

In conclusion then, marked similarities can be found between the views of all of those consulted in the course of this review, be they from within the Youth Justice Directorate, from the wider Families SA, external agencies, or clients or staff of the youth training centres. What emerged was a consistent view that significant re-development of youth training centre programmes is required. There would appear to be a need to professionalise the processes and structures that support programme delivery, such that youth justice staff members, young people and their families, and members of the community, can be confident that Families SA is responding to the harms caused by juvenile offending in a way that both meets the needs of those young people who are detained and, importantly, also leads to improved community safety.

## 5 Recommendations

The purpose of this review was to stimulate discussion in relation to how current programmes and services offered to young people in youth training centres might be strengthened and improved. The following recommendations should be read as a series of suggestions for change. They have not been costed, and there may be legal, operational, or practical constraints that impact on their viability. Nevertheless they serve to highlight the types of change that are required if a suite of evidence based programmes that effectively reduce the risk of participants re-offending is to be developed. The issue of resourcing is, as always, a key one and we would argue that any additional resources that may be required to implement these changes should be identified as a matter of priority. It is clear to us that a suite of high quality and well supported programmes are required if Families SA is to fulfil its responsibilities to young people, their families, and the community. We have limited the number of recommendations made in this report to eight, in the belief that each of them can be implemented within a 12 month time frame.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Policy statements are developed in relation to the provision of programmes in the youth training centres. These should, as a minimum:
  - a. Clearly articulate the purpose and aims of youth justice in relation to the rehabilitation of young offenders.
  - b. Describe a framework for rehabilitation which outlines the legal, administrative and theoretical basis for youth justice programmes.
  - c. Contain specific criteria by which programmes are developed and endorsed (for example, programme standards).
  - d. Outline the processes of audit and quality assurance (that is, programme evaluation).
2. Implement the new case management tool and develop processes to use for:
  - a. Population needs assessment.
  - b. Case planning.
  - c. Targeted programmes for higher risk residents.
  - d. Through-care between the centres and the community (particularly for regional and rural areas).
  - e. Integrated planning between programmes and education.
  - f. Exchange of information between agencies to inform case plans.
  - g. Shared working with young people and other agencies to achieve the objectives of case plans.
  - h. Ensuring case plans are implemented and reviewed.

In addition, the risk assessment components of the tool require validation with the South Australian youth justice population.

3. Establish a programme management group, comprising both youth justice staff members and representatives of external agencies and other stakeholders to oversee the development of programmes offered in the youth training centres and report back to the Directorate management. This group should also:
  - a. Investigate the possibilities for integrating programme delivery into the conditional release system and the use of day release as a means to encourage involvement in community programmes prior to release.
  - b. Consult with centre staff and managers in relation to the social climate of units.
4. Recruit professional level staff with experience in programme delivery to assist with programme implementation, evaluation and support and supervision to other youth justice staff through the establishment of a youth justice intervention team to operate across both youth training centres, and also (possibly) community settings.
5. Following further consultation with stakeholders, develop a specific intervention framework for young people who:
  - a. Have committed serious and repeat offences that cause high levels of harm to the community (for example, sexual and violent offenders).
  - b. Identify as from an Aboriginal cultural background.
  - c. Have specific needs in relation to gender (female youth justice clients).
6. Communicate programme policy and governance arrangements to all stakeholders, including:
  - a. Youth justice staff members, both in the training centres and community, and provide training in relation to the underlying principles of youth offending and evidence based practice to Senior Youth Practitioners, and other staff as appropriate.
  - b. Other government agencies (for example, Department of Education and Children's Services; Attorney-General's Department).
  - c. Non-government youth agencies.
  - d. Clients of youth justice and their families.
7. Deliver training to:
  - a. All staff involved with the case management of youth justice clients in the new case management approach.
  - b. Those involved in programme delivery in structured approaches to behaviour change (for example, cognitive behavioural therapy) and group work with adolescents.
8. Centre managers should monitor the social and therapeutic climate of the units and, as needed, make improvements to:
  - a. Safety for both staff and residents.
  - b. Levels of cohesion between residents and feelings of being included and valued.
  - c. Communication between staff and residents.
  - d. The consistent application of behaviour management by staff members.

## Appendix 1: Accreditation

Accreditation systems usually maintain that in order to replicate the programme it is essential that clear documentation be available that will enable delivery staff to run the programme in the way in which it was designed, thus maintaining programme integrity. This requires the development of a number of manuals, including a **Theory Manual** (to describe the theoretical base for the programme and the model of change); a **Programme Manual** (to describe each session of the programme in sufficient detail to enable any well-trained professional to run the programme in the intended fashion); an **Assessment and Evaluation Manual** (containing all assessment and evaluation instruments used in the programme, guidance on their administration; and an explanation of the practical uses of the various applications and contents); a **Management Manual** (describing the selection, training, supervision and performance appraisal of staff; how participants are selected for the programme; the ways in which participants are assessed before, during and after the programme; the minimum operating conditions required to enable the programme to run as intended; arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the programme, including the assurance of programme and treatment integrity, and audit; the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff); and a **Staff Training Manual** (describing detailed training courses, including curriculum and training materials, for all staff involved in the programme; how staff competence to run the programme will be assured; how competence will be assessed at the end of training on a pass/fail basis; how performance will be reviewed regularly).

One way of reviewing programmes is to assess them against the criteria developed from the research evidence relating to the features of effective programmes. Accreditation systems for offender rehabilitation programmes in adult jurisdictions have been reviewed in a number of published papers, including those by Lipton et al. (2000), Blud (2003) and Blud, Travers, Nugent and Thornton (2003)<sup>24</sup>, and provide a useful basis for the development of an accreditation process for youth justice programmes.

The most comprehensive system of accreditation currently being used is that developed by the Home Office in the UK. An alternative method of programme accreditation that is widely used in North America is the Correctional Programme Assessment Inventory. Both systems draw heavily on the principles of effective practice, identified in meta-analytic reviews of the outcomes of treatments, to guide decisions about accreditation. They are based largely on the 'what works' criteria (see Day & Howells, 2002 for a review), and require that in order to receive accreditation, a programme will (as a minimum) adhere to the principles of risk, needs and responsivity. In addition, they make some requirement about treatment methods, staff qualifications and through-care, all of which are important components of an effective service delivery model. Generally then, to achieve accreditation, programmes need to demonstrate their ability to meet standards in the ten areas outlined below, although more specific criteria against which programmes might be assessed are also available.

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24. Please refer to Howells, K., Heseltine, K., Sarre, R., Davey, L. & Day, A. (2004). Correctional Offender Treatment Programs: The National Picture in Australia. Report for the Criminology Research Council. <http://www.aic.gov.au/crc/reports/200203-04.html>

### 1. Theoretical Model of the Programme

There is now a considerable research base regarding the factors that have been demonstrated to contribute to or reduce recidivism. It is expected that this knowledge base will be the starting point for the development of any new programme, and that it will also be utilised to explain clearly how the programme can be expected to reduce offending in clients.

### 2. Risk

In order to receive accreditation, programmes must usually demonstrate that they select individuals for treatment on the basis of their risk scores. Programmes should seek to employ actuarial based risk-need assessment measures which are comprehensive (incorporate multi domain sampling of the factors associated with criminal conduct) and measure a wide range of factors, both static (historical) and dynamic (changeable) in nature, that are associated theoretically and empirically with criminal behaviour.

### 3. Criminogenic Need

To achieve accreditation, emphasis should be placed on the identification and reduction of criminogenic needs (dynamic risk factors) or those factors that the research evidence has demonstrated are highly likely to be causal of re-offending in those taking part, with less reliance or emphasis placed on the reduction of non-criminogenic needs. A factor to be targeted by a programme is criminogenic for general offending if it occurs on the following list:

- poor cognitive skills;
- anti-social attitudes and feelings;
- strong ties to and identification with anti-social/criminal models;
- weak social ties and identification with pro-social/non-criminal models;
- difficulty with self-management, decision making and pro-social interpersonal skills;
- dependency on alcohol and drugs;
- contingencies favouring criminal over pro-social behaviour;
- some adverse social or family circumstances.

### 4. Responsivity

Most accreditation systems require that efforts are made to design and deliver the programmes in ways that are likely to suit the specific learning styles of the client group. Specific responsivity factors may include personality, ability, motivation, strengths, age, gender, ethnicity/race, language, and various barriers to successful participation in service.

### 5. Effective Methods

Programmes are accredited that employ methods that have been demonstrated to be consistently effective with offenders. To be accredited the programme must:

- either use predominantly cognitive behavioural methods,
- or be a structured concept-based therapeutic community,
- or, if it uses other methods, propose a plausible combination of theoretical argument and analysis of research to justify their use with this particular type of offender in order to reduce offending behaviour.

#### 6. Skills Oriented

The Home Office accreditation system suggests that programmes should teach skills that will make it easier for participants to avoid criminal activities and to engage successfully in legitimate ones. In this system, applicants are asked to describe why acquiring particular skills would make it easier to avoid criminal activities or to pursue legitimate activities successfully.

#### 7. Multi-modal

The Home Office accreditation system argues that given the complexity of criminal behaviour, programmes should address a range of conceptually distinct dynamic risk factors in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way. To this extent they recommend that a programme targets a number of criminogenic needs.

#### 8. Treatment dosage

The amount, intensity, sequencing and spacing of intervention should be related to the seriousness and persistence of offending, and to the range and seriousness of the criminogenic factors typical of participants. Gendreau has suggested that 'intensive services should occupy 40–70% of the offenders' time while in a programme and are of 3 – 9 months duration (Gendreau, 1996 p.120) and that the treatment dosage should be 100 hours direct service.

#### 9. Aftercare, structured follow-up, continuity of care, and relapse prevention

Most accreditation systems call for the ongoing monitoring of the programme and progress of group members and to intervene when circumstances deteriorate or positive opportunities emerge. It is suggested that generally, and particularly for residential programmes, it is important that programming be community-oriented and attend to family, associates, and other social settings. Specific and structured after care and follow up activities should be designed and in place. At a relapse-prevention level, high-risk situations and circumstances should be identified and low-risk alternative responses practiced.

#### 10. Evaluation

A commitment to the ongoing evaluation of its effects should be built into the programme. In order to establish the link between the programme intervention and reconviction it is necessary to demonstrate that the programme achieved its objectives through interim measures designed to measure change in the targeted dynamic risk factors. These measures may be, in the short term an indicator that the programme is effective before reconviction data is available, and in the longer term will increase knowledge of how programmes produce change.

### References

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## Appendix 2: Climate Survey

Please complete the following questions about the secure care centre in which you work the most. The term resident is used to refer to young people who are resident in either Magill or Cavan. Please try to answer each of the questions, and remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

**We do need to collect some basic demographic information:**

**Unit: Cavan/Magill (please circle)**

**Role (e.g., teacher; youth worker) \_\_\_\_\_**

I agree:	Not at all	Little	Somewhat	Quite a lot	Very much
This unit has a livable atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
The residents care for each other	1	2	3	4	5
Really threatening situations can occur here	1	2	3	4	5
In this unit, residents can openly talk to staff about all their problems	1	2	3	4	5
Even the weakest resident finds support from his/her fellow residents	1	2	3	4	5
There are some really aggressive residents in this unit	1	2	3	4	5
Staff take a personal interest in the progress of residents	1	2	3	4	5
Most residents don't care about their fellow residents' problems	1	2	3	4	5
Some residents are afraid of other residents	1	2	3	4	5
Staff members take a lot of time to deal with residents	1	2	3	4	5
When inmates have a genuine concern, they find support from their fellow residents	1	2	3	4	5
At times, members of staff feel threatened by some of the residents	1	2	3	4	5
Often, staff seem not to care if residents succeed or fail in the daily routine / programme	1	2	3	4	5
There is good peer support among residents	1	2	3	4	5
Some residents are so excitable that one deals very cautiously with them	1	2	3	4	5
Staff know residents and their personal histories very well	1	2	3	4	5
Both residents and staff are comfortable in this unit	1	2	3	4	5

Any other comments:

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Thank you