

The Griffins Society Visiting Research Fellowship Programme

On Detention:
The use of prison for
girls aged under 18

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Supporting women through
the criminal justice system

The Griffins Society

The Griffins Society is a voluntary organisation working for the care and resettlement of female offenders. As part of their commitment to identifying and promoting best practice, the Society established the Griffins Society Visiting Research Fellowship Programme at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 2001. Fellows have produced some outstanding research on a range of issues and the Society is committed to disseminating and promoting Fellows' recommendations with a view to having them adopted by practitioners and policy makers. More information the Fellowship Programme, and on the practical projects which have been based on Fellows' research findings, is available on the Griffins Society website.

The Griffins Society Visiting Research Fellowship Programme

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Abbreviations

DTO	Detention and Training Order
LASH	Local Authority Secure Home
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
STC	Secure Training Centre
W&YPG	Women and Young People's Group
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOT	Youth Offending Team
YPSMS	Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Chapter One: Aims and Purpose

The Rivendell Unit is one of five dedicated prison units in the country which holds girls between the ages of 17 and 18 and one month (in most cases). This is clearly a very distinct group and the reasons for its delineation are central to this project. The unit was opened in December 2005 commissioned, like its sister-units, by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The units are based upon a child-centred approach, the rationale of which will also be central to the discussion below.

I wish to explore the development of the Rivendell Unit as an example of a visionary, new approach to the custodial placement of 17 year old girls and its effectiveness in terms of 'successful' resettlement back into the community. I will examine the current good practice and highlight areas which could be improved, particularly with a focus upon gender-specific need.

The objective of this project, therefore, was to examine the processes that assist with effective resettlement for juvenile girls by:

- identifying the concerns that young women and staff have about effective resettlement specifically in terms of gender
- identifying successful current practice for this group in resettlement
- identifying barriers to effective resettlement
- charting the experience of resettlement for these young women and follow-up issues over a set period of time.

In order to achieve these aims I have employed three main methods of enquiry: an extensive literature review to provide context and policy background, qualitative interviews with both the girls and members of staff based at the unit and follow-up questionnaires to external YOT workers.

Chapter Two: Methodology

The following section explains how and why I implemented the chosen research methods and the problems that were experienced along the way.

Background

I have worked in the Rivendell Unit, at HMP & YOI New Hall, since April 2006 as a Probation Officer seconded into the YOT Liaison Team. As a result, I cannot claim an independent position with regard to this research. I hold a case-load and interact with all of the young women upon the unit in some capacity. I also work alongside all of the staff from the various agencies within the unit and a delicate balance is necessarily maintained which accommodates each professional remit in what is a very intense environment. My perspective is also affected by my experience as a Probation Officer since qualification in 2002 and, until my current role, sole contact with adult offenders. This has been my first experience of both young offenders and of being based in prison. I have also previously worked with a heavily male-centred client-base. This background experience has given me somewhat of an ‘outsider’s’ viewpoint whilst experiencing a steep personal learning-curve which has run alongside that of the Unit as a whole during its ‘bedding-in’ period.

The aims and purpose of this study have been shaped by prolonged discussion with the YJB. Before any practical evaluation could start I spent the best part of nine months gaining permission from the various relevant bodies which included: the YJB, HMP & YOI New Hall, the Women’s and Young People’s Group, the Prison Service Research Approval Board, West Yorkshire Probation Service and Wakefield YOT. I sought permission alongside guidance on work that was already being completed to avoid the duplication of existing or ongoing evaluations.

Literature Review

The literature review focuses upon the myriad issues that culminate in the position of ‘girls in prison’ (henceforth also termed young women, juvenile girls, girls or trainees).

It is structured around the following headings and areas of interest:

The Lost Population

- why juvenile girls are the subject of little research
- how they have become subsumed within wider areas of debate
- the patriarchal bias within the prison estate
- the needs of girls as opposed to women
- the impact of over-population.

History of Policy

- the use of prison for women and children
- the similarities between the current position of the female estate to that of the juvenile estate prior to the involvement of the YJB
- why children were removed from the adult estate
- why have 17 year old girls been retained in the adult estate?

The New Regime

- is any prison regime appropriate for a 'child'?
- the needs of 'girls in prison'.

Policy Context

This chapter places the development of the Rivendell Unit in the context of current policy.

- modern research and policy.

The Rivendell Unit

- vision statement and ethos
- practical implementation.

The Issue of Resettlement

- why the importance of resettlement?

Qualitative Interviews and Population Samples

I was able to access both a sample of young women placed upon the Rivendell Unit and a representative sample of staff from the various disciplines. In total I interviewed 14 girls and 14 members of staff.

All of the young women interviewed were aged either 17 or had recently turned 18. They all provided consent to be involved in this study and were informed that I was undertaking the various interviews outside of my role as 'YOT worker', in which they all knew me. I used a semi-structured interview technique to gain information upon their personal experiences of both custody as a whole and the Rivendell Unit. I also chose only to include girls who had been sentenced to Detention

and Training Orders because their sentences were likely to be short enough for me to be able to conduct some follow-up with their external YOT workers. I, therefore, chose not to interview girls with longer sentences (those sentenced under Sections 91, 226 or 228 or ‘life’) or girls on remand due to my time-scales. I recognise, however, that these girls may provide a different perspective and may have a wholly different range of needs that would be worthy of further research. The girls I did interview had a wide range of current convictions (Table 1) and previous sentence histories. However, it is again recognised that due to my focus upon DTOs the girls I did interview for this study were not the ones with the most serious current offences which may have affected their responses along with the greater length of their sentences.

I interviewed the sample of young women whilst they remained upon the Rivendell Unit and gained their consent to contact their external YOT workers to evaluate the ‘success’ of their resettlement two months after release. Initial interviews led to some refinement of the questionnaire to make the language appropriate and to structure discussion more effectively. Following the girls’ release (where possible, see Fig. 1), I contacted the external YOT workers either by telephone or e-mail with a short questionnaire to gauge the problems and successes seen in their resettlement back into the community. This was possible for most of the girls but two were remanded on further charges and moved to the YOI wing, one breached and committed a new offence on her first day of release and one was moved from custody to a psychiatric hospital.

Type of Offence	No. in sample
Actual Bodily Harm	1
Assault PC	1
Breach ASBO	2
Harassment	1
Perverting Course of Justice	1
Possession of Counterfeit	1
Robbery	3
Theft	1
Threats to Kill	1
Taking Without Owner’s Consent	1
Violent Disorder	1

Table 1: Types and frequency of offences in sample n = 14

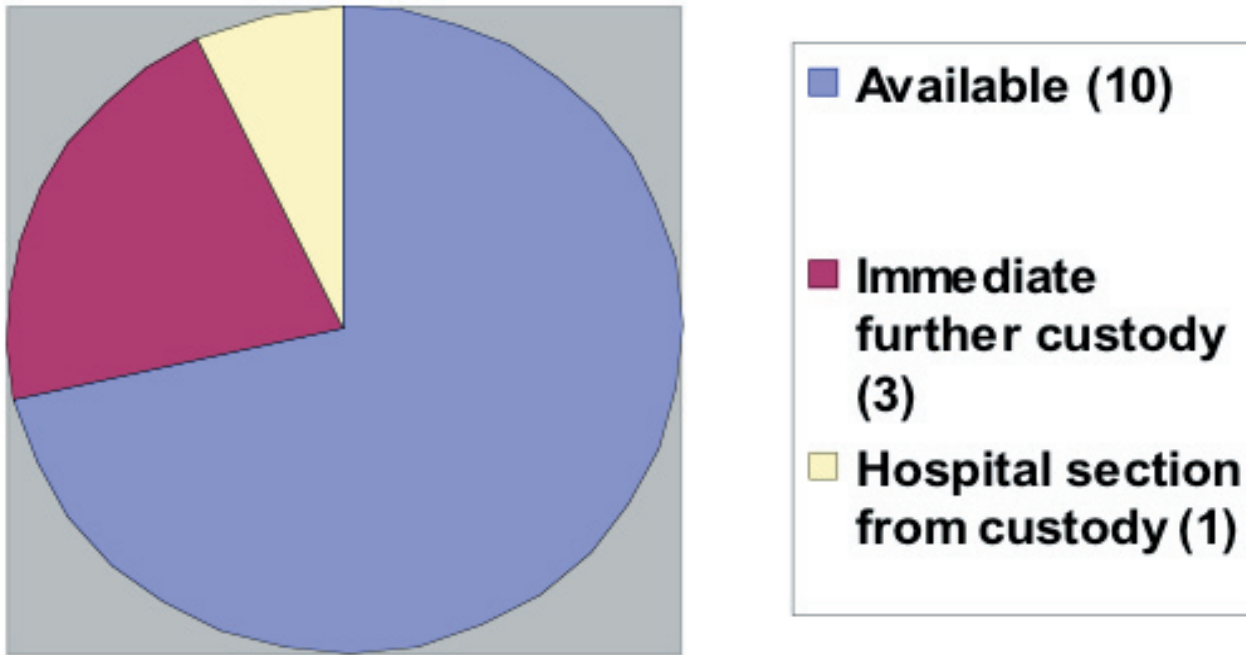


Fig.1: Pie-chart showing cases where resettlement could be followed up through contact with external YOT

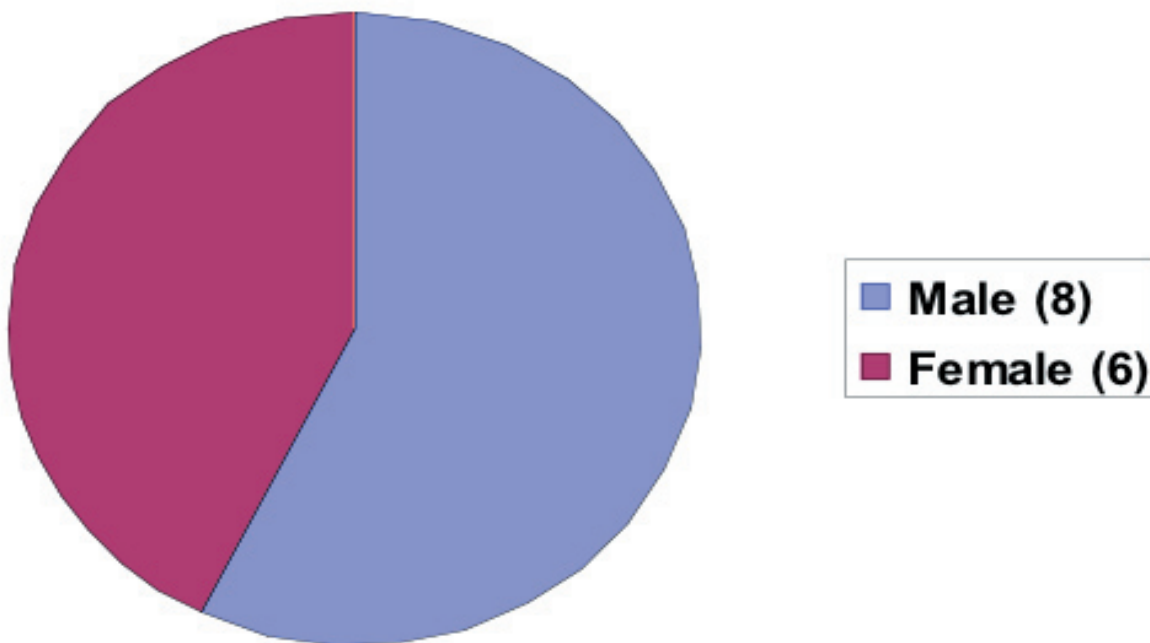


Fig.2: Pie-chart to show male and female staff sampled (n=14)

With respect to my colleagues, I also utilised a semi-structured interview to obtain their views upon the Rivendell Unit and the needs of its population. I interviewed a mix of male and female staff (Fig. 2) from the following disciplines: the Prison Service, the YOT, Connexions, Young People's Substance Misuse Service, mental health in-reach and education (Fig. 3, Fig.4).

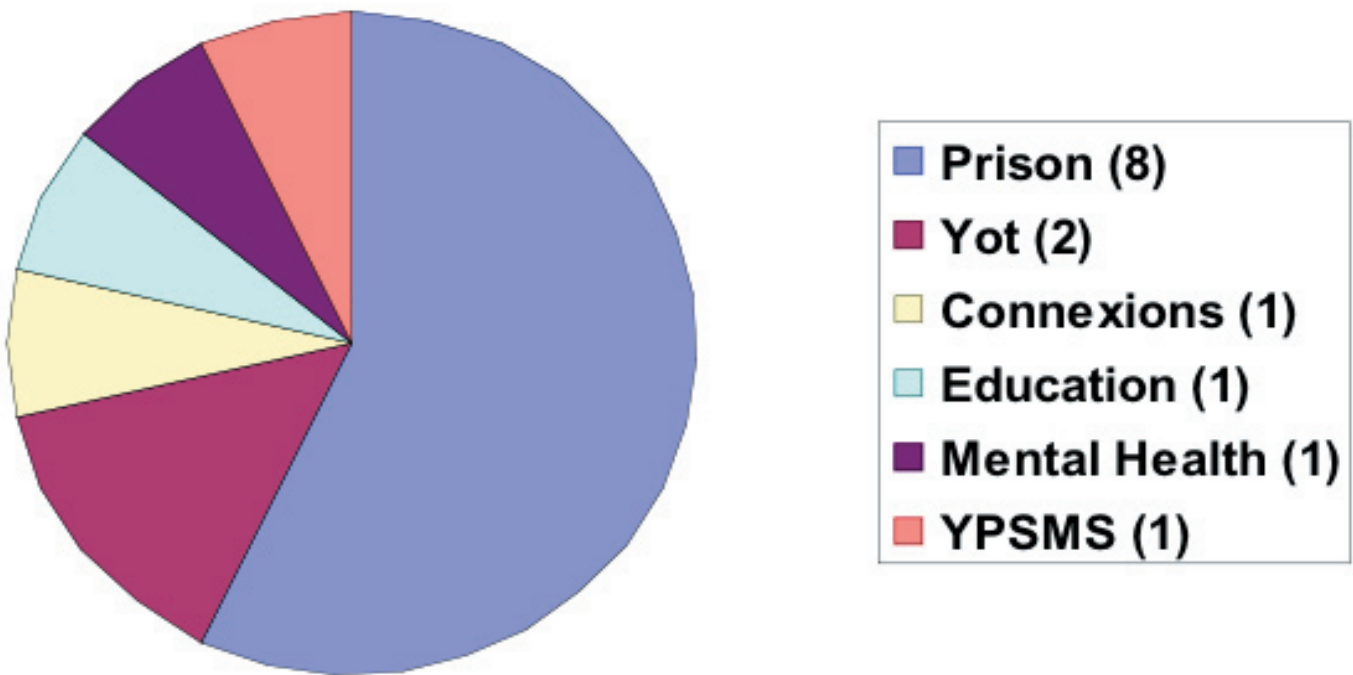


Fig.3: Pie-chart showing disciplines of staff in sample (n=14)

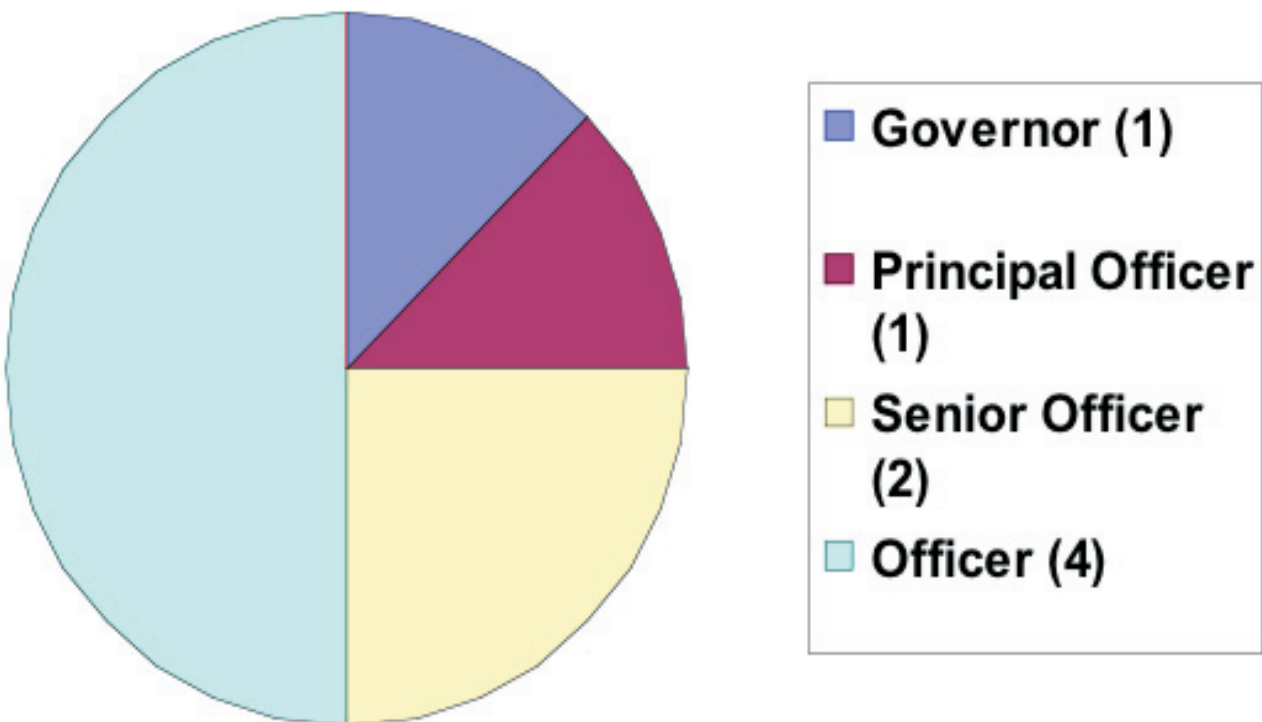


Fig. 4: Pie-chart showing rank of discipline team staff (n=8)

All of my research findings are, therefore, qualitative. I recognise that the evaluation of ‘successful resettlement’ in this case is very subjective as it depends much upon the individual’s views of what is and is not working. It is also limited by the two-month follow-up timescale. I am reliant upon the external YOT workers’ views too and their perception of what has gone well and what could be done better. It is also worth stating that all of those involved in this project, including myself, have their own perspectives which may have been affected by outside forces. The benefits of the qualitative approach, however, are that it provides depth and allows the service-users views to be heard.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The Lost Population

The position of 17-18 year old girls within the criminal justice system as a whole is subject to debate with multiple themes. These include gender, age and ability, the specific nature of girls' offending behaviour, the balance between being tough on the crime and addressing its causes, and the girls' own high vulnerability. The result is that 'girls in prison' as a group tend to be subsumed within these wider subject areas in both literature and practice. This complicates and clouds their position and produces assumptions based on their role as both women and children within these debates.

As the Howard League of Penal Reform note "little research has been completed on the offending and imprisonment of girls" (Howard League 1997, p4). To address this, they began an inquiry into the "use of prison custody for girls under 18 [and] the conditions and treatment they experience" and the subsequent report *Lost Inside* was published in 1997. It noted that despite their complex issues, the issues around youth crime perpetrated by girls have been routinely over-shadowed by boys due to the lower numbers involved. One of the recommended starting points of the *Lost Inside* inquiry for the attention of all political parties was, therefore, to "Recognise that the offending of girls aged under 18 is of a different nature and that they are particularly vulnerable in the prison system" (Howard League 1997, p13). It asked for a shift away from the sensationalised images of teenage girls portrayed by the media, with the hope of instigating an informed debate to generate more appropriate resources instead of continually tacking them on to the rest of the system.

With respect to *women*, Heidensohn (2006) discusses that such media sensationalism may have actually sprung from the increased discussion, theorising and growth of analysis into female offending over recent times. It may be that a desire to deliver 'just deserts' actually produced a disproportionate use of incarceration so contributing to the rise in the female prison population. However, Heidensohn also documents that traditional factors also remain in play such as chivalry, stigma and double-deviancy; the culmination being that women offenders in general are still viewed as 'worse'.

Despite advances in the field of feminist criminology, there remains little gender-and-age-specific research for girls within the system. Further, in relation to the nature of prison itself there remains engrained patriarchal systems and the momentum for any change tends to stem from the influence of the study and experience of men. As Myers (2006, p24) states "Excepting tokenistic changes, women are still subjected to a patriarchal prison system, set up by men, for men. Historically, gender has been ignored when exploring criminal behaviour". There remains little recognition of the biological, psychological and social differences between male and female offenders (Hutson and Myers 2006). This is reinforced by the recently published Corston Report (2007) into women with particular vulnerabilities within the criminal justice system which details the ways in which women continue to be marginalised, with their needs going unmet. I would argue that this is doubly-so for girls.

Hutson and Myers (2006, p147) in their study of the coping mechanisms of female young offenders (aged 18-21) argue that "the experiences of women as a group are the same, regardless of age" by which I infer that they found the experiences of older women to be applicable to the "forgotten few"

that are girls in institutions (ibid, p163). They make salient points with regard to the importance of the previous life experiences for women in custody and the need for a holistic approach to link these experiences with their rehabilitation. They also point to the tendency to medicalise female offenders; the view of “mad girls” rather than “bad girls”, the over-prescription of medication and the coping mechanisms such as misuse of medication, self-harm and eating disorders. I recognise all of these trends within the female juvenile estate but even Hutson and Myers’ study can not be fully translated to juveniles, who all remain children in law despite their varying levels of maturity.

The theme of the previous victimisation of women who in turn offend is strong (Hutson and Myers 2006, Corston 2007, Rungay 2004). As ‘children’ it would seem obvious that this experience as both victim and perpetrator for ‘girls in prison’ can be even more complex than that of adult women and raise numerous ethical and practical issues for their treatment within the criminal justice system. As Rod Morgan recently illustrated in his lecture entitled *Rebalancing Youth Justice* (08/05/07), these children are among the most victimised in our society and the roles of victim and offender can not be seen as discrete. This has been reflected by research into young female offenders by the Middlesex University Policy and Practice Research Group which, as will be viewed, has been used to inform our practice upon the Rivendell Unit.

As discussed, the position of girls aged under 18 is clouded by their inclusion in debates around both women and children in prison and this inevitably causes disadvantage. The Fawcett Society has issued a guide for the criminal justice system to the new gender equality duty, hoping for a move away from “one size fits all assumptions to a more effective and efficient use of resources” (Fawcett Society 2006, p3), but tellingly no guide has been issued specifically for female juveniles within the system. The Youth Justice Board are addressing this requirement within the Women’s Offending Reduction Programme and also over-sampling young women so that sufficient numbers are provided for research. These initiatives highlight the need to view female juveniles as a distinct group that is not subsumed within assumptions based on male or older groups.

Baroness Corston (2007, p5) has stated that she has yet to see evidence of “any real understanding that treating men and women the same results in inequality of outcome...There are fundamental differences between male and female offenders and those at risk of offending that indicate a different and distinct approach is needed for women”. This clearly does not fit with the requirements of the gender equality duty, implemented in April 2007. Baroness Corston continues, “Custody as it exists today is disproportionately harsher for women than men” (ibid, p27). This would seem even more likely for female juveniles in light of their layered vulnerability.

The lack of clarity on the subject of ‘girls in prison’ is also due to the traditional debate around the purpose of imprisonment and the use of it at all for women and/or this age group. This is complicated further, at present, by the effects of the rising prison population and over-crowding in general. Their position, therefore, needs to be viewed in the context of changes happening in the prison population as a whole. At the time of writing, the prison population has exceeded 80,000¹, Operation Safeguard has been implemented to utilise police cells and three existing women’s prisons have been re-roled to hold men to cope with the increased pressure (Howard League Magazine September 2006, HM Prison Service 2007). The latter in particular has caused disruption

¹ 15/09/07: data obtained from www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/publicationsdocuments/index.asp?cat=85 - 87k

to the female estate and particularly the maintenance of family ties (Fawcett Society 2006).

Further, some of the steepest rises within the growing prison population have been with regard to the women and children's estate (Prison Reform Trust 2006a) and yet the male prison estate continues to "largely determine what occurs in the female estate" (Howard League 2006, p32) due to the proportional imbalance. In October 2006 Rod Morgan, the then YJB Chairman, Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers and Children's Commissioner Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, warned that crisis point had been reached for young people in custody during a visit to Feltham YOI when over 3,350 children and young people were being held in the estate. Professor Morgan warned, "We can't simply put up a sign saying 'No Vacancies'. Action is urgently needed to stop custody for young people going into meltdown." (YJB Press Release 24/10/06). Overcrowding raises the risk of self-harm due to both resourcing and in relation to the distance children may be placed from their families, a difficulty in delivering stream-lined education and offending-behaviour courses and discipline issues. This is felt even more so in the juvenile female estate due to fewer units causing greater geographical catchment areas and the more complex and layered needs already highlighted.

It has proved impossible, however, to chart the growth within the female juvenile estate as the available statistics do not break down specifically to 17 year old girls. This is further complicated by their previous inclusion in female YOI prison populations and their current inclusion in the juvenile estate. Also, some vulnerable 17 year olds remain in STCs whereas it is occasionally possible for 16 year olds to enter a juvenile unit. At the time of the implementation of the new juvenile units there were around 80 17 year old girls in custody². The small numbers would indicate that there will have been little movement since but any increase would be proportionally significant and as Hutson and Myers state "while the number of young women in custody may be small this does not mean they have 'small' problems" (2006, p149). These problems have already been compounded by the loss of one of the original five sister units to the male estate, creating further geographical and population pressures for girls in custody.

History of Policy

The 'crisis' within the juvenile estate has continued to manifest. An article in The Guardian on 31/03/07 reports that "Senior criminal justice figures...fear the UK is becoming a society that criminalises its children" (Campbell 2007, p14), an article in which Rod Morgan charts the beginning of this hardening in attitude and policy as being the James Bulger case. The newspaper article also charts the 26% rise in the numbers of children and young people criminalised in the last three years and identifies that seven times as much is spent on youth custody as on prevention schemes.

Morgan (2007) identifies significantly longer sentences and an increase in the proportionate use of custody (trends also seen in the female population) as being responsible for driving up the numbers

² 15/09/07: data obtained from http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison_life/juvenileoffenders/

of children and young people in custody. He also questions the use of ASBOs and whether they are dragging children into the criminal justice system that otherwise would not have been criminalised or if they would, whether this is being fast-tracked at a younger age.

Historically, the use of prison at all for both women and children has long been subject to debate and arguments forwarded that ‘prison does not work’ (Howard League 2006, Prison Reform Trust 2006b, Howard League 1997). Indeed, it is acknowledged by the Home Office that alternatives to custody for both groups need to be found but resources and the hardened political climate have made this difficult to achieve in reality, as the Howard League state;

Our fear is that this climate is unlikely to produce the nuanced policy response necessary to adequately address the needs of women and girls in the penal system, and that instead a blanket ‘get tough’ approach will prevail, to the detriment of men and women alike. (Howard League 2006, p5)

More recently, Baroness Corston (2007) has identified “The need for a distinct, radically different, visibly-led, strategic, proportionate, holistic, woman-centred, integrated approach” for women. Baroness Corston also highlights that the position of women in prison is currently reminiscent of the Audit Commission’s findings in the 1996 report *Misspent Youth* which contributed to a more integrated, strategic youth justice system shaped by the YJB. This is illustrative of the many intricacies of the position of girls in prison. Her observations will apply to 17-18 year old girls due to their location inside adult establishments but there is no specific mention of juveniles in this report.

The fact that dedicated prison units have been established for 17 and 18 year-old girls, a very narrow delineation, requires further thought therefore; what makes this group different? In the context of a lack of specific research into this group, how have these differences been made apparent? And why have so many resources been directed into a group subsumed within two areas of policy?

The decision originally to remove 15 and 16 year-old girls from prison stemmed from a judicial review of Home Office policy which declared that it was “unlawful for the Secretary of State automatically to place a young offender in an adult prison” and the process of removal began in 1999 (Howard League 2006, p19). There have never been Young Offender Institutions designated specifically for girls, unlike boys. Despite Article 37 of the UN Convention for Human Rights stating those aged under 18 should be held separately to adults, the UK had reserved the right not to implement this “when the mixing of adults and children is seen to be mutually beneficial” (Howard League 1997, p29). The *Lost Inside* report (Howard League 1997) details historical arguments for the benefits of placing girls alongside adult offenders and then presents evidence and their argument which opposes this view. It summarises that there are “too many damaging and negative aspects of prison to warrant mixing the youngsters with the adults” and states that “if while they are in prison there is no recognition of their particular needs by virtue of their age and immaturity there can be no attempt at rehabilitation” (Howard League 1997, p30-31).

The removal of younger girls was largely achieved by 2004 and now only 17 year-old girls (are usually) held in prison, despite the original stated intention being the removal of all girls younger than 18 from this environment (Howard League 2006). The process and review has led to dedicated units being set up for this age-group, an example being the Rivendell Unit, so they should no longer

mix with adult women or young offenders. There are now five such units in the country at New Hall, Cookham Wood (although this unit is currently being re-roled due to population pressures), Eastwood Park, Downview and Foston Hall.

The policy which explains why 17 year olds were removed from the adult estate is detailed in the chapters below (and thus their separation from the YOI units). The reasons for the creation of distinct units for 17 year old girls have been explained to me by the YJB. I am told that firstly there was a need for appropriate accommodation. That is, the serious nature of some of the crimes perpetrated by 17 year olds meant that they were unsuitable for STC accommodation. Some 17 year olds may be too risky and present child protection concerns in this environment. There is also an issue around maturity. Some of the younger children in STCs may be easily influenced by the older, more serious offenders whilst some of the 17 year olds may feel hampered by the needs of the 13-16 year olds. There is also a legal obligation to provide custodial placement for any 17 year old placed on remand so some accommodation needed to be found which did not necessitate contact with adults. Further, at the time of development there was little ability to develop the existing STCs and so it was more cost-effective to build upon the prison sites.

In 2007, however, some extra secure training centre places were purchased primarily for 17 year old young women as part of the further reconfiguration of the secure estate for children and young people (YJB 2007a). This appears to have been in response to the increasing media profile of teenage female offenders and a recognition of the need for a transitional step between local authority provision and the adult female estate. The two approaches now provide stepping-stones for both the more and less mature 17 year olds that enter the system and, population pressures permitting, may require different approaches. There is not a link in terms of the legal requirements of Detention and Training Orders as the sentence is legally the same in terms of placement across the juvenile age-group, it is the YJB policy which has created the delineation and placement policy. Rod Morgan (2007) has gone on to question whether this extra purchasing and needs-based placement policy indicates that more juveniles would be best placed outside the prison environment.

The New Regime

It would seem that 17 year old girls have become a very complicated prospect in terms of both their security requirements and welfare needs. Their complex legal position and the vast spectrum between an older, sophisticated 17 year old offender and an immature, inexperienced girl has created a number of problems for those charged with their care in the criminal justice system. There can also be a wide spectrum and combination of pronounced needs in terms of learning difficulties, mental health problems and the nature and type of their offending histories. This is becoming markedly noticeable, even within such a small population, since the introduction of ASBOs and the potential for children to be imprisoned without committing a criminal offence. The proliferation of self-harming behaviour amongst young women also contributes to this disparity as such behaviour can be classified as anti-social when it becomes reckless and a danger to others. In such cases, where the young woman's mental health is viewed as untreatable by medication and there is no third option for her care, she may often be held in custody for what amounts to her own safety. As the female juvenile population is so small, this type of case will be held alongside girls who have committed very serious offences.

So why do 17 year old girls remain in prison when those only days younger do not?

The debate round the appropriate use of prison for children includes the issues of ability, vulnerability and the demarcations of adulthood. This continues beyond the legal definition of adulthood too, “Much of the youth justice debate recently has failed to address the issues of those young people who have fallen foul of an arbitrary divide which assumes that everyone becomes a fully-fledged adult on their 18th birthday” (Stubbs 2006, p18). I would argue that, most pertinently for 17 year-olds within the prison system, the following issues are central to the debate; the limited age-range which the units hold, the contrast to secure units and the impact of the expected transfer of most girls to Young Offender’s wings within one month of their 18th birthdays .

For those designated as children by the law, there has been historical and ongoing debate about the appropriateness of the use of prison. Pitts (2006, p8) argues that all child imprisonment is “damaging, counter-productive and wrong” and yet as we have seen the population of young people aged 10-17 in prison is rising. The Local Government Association (LGA) Children and Young People Board is now calling for “an end to penal custody for children and young people for all but the most serious cases” (Howard League Magazine, September 2006, p3). However, 17 year-old girls remain within the prison system today and are clearly viewed as a different proposition to younger (and older) girls.

Why is this the case if there remains little research into this group and, still, much of the system remains based around the male-model?

The narrow age bracket held by the dedicated units is a transitional and difficult life-stage for most young people, but further complicated by the backgrounds of many of the girls which negatively affect their development. It has been argued that any use of imprisonment can not address a child’s complex issues and yet 17 year-old girls remain in the prison system. Juliet Lyon specifies in the Prison Reform Trust’s recent *Young People* edition (June 2006, p3):

Young people in custody are much more likely than others of their own age in the community to have slept rough, used illegal drugs, engaged in hazardous drinking and become early parents. Almost half of all children in prison will have been taken into the care of the local authority and many will have lived in children’s homes. Up to 30% of young women in custody report being sexually abused in childhood, a high proportion will have been victims of domestic violence and many young offenders have experienced loss....almost all young people in jail have a diagnosable mental disorder. (Lyon 2006, p3)

It is clear that this is a group who are very much at risk and in need themselves. Despite their high vulnerability, staff historically were not being sufficiently trained to deal with the extent of the complex needs (Howard League 2004) and were not equipped with the necessary resources. The juvenile units have been a step towards recognising this need and the level of resourcing reflect the extent of the girls’ vulnerability.

Chapter Four: Policy Context

To summarise, thus far the difficulties experienced by ‘girls in prison’ have been subsumed by the debates around women, children and the purpose of imprisonment; the increased awareness that this group is extremely vulnerable and has complex needs; and the awareness that the current system could not respond to these needs without additional resourcing.

The Female Juvenile Estate

Significant events for the changes within the secure estate for juveniles may be seen to begin with the YJB being made responsible for the commissioning and purchasing of all custodial places in April 2000 (YJB 2004). The judgement by Lord Justice Mumby in November 2002 was also key in establishing that children in custody are entitled to the same level of resourcing as a child in the community. The duties and obligations of the Children Act 1989 therefore applied to children in custody and their rights would be upheld under the Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (Wise 2003). Further, the Green Paper *Every Child Matters*, underpinned by the Children Act 2004, established objectives by which services for children should be measured. The subsequent Children’s Bill “places responsibility of safeguarding and promoting welfare on (amongst other bodies) providers of custody for children.....the first time that custody providers have been drawn into mainstream children’s legislation in such an explicit way” (YJB 2004, p7).

Two reports were published in April 2004 which provided more information about the needs of young people in custody and spotlighted areas for reform. *Juveniles in Custody* was published by the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in conjunction with the YJB and provided qualitative feedback from 15-18 year old boys and girls in every Prison Service establishment. This report details findings with regard to young people’s perceptions of custody, the impact of their physical location and their resettlement needs. The *Girls in Prison* report was based on research carried out by Ofsted and the Prisons Inspectorate. Their joint-working highlighted the particular vulnerabilities of female juveniles and the need for education and training to be central to any juvenile sentence. This led to the thematic review of education for girls in prison which found that whilst girls resided in adult establishments their needs could not be adequately met. The link was made between poor levels of education and low self-esteem. Resettlement issues and the need for continuing stability and support were also highlighted to specifically address the needs of young women. Subsequently, the Director General of the Prison Service and the YJB began to announce measures to address these findings.

In terms of practice, *Girls in Prison* made recommendations for improved quality of assessment, target-setting and reviews and a sustained focus upon education and purposeful activity throughout the sentence (both in custody and the community). It particularly highlighted the importance of the resettlement process and the problems created by disjointed sentences due to a lack of streamlined or continued input and opportunities throughout the entirety of a sentence and placing a young person back into worse conditions in the community than they had experienced, in terms of their welfare, in prison:

Many regarded their time in custody as a respite, in a relatively secure and orderly environment. Ill-equipped for their return to society, they were inadequately prepared for or supported when they did so. (Ofsted 2004, p3)

The Prison Service Order 4950 *Regimes for Juveniles* issued in 2004 provided a statement of purpose to capture the change in emphasis for their role. It acknowledged the principal aim (stemming from Section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) as being to “prevent offending by children and young people” (PSO 4950, p5). However, it also develops the awareness of an adolescent’s different needs and the necessary ways in which the juvenile estate should differ from the adults’ in response. A central principle is that “the punishment of custody lies in the loss of liberty itself, and not in any gratuitously punitive aspect of the regime”(YJB 2004, p7). This ‘absolute’ principle affects the subsequent balance between punishment and rehabilitation. The Prison Service interprets it thus, “Underpinning the entire PSO is the belief that custody cannot just be about containment. However, if it is to have a positive influence we must provide regimes which recognise that: adolescents do change, adults matter to adolescents and adolescents need care and control” (PSO 4950).

The operational specification for *Dedicated Units for Young Women* was published in October 2004. The ‘vision’ was established as:

To provide each young woman with a service that will meet her specific needs in relation to offending behaviour, education and training, substance misuse, health and mental health. The service will be underpinned by a model of care which requires all staff to work in an integrated way to address the needs of young women, with the aim of increasing their life chances on release. (Prison Service 2004, p4)

A key feature of the specification was to build a multi-disciplinary team to address the girls’ needs holistically. An emphasis was placed upon the relationship between increasing self-esteem, learning new skills and addressing offending behaviour. Education, therefore, became a central tenet as promoted by the *Girls in Prison* thematic review. It was also recognised that a secure and supportive environment, staffed by trained and experienced people that have chosen to work with juveniles would enable the requirements of the Children Act 1989 and *Every Child Matters* to be delivered.

The Rivendell Unit

The Rivendell Unit opened in December 2005 at New Hall with the vision statement; “Working together to make a positive difference in people’s lives”. The unit’s operational specification encompasses the principles and objectives set out above and fleshes out how they are intended to be achieved. From the start, the ethos has been around an holistic approach and inclusion. Indeed, the specification states “One of the guiding principles by which the unit will be led will be inclusion and exclusion will only be used as the last resort” (Rivendell Project Team 2005 , p14). This is expanded by the Inclusion Policy which aims “to include, motivate and manage” those young women who may be vulnerable due to behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties (SENCO 2007). The unit is staffed by prison officers (who wear a ‘softer’ uniform), YOT staff including Connexions, education staff, substance misuse workers, YMCA, Advocacy, a mental health in-reach worker and there is both medical provision, counselling and chaplaincy support from the main establishment. In

order to apply the principles of the Children Act 1989, there is collaboration with Wakefield Social Services and a Principal Social Worker based at the unit. This ensures that all decision making puts the welfare of the child first and all child protection concerns can be immediately addressed. A Child Protection Committee is formed by representatives of the relevant agencies to develop an overarching child protection strategy and address vulnerability, bullying and self-harm.

Multi-agency working is, therefore, key and the staff have all chosen to work on the unit. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the implementation of the separate juvenile unit has caused problems, as with any change, within the establishment. There have been contentious issues, particularly around resourcing. The discrete nature of the unit has caused friction and practical problems and such a directional change will always provoke a personal reaction for all staff and, hopefully, reflective practice for those directly involved. By this I mean that hopefully change can also provoke contemplation and learning rather than automatic hostility to new ideas, which may then be disseminated through the wider system.

As discussed, joint working between Ofsted and the Prison Inspectorate have fed into the reforms begun by the YJB with a resultant key focus upon education and training for juveniles. The girls in the Rivendell Unit receive 30 hours of education per week plus extra-curricular activities. There are four available courses, Art and Parentcraft, Business Administration, Catering and Hairdressing and the unit includes both a hairdressing salon and a small gym. Education is, therefore, central to the regime of the unit. Each young woman has a individual timetable which reflects her needs and which constitutes a holistic approach from each service provider. She also has an individual learning plan to address her learning style and ability. Whilst education forms the central tenet of the regime, the other professionals provide focused input with the girls and underpin the whole management of the unit. The holistic approach means that everybody is responsible for pro-social modelling, whilst each professional has their own specific role and remit.

Groupwork forms a substantial part of the education timetable in five-week cycles. One of the available group programmes is an Offending Behaviour Programme entitled *My Offence, My Victim, My Risk* written by the YOT liaison workers based on the Unit. Although I may be biased, as I deliver the programme and have been involved in its production, I see this as one of the most important elements of the regime and the girls' rehabilitation. Also, as the seconded Probation Officer upon the unit, my focus is very much upon offending behaviour and the reduction of further offences. The group programme, as with the rest of the regime, aims to strike the most appropriate balance between challenging negative behaviour and promoting positive behaviour. As Baroness Corston notes:

Punishment alone, especially in stark terms of loss of liberty and all that entails for women, does not change behaviour. (Corston 2007, p20)

A key factor for my team has been for the programme to address directly the criminogenic needs of young women, as opposed to taking a generic approach. The available research, as discussed earlier, highlighted a need to include a focus upon self-esteem, poor self-image, emotions, victimisation and the influence of relationships. The *Girls in Prison* (Ofsted & HMCIP 2004) report in particular highlighted these themes and also that there was a strong belief by the majority of young women that "too little attention had been given to their offending behaviour to enable them to make more positive life choices and decisions on release". The group and supporting one-to-one work aims to

address this deficiency. At present this programme is being assessed for accreditation. The issue of specific programmes for girls within the criminal justice system is also being pursued by the Policy and Practice Research Group at Middlesex University and we are integrating their findings with our practice.

The Issue of Resettlement

The bridge back into the community, resettlement, is fundamental to maintaining the momentum towards change begun in custody. This has been identified within the research which has underpinned the development of these units. As has been discussed, girls have different needs in prison as compared to the rest of the prison population and this continues beyond their release. The report *Girls in Prison* (Ofsted & HMCIP 2004, p3) stated:

The lack of stable and continuous family support, poor role models, poor educational histories, and life in care institutions were recurrent themes in the lives of these young women. With very few exceptions, the young women had experienced an absence of positive family support during adolescence and they had low expectations of any new help or support on release.

This lack of external support is compounded further by the high levels of mental health and emotional problems and associated substance misuse seen in this population. The issue of throughcare and sustainable resettlement is therefore crucial for this highly vulnerable group.

Again, the resettlement of 17-18 year old young women is subsumed within the overlapping research and recommendations for both women and young people. The National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan (Home Office 2004) focuses upon adult offenders leaving custody and provides seven pathways for greater strategic co-ordination between statutory and non-statutory organisations. The YJB has since produced a national youth resettlement action framework with pathways closely aligned to the adult model “to improve partnership-working and the management of the transition from custody to community, and from community to mainstream and children’s services” (YJB 2006, p4).

With regard to women’s resettlement needs, Baroness Corston (2007, p10) has identified the accommodation pathway as the greatest concern and that “most in need of speedy, fundamental gender specific reform”. I support this wholeheartedly. Accommodation forms a central theme of my research amongst both the young women and staff and will be explored in greater detail in my findings below. Baroness Corston also goes on to discuss the need for the teaching of life-skills as a priority for successful resettlement, particularly the concept of emotional literacy. Further, she praises the Prison Service’s Women and Young People’s Group for developing two additional pathways; Pathway 8, support for women who have been abused, raped or experienced domestic violence and Pathway 9, support for women who have been involved in prostitution. The need for these extra pathways is also reflected in my research and will be explored further in my conclusion. These developments again highlight the centrality of relationships, emotions and victimisation for female offenders. Research into the different types of community provision needed for women supports these themes and the need for a joined-up, holistic approach (Corston 2007, Clarke 2004).

With regard to children and young people, the need for improved resettlement is imperative as the YJB cite “Reconviction rates are high, with approximately 70% re-offending within 12 months [of release], and one study suggesting that 27% re-offend in the first month after release” (YJB 2006a, p5). The document attributes this to the dislocation caused to children and young people from their families, communities and from mainstream and children’s services

The YJB’s resettlement framework addresses the needs of children and young people. The seven pathways can be seen to correspond with the aims of *Every Child Matters* as illustrated below:

Every Child Matters outcome	Youth Resettlement Pathway
Be healthy	Health, Substance misuse
Stay safe	Accommodation, Families
Enjoy and achieve	Education, Training and Employment
Make a positive contribution to society	Families
Achieve economic well-being	Finance, Benefits and Debt

Table 2: Every Child Matters linked to Youth Resettlement Pathways

The additional Case Management and Transitions Pathway is imperative in stream-lining service provision and so is applicable across the board (YJB 2006a, p5). The framework recognises that both the child’s vulnerability and risk are likely to increase upon release from custody. This perpetuates the complex hybrid of the child protection and welfare needs of the individual young person and public protection issues that, as have been discussed in previous sections, were already identifiable within custody. The joint protocols of the Prison Service and YJB state that the Rivendell Unit should provide “all young women with the opportunity to develop, maintain, and strengthen appropriate community ties to prepare for their release” and that this strategy should be reviewed in accordance with the needs of the population (Prison Service 2004, p69) to address both of these dimensions of risk.

To conclude this section, therefore, the policy context illustrates a move towards a greater recognition of age-and-gender specific requirements. The needs of adolescents have been recognised and the particular need for the raised self-esteem of girls incorporated into the design of the regime. This has been bolstered by improved legal support for the rights of the child and government reviews into safeguarding which largely culminated in the *Every Child Matters* agenda. This has resulted in a holistic approach to provide better communication and transparency, cross-fertilisation of skills and knowledge, and a swifter, more comprehensive response to the myriad of needs we have seen that this group are likely to present. I have also discussed the struggles that this change in thinking and practice has produced at ground-level even within the small scale of the Rivendell Unit and its home establishment. The bridge of resettlement into the community and a very large catchment area is inevitably more complex and subject to many more external forces.

Chapter Five: Findings

The evidence of good practice and barriers will now be presented in terms of the young women and staff's views. As I have shown it is difficult to discuss the use of custody in isolation as, inevitably, its efficacy will be judged in the community. This is especially so in the case of DTOs which are a sentence of two halves!

This chapter analyses the responses gained from interviews of the young women in custody, the professionals working upon the prison unit and the views of the relevant external YOT workers two months after release. As could possibly be expected, the staff were somewhat lengthier in their responses, whilst the girls were generally very direct! I approached the individuals inside the unit randomly and according to availability and time-scales. No one declined to participate and I gained a sense that the young women particularly were all glad to be heard.

The following analysis will be structured around four main themes that build upon one another to produce a full picture of the resettlement needs and realities:

- Girls and their specific needs: how the girls themselves view their needs as opposed to boys in male establishments; and the differences staff have noted through their varied experience.
- The impact of the new regime: the differences both the girls and staff have noted between their experiences in the new juvenile units and other forms of custody.
- Successful practice and the barriers: what both the girls and staff view as working and hindering effective resettlement.
- Resettlement: an analysis.

Girls and their specific needs

Girls v Boys

On initial, direct questioning I found that the majority of the girls interviewed had never considered themselves to be any different to boys in a similar situation and actively asserted their right to be viewed as equals in the way they were dealing with prison life. As will be explored below, this immediate response could be unpicked upon further questioning and there were notable exceptions particularly for those girls who themselves had children 'on the out'. However the staff on the unit were all immediately able to highlight the differences between this age-group of girls and previous groups they had worked with in custody. I will first examine the themes that are apparent to the staff, which impact upon the way they deliver their practice, and then examine the more subtle observations that stemmed from the girls themselves.

Figure 5 (below) quantifies how many of the staff interviewed (from all disciplines) have experience of working with one or more client group in a prison setting. Some of the staff from civilian

occupations had further experience in the community but I chose to concentrate on comparable

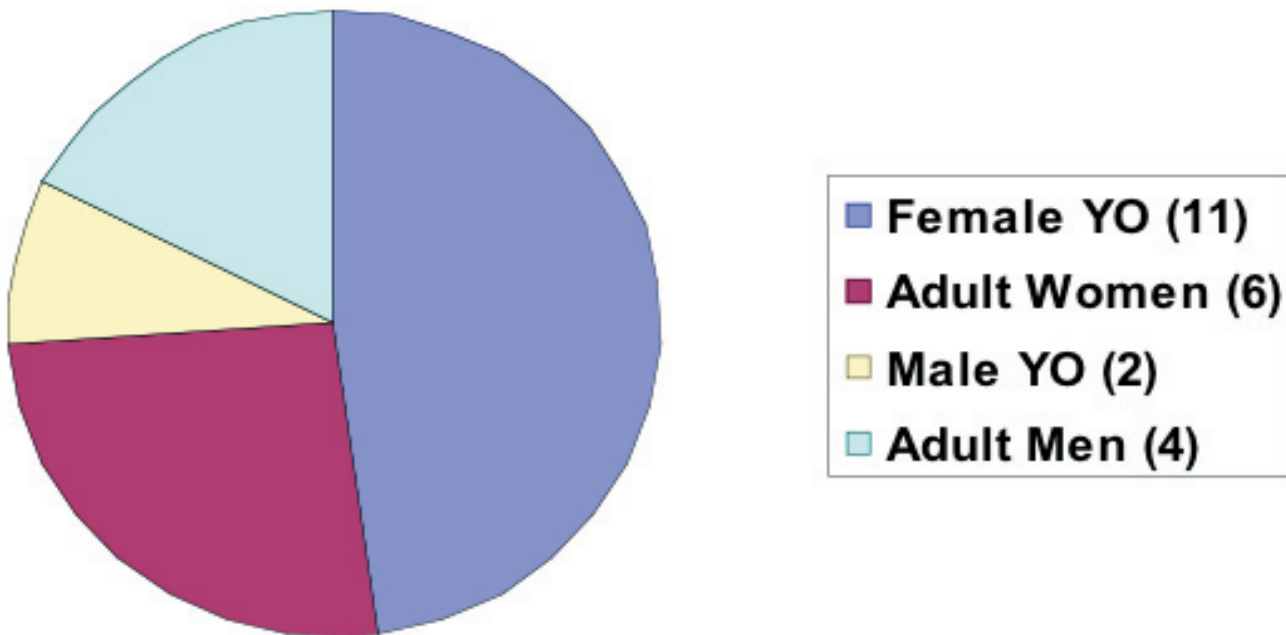


Figure 5: Proportion of staff (n=14) whom have had previous custodial experience of a different client-group

The reflections of the staff illustrate many of the themes highlighted in my review of the research into the presenting needs of women of any age (Hutson & Myers 2006, Rungay 2004, Clarke 2004). These include the greater frequency of self-harm and emotional problems, the importance of relationships both with staff and support networks, and their own victimisation. These are often tightly interwoven areas and expressed in a range of positive and negative coping mechanisms/ destructive behaviour.

There's a whole host of issues...anything from housing, drugs, violent boyfriends, neglectful families and parents, delinquent peer groups.... YOT Manager

Lot more emotional...they show their emotions more....and there appears to be a lot more complex issues around their offending. They're more tactile. Senior Prison Officer

There's more self-harm issues with the female than male estate and different forms of self-harming. Senior Prison Officer

Girls in Prison

However, the staff were also able to identify a wide range of issues that presented specifically in the juvenile female estate. Most noticeable, were the recurrent observations around the girls' level of volatility and challenging behaviour. This seems to be an exaggerated form of the emotional

complexity seen by staff in the adult female estate:

Biggest difference I would say is that young women tend to be more volatile and act before they think...although this may be due to immaturity. They're also more demanding and in need of a role model. Principal Prison Officer

...from a control point of view more difficult to manage. They're the most demanding group to work with...I've worked with YOIs, adult men and women and these have the most baggage...sometimes it's also their first time in custody. Head of Children's Services

More challenging, more demanding. They're kids...why, why, why? This age group ask why...most of them have a short temper and don't like the word no. I think their underlying issues...they're not different to adult females but they haven't learned to control them. A lot of their behaviour is triggered by abuse...instead of recognising their feelings and hurt, they're committing the crime...a lot of them haven't learned to handle their emotions. Prison Officer

The mental health in-reach worker, with previous experience in the adult women's estate, identified the need to "modify language for them to be able to understand, trying to find different ways to communicate".

One Senior Prison Officer, who has previous experience of working in a male YOI, was able to highlight a cultural difference that she thought might result from the bigger catchment area and smaller unit typical of the female juvenile estate:

Significant differences gender-wise...in Wetherby [male YOI] it wasn't cool to learn. And there was more peer-pressure as it's bigger...I always think girls are more mature anyway. I think girls are much more protected [in the new units] but then they are so far away from home...I've noticed because the catchment area is so big you don't get the gang culture based on towns. The other difference with boys is that they will fight as they don't want to lose face.

Building upon the issue of geographical distance and also the nature of many of the girls' family backgrounds, there were also many practical issues highlighted as being different for this specific group in terms of their external support and individual coping abilities:

Support really...the adults seem to have husbands, partners and children...whereas a lot of the young women on here are struggling for support. That's a problem for this age group. Prison Officer

Much more high-maintenance, more issues, poor coping strategies, a lack of goals and belief in the future... YPSMS worker

The positive side of this struggle to assert themselves is that this age-group, and particularly it would seem girls, are much more open to the experience of pro-social modelling through relationships and boundary setting:

I think the more one-to-one time you can give them at this age as a responsible adult figure in their life, you can see it getting through and having more of an impact. I think when they get to know you and trust you their behaviour does improve. Most of them just want adult role-

models and boundaries....This is the age group when you can have the most effect. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The majority of the time, when they feel respected and they feel the sense of self-worth from all agencies....its holistic. And we've got the flexibility to be young person-centred - and promote self-esteem. YOT worker

As mentioned at the start of this section, the girls themselves generally provided a flat “no” when asked whether they thought their needs differed to boys of the same age in prison. This appeared to be partly bravado in the face of being seen to do ‘their time’ in prison on a par with boys and partly their genuine belief. Of course as teenagers, and in this case mainly very damaged teenagers, it perhaps should be expected that they find it difficult to view themselves abstractly. As one prison officer stated their level of self-absorption and lack of social skills is a defining feature of this population. After all, this is a group for whom survival has generally been key and the usual child development stages impacted by negative life events and learned behaviour.

However, the mothers amongst them immediately recognised their own experiences as being different:

Yeah, my daughter. I think I need to see her more. I think they treat us more harshly than lads. Its worse for me as I've got a daughter on the out. Some staff don't realise how much things mean to you on the out. I feel it worse than a man would.

That thing they've done where my son can come and see me up here and they didn't do that for his dad when he was locked up.

Both of these girls had been provided with regular contact visits on the unit organised by liaison between the unit's social worker and external social services.

Another theme recognised by two of the girls, both of whom had been involved heavily with drugs, is their vulnerability. Both highlighted the need for awareness around exploitation and their thinking skills:

Vulnerability and the drugs thing...I can be very spontaneous and do things that get me into predicaments I don't want to be in.

I think that you should speak more to girls who have been in my position [being sexually exploited] because I didn't think there was anything wrong with it at the time.

This clearly builds upon the issues of self-esteem and self-efficacy noted also in the adult women's estate (Corston 2007). However, as children the experiences these girls are relating are child protection issues and doubly resonant due to their development and welfare needs.

The impact of the new regime

In this section I will concentrate on the aspects of the Rivendell Unit which both the girls and staff have highlighted as an aid or a deficit to their long-term needs (aside from the call from many of the girls to allow smoking, improve the food and accept boys onto the unit!). For the majority of the girls in the study this was their first time in custody (n=8). Others had been held in a STC, a LASH or another juvenile unit; some, all of these or a combination on a number of occasions.

Lost and Found Inside

The physical environment itself is subject to great debate both amongst the staff and the trainees. Anecdotally, it is also contentious within the main establishment and in my personal experience a lot of the staff outside of the Rivendell Unit in HMP & YOI New Hall have been quite negative due to the segregation and high level of resources channelled to the lower age-group (funded by the YJB) and the belief that, as a result, it is not a 'proper prison'. Of the staff that work there, however, the overwhelming majority that I spoke to felt that it was a vast improvement, or at least that there were more pluses than minuses, to the separate unit:

The segregation [is better] to a degree....F Wing³ had an element of mixing and picking up negative stuff in terms of criminal behaviour and bravado. Mental health in-reach worker

Again it's down to safeguards...they don't shower together, they don't smoke so there's no bullying for that, the vulnerabilities are better here. They don't mix with adults at all...and the education is better. It's more streamlined now. Senior Prison Officer

This is a lot more positive without a doubt...the environment's better, although claustrophobic due to space. One major advantage is that all the staff want to be here. Love the multi-agency approach, staff have more time. If something's happening it's highly unlikely someone won't pick up on it. The rooms themselves are nicer. But the main difference is the staff and that they want to work with young people. That's the key to all this. Head of Unit (Acting Governor)

All the staff interviewed, without fail, identified that the new environment facilitated much more effective multi-agency working, a key development under the Mumby judgement, the UN Convention of Human Rights (Wise 2003), Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004 (YJB 2004). This ensures a plan for resettlement is commenced as soon as the girl is assessed within custody and produces joined-up working both inside and outside of the prison.

Aside from the practical benefits of bringing the agencies together, the importance of the environment is intrinsic to the holistic approach of the unit. The principles of pro-social modelling are inbuilt within the whole regime. The child-friendly environment reflects the 'absolute principle'

³ F-Wing was the YOI wing at New Hall prior to the introduction of the juvenile unit

that “the punishment of custody lies in the loss of liberty itself, and not in any gratuitously punitive aspect of the regime”(YJB 2004, p7). This positive approach, therefore, is engrained in the resettlement process that begins at day one of sentence. The need for stability and continued support in terms of resettlement, particularly in the case of young women, had been highlighted by the Girls in Prison findings of HMCIP and Ofsted in 2004 (as discussed in previous sections).

The desire to streamline DTO sentences and the provision for young women is also central, therefore. For the staff, it is reflected by the improvements in the sentence planning process:

The main thing is at the start of the DTO meetings...their issues are brought to the attention of outside agencies. Having as much in place as possible so they know where they are going and what they are doing....And for them to come to the conclusion about their options for themselves by getting feedback, not being ‘told’. Connexions worker

The facilities, environment and culture of the unit have created vast improvements in the girls’ ‘ownership’ of their own targets produced through this process. As one YOT worker says “sentence planning is now better, it’s more young person centred.” This is also true of their education plans as “in a place of this size I can see every girl and tailor their education to meet their individual needs” (SENCO). The identification of each girl’s needs is then shared through multi-agency meetings designed to address, respectively, behaviour, risk and vulnerabilities and this enables the tailoring of the unit’s approach as a whole to the young woman to provide consistency.

The fact of segregation from the adults does continue to raise debate, mostly amongst the prison officers, although the small space and resultant intensity is identified as an issue by others. I found most of the staff felt that overall it has reduced negative influences, although one officer believed there were “good points” to be gained from contact with the adults in terms of their maturity that had been lost. A common viewpoint was that a balance had been struck, as expressed by the unit’s SENCO; “It can be a bit insular...but here it’s much cleaner and more homely. Its more positive... I .just think a cleaner, calmer atmosphere...it’s more focused.” This can be seen as progression from the original debate chronicled by the Lost Inside report (Howard League 1997) discussed in an earlier chapter. The views of the girls on this issue is picked up in the section below as they tended to view their surroundings in terms of experience rather than the solid environment.

Outcomes

In terms of how the new regime and environment may affect re-offending and aid resettlement, however, opinions amongst both the staff and the young women were split. I believe that the crux of the debate is illustrated by the following quote from the YOT manager:

Not a day passes by when...I don’t question if this is the right way to be doing things. It’s very expensive...I think sometimes, there’s something about providing such a secure place for them and then we’re putting them back into exactly the same environment.

The Governor also picked up on the theme of the entrenched nature of some of the girls’ difficulties in relation to their backgrounds:

Interesting....I think it depends on the individual trainee. Some have been in STCs their whole life and so may find it comfortable. The environment alone on F-Wing could have stopped more of the hardened girls coming back. But this to me is the way forwards without a doubt.

I found that all of the staff reflected that working practices had become much improved upon the unit compared to the YO Wing but that it was external factors beyond their control which may alter outcomes. In terms of impact, most of the staff felt that we were going in the right direction but that it would take some time for the true outcomes to be able to be measured.

Wouldn't like to say...I don't think this in itself puts girls off re-offending....for some it's better than what they've got at home....if you could give them the shock of their lives, but I understand why they do it treating them as a child. Prison Officer

F-Wing scared 'em as it was quite big and then this unit which is more child-friendly. I'm sat on the fence again until this unit has been running a few more years. Prison Officer

Other professionals recognised that longer-term evaluation was needed but felt that there could be no going back. As my colleague in the YOT liaison team states, what works is “Rivendell no doubt about it. Because some of it's about being safe and when you're safe you're more open to learning and change.” However, this again highlights the sometimes grating juxtaposition between a regime which protects from the responsibilities and hazards of ‘real life’ and the subsequent release into an unchanged home environment .

The young women themselves were interestingly split in their opinions. I found that of the girls with previous experience of secure units (6 of 14) all felt that the new style juvenile units were more likely to ‘help you stay out of trouble’ (although none of the girls questioned had experienced the old style YO Wing). Some of the girls who had been in custody before felt that the juvenile units meant being treated “more like an adult” and that it was “stricter” and “you don't get away with as much”. Other comments were:

They [Rivendell Unit] give you more responsibility and more trust....you get more support in here and more help with things on the out.

This place...in a secure unit you wanna go back...why would you wanna come back here?

I don't want to come back here, cos we're all 17 some of the girls just try to big themselves up.

These statements highlight some of the many debates to be had about the use of custody overall and this type of regime. Both the staff and girls' comments alike debate the roles and balance of punishment, deterrent and rehabilitation. Much of the girls' opinions depend upon their previous experience of the criminal justice system, if at all, and their home lives and environment . The final quote above also raises questions around the research discussed in earlier chapters (Howard League 1997) with regard to the need to separate these young women from adults. Even within such a small age-group, perhaps because of it, there are dynamics of power and social cliques which inevitably produce some form of exclusion between the young women despite all of the safeguarding procedures aiming to prevent and combat this.

This theme was developed further by one girl who had no past experience of custody, who felt that the Rivendell Unit should be “more like a prison” and that staff “don’t give you enough freedom and they treat you like 10 year olds”. This young woman requested to be transferred as close to her 18th birthday as possible as she felt she could not cope with the younger or more immature girls (when I have seen her in passing in the main establishment she tells me that she does not regret this!). It is worth questioning her motives, however, as it may be that the adult estate provides a greater opportunity to become ‘lost’ and this may be preferable to some than the challenging, individualised nature of the juvenile regime. Or perhaps she just wanted a cigarette (a highly motivating factor for some)!

The young woman in the sample with the longest experience of institutions and who understood that she had become very institutionalised at a young age, however, had this to say:

None of it helps. No matter how much group-work crime-work, nothing’s gonna help you. You need to help yourself first. They make it too nice. And it’s easier in STCs and YOIs than the community...you’re in a regime here. There are more distractions on the out...it’s not even a punishment to come here. It’s just a way to escape I think. People might see it differently but I see this as a bit of time-out...you’ve escaped all the punishments on the outside and they’re a lot harder on the out.

Again, this observation raises many themes around personal responsibility (particularly at a young age) and the purpose of custody and its potential negative consequences. This girl had lost a college place due to her latest conviction but was pragmatic about the lost opportunity as she had spent most of her teenage years in some form of custody. With hardly any family support and no address to return to, she viewed prison as a form of respite.

Although such views seem to contradict much of the positivity noted by staff, I do not believe that this means that either group are necessarily ‘wrong’. It is worth returning here to the dominant theme highlighted by the available research into this group of ‘girls in prison’ of low self-esteem. In view of many of the girls’ experiences of victimisation and their exclusion from forms of empowerment such as education and stable family units it would actually seem inevitable that many have low expectations. As Morgan (08/05/07) stated these children are some of the most victimised and damaged in our society and, as has been demonstrated, this can be said to be doubly-so for female children in prison - so is it not likely that defeatism is likely to be rife amongst them with little ability to appreciate their own self-worth? At this age and with the influence of peers at perhaps its strongest, particularly in the absence of other support-networks, it is easy to see how offending behaviour can also provide a strong sense of identity for these young women and a reluctance or inability to see beyond being doomed to further deviance or failure (Maruna 2001). The bravado or defeatism in this belief will depend upon the individual’s personality but in my experience is also likely to fluctuate according to mood and current circumstance.

The theoretical questions raised around individual and social forces and responsibility seem to play a heavy role within staff members’ personal reflections. Whether they believe this type of regime is the correct approach or not, it is very difficult to isolate ‘what works’ when there is potential for the environment to be a safer, more comfortable option for such a damaged and needy set of young women who do not have anywhere near the same level of support or opportunities in the community.

Successful practice and the barriers

To summarise the interviewees' responses so far, the staff unanimously highlight the successes of inter-agency working whilst the girls' view of their achievements and 'best bits' were based upon education. I believe that this is a reflection of the staff's awareness of processes and the girls' view of their tangible results (particularly in an area where many of them have been disenfranchised in this past). Ten of the fourteen girls questioned identified education and their resultant qualifications as their positives. As education, in the form of 30 hours per week, forms the centre of the regime both practically and in the view of the girls I wish to examine effective practice in this area, and the limitations.

It was also noticeable that the girls who highlighted their education and subsequent plans for the future, "starting work when I get out because I've got my maths and English now", "the hairdressing course...gives you something to work towards when you get out", were the same ten girls who were released and available for a follow-up contact two months later. The four remaining girls, whilst not wishing to over-generalise as all those questioned had multiple obstacles to overcome, were the four most entrenched in offending either due to their chaotic backgrounds, being heavily institutionalised, having serious substance misuse issues, severe mental health problems or a combination of all these and more. As a result, I believe they generally had less capacity to see beyond their immediate difficulties and had either knowledge that further remand/custodial sentences were due or a strong belief that they would face some form of further imprisonment much more quickly than some of their peers. Again, this sense of being 'doomed' reflects Maruna's (2001) work upon active and reformed offenders and the impact of self-worth upon their aspirations.

Education v Life-skills

In terms of the importance of education, the SENCO for the unit summarises:

Well I think for the girls, they hardly come in with any qualifications and nearly everyone goes out with something...we're boosting their confidence. It will be interesting to see in 5 or 10 years time whether it has been a success....because I think everyone involved with it at the beginning wants it to work. Elsewhere in prison it's all about locking doors and they don't have to interact.

However, I found that five of the staff identified that 'a change that they thought could be made to the Rivendell Unit to make it more effective in terms of reducing the risk of re-offending' would be that the education provision should be more vocational and/or life-skills based. That is, less focused upon literacy and numeracy and more skills-based. It was also suggested by officers that the courses on offer were stereotypical girls' professions and courses in painting and decorating or mechanics would be more useful. As this involved four members of the discipline team and the mental health in-reach worker, I would suggest these are the staff with the greatest proximity to the girls in terms of their domestic situation and ability to care for themselves, being based on the spur in terms of the prison staff and, with regards to the in-reach worker, screening their emotional well-being and mental health.

In terms of equipping youngsters I think we should have more focus on life-skills, team-building. Not necessarily competitive but social skills....in terms of the spurs could have budgets, planning for example...taking responsibility and developing their social and living skills. Mental health in-reach worker

Education is good but I think there should be more vocational education....I think there should be a greater emphasis on responsibility rather than the regime taking responsibility for them. Principal Prison Officer

We should be looking at where the skills deficits are and the type of client we've got. Senior Prison Officer

This theme will be examined further in the next chapter. However, it is worth noting that of the wider curriculum there were some subjects that gained specific mentions from the girls. Two of the most noteworthy case examples were two girls, both from travelling backgrounds, who were illiterate when sentenced. They both learned to read and write and gained qualifications in maths and English during their time in custody. Both girls were able to highlight this as their major achievement! Also, three of the girls specifically mentioned the Offending Behaviour Programme:

The Offending Behaviour course...I get to talk about my offence more and I can deal with it better.

...it's actually made me think about what I did wrong and it's made me get my head straight so I'm glad.

The crime work's good. I've learned loads from that.

There have been many successes in education both on a macro and micro level in terms of the skills that girls have been able to develop. Some girls may have been able to gain qualifications whilst others have learned how to tell the time or how to relate to others on a daily basis. It may be that the next Ofsted Inspection does recommend a directional change and I do think there is scope for incorporating more life-skills into the regime. A further problem that I have noted is that for a significant proportion of the girls Art and Parentcraft is the only available course for them due to their intellectual ability or the risk they present with the tools used in other subjects. This can be very restrictive and I believe that it is a key area for development.

ROTLs

Four girls identified ROTLs (Release on Temporary Licence) as 'the one single thing that could be done here to help you settle back into the community'. The visits into the community can be for a housing, job or college interview, some form of voluntary work or to aid with family ties and so link directly to resettlement. It is often the first step back into 'reality' and a chance to acclimatise. Indeed, the Governor of the unit highlighted this area, performed by Connexions with respect to employment and training and the prison officers with respect to welfare, as the main contributor to successful resettlement as it has been integral to many of the girls' achievements upon release.

However, many of the staff felt that this could be an area for development to include more restorative justice projects and voluntary work. For example:

Everything seems to be based on them getting something from the ROTL and not giving something back to the community. Prison Officer

There is now a project underway with Riding for the Disabled which allows girls who meet the criteria to go out on a weekly basis and work with this charity. It is an area that would benefit from more schemes and would directly contribute to the restorative angle of custody that staff have noted missing thus far. It also would not be a one-way process however. Such schemes would also contribute to the holistic, relational approach of the unit and the objective of improving self-esteem. As Gelsthorpe and Sharpe (2007) discuss, the improvement of self-worth is identified by research as a key factor for future desistance from offending. It also provides opportunities for a new self-image and casting of the time spent in custody for those girls open to a move beyond the label of 'offender'. As Rumgay (2004) suggests successful resettlement and desistance may be linked to a mixture of opportunity, 'identity-scripts', self-efficacy and resilience. Such projects are likely to provide the potential for growth in all of these areas as the girls learn new skills in a very practical, focused way.

Barriers to progress

The opinions noted about expanding the use of ROTL and introducing more life-skills based education will hopefully form part of the development of the unit. There will obviously be a time delay for any new project trying to reach the capacity to meet fully its original vision and criteria. The Rivendell Unit has also been beset by staffing problems which have caused further delays in implementation and this has been further compounded by the segregation from the main prison in terms of juvenile trained (and willing) staff. As a Senior Prison Officer noted "we have to consume our own smoke".

Population pressures are also very destabilising. As discussed in terms of the literature and policy making in this area, the current crisis in the prison population as a whole has a major impact upon the delivery of the joined-up plans formulated for and by the girls on the unit. Staff are concerned that the movement of girls in response to placement needs may negate all of this good work.

I think because of the input on here I do think it's better although I don't like the '18 years old and boot them off'...it depends how long they're staying. This [works], if they stay here the whole time but not if it gets interrupted. Prison Officer

Where possible, the YJB will agree for DTOs to remain in the units "on the grounds that to transfer them to adult estates would generally be counter-productive in terms of humanity and continuity in offender or education programme participation" (Moran 2007, p213). In reality though, the crisis in over-crowding has made this increasingly difficult and many girls are moved quickly after their 18th birthdays unless there are major vulnerability issues. Vulnerability is, as we have seen however, endemic to the whole female estate.

Other problems noted by the staff are those generated by the huge catchment area, which removes much of the little support these girls tend to have, and the variety seen in the resources of the large number of YOTs that we deal with (whereas a male YOI would only deal with a small number of local YOTs due to higher numbers). This prevents effective local links being forged and creates problems for the girls in comprehending why one individual may be offered certain opportunities or assistance when they themselves are not.

The major factor identified by 12 of the 14 members of the staff in response to the question ‘What do you see as being problematic in terms of the young women’s resettlement?’ was, predictably, accommodation:

Some of the time it’s about placing and accommodation...it lets us down at the last minute. Some areas have more services to tap into than others. The reality can be that there are no services to access for an identified area. Mental health in-reach worker

A lack of decent places to put them where’s gonna be away from re-offending. Some of the girls in here that were on drugs do really well but then you drop them back down and you know they’ll be back on it in 11, 12 hours. And the difference between the different YOTS is unbelievable...and they’re at a difficult age to house in between juvenile and YOs. Prison Officer

The biggest problem for effective resettlement as a whole is - still not got enough proper throughcare...still not enough resources being put in to make it effective. Senior Prison Officer

Where we are placing them...I think it’s an absolute disgrace and disgusting. We are putting them in hostels...vulnerable young women! We put them out the gates and we are setting them up to fail. Prison Officer

Accommodation, accommodation, accommodation. YOT worker

Of the young women, however, only one highlighted this issue. She said the most important thing to ‘help her stay out of trouble’ would be “somewhere to stay”. One, however, noted that she was going back to an area rife with drugs problems when her main issue was amphetamine use. The majority (10) felt that being in prison would not cause them any problems upon their return to the community. The remainder felt that their future may be affected in terms of being able to get a job (3), the self-harm marks on their face and body or “a tiny bit in a way as you lose contact with friends and some of my family”.

This could be interpreted as an over-estimation of the problem by staff who may be imposing their own standards and values upon the needs of the young women. I believe that this is sometimes the case. However, I believe that a stronger argument is that these particular young women have been excluded from parts of society throughout their lives and chaos, transience, and lack of support have become the norm for them so many either choose not to worry about this situation as ‘that’s life’ or do not know there are other options and certainly not how to achieve them.

Resettlement: an analysis

The major problems in terms of resettlement identified by staff have been shown to be accommodation; lack of support for the young women both during their custodial sentence and upon release; and the inconsistency of service provision throughout different localities.

The young women themselves have either expected not to be released due to further charges or their severe mental health problems; believed that if they were released they were likely to come straight back; or seen their immediate problems in terms of getting a job, family issues, dealing with the temptation of drugs; or none at all, as many of the girls questioned felt that this experience of prison life had been positive overall. In fact, ten girls answered that there was nothing about this experience that would produce any negative consequences for them:

No, it's helped me a lot.

It's been a new experience for me.

Just being here has helped.

All the people I've talked to, I haven't done that before.

I've never had the chance before but now I've had a chance to grab it and I want to carry on 'on the out'.

As part of this study I have also contacted the girls' external YOT workers, where possible, two months after their release. They identified the following examples of good practice in terms of resettlement (between the unit and the external YOT):

- Addressing literacy skills
- Good stream-lined case-management and case-work
- The community plan put together at the final DTO meeting before release.
- Attendance by a prison officer at a review post-release
- Risk assessment and referral into MAPPA by the prison.

The main issues the girls have faced upon release have been:

- Accommodation
- Drug misuse
- Alcohol misuse
- Relationship problems – further victimisation
- Inability to cope with independent living
- Non-compliance with licence
- Entrenched pro-criminal lifestyle and family background
- Self-esteem issues
- Care proceedings for their children.

This list reflects the problems noted for women across the board (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007) and is amplified by the needs of such vulnerable teenagers. For female juveniles, I would argue that the intertwined areas of previous and ongoing victimisation and low self-esteem in particular have played a major role in many of these girls' situations and their ability to develop such skills as resilience and self-efficacy as noted by Rungay (2004b) as necessities for survival.

A particular observation for the girls of this age group is that whereas many of the girls have suffered victimisation in some form from their family whilst growing up, at this age much of the victimisation and negative influence shifts towards the boys/men in their lives. It appears to be an age when domestic violence can take many forms. For example, one of the young women's external YOT workers replied that this girl, who had long had a difficult, abusive relationship with her father which resulted in her being unable to return to the family home:

...has recently had a 'relationship' with a known offender, this has resulted in her being victimised, being homeless and being very badly assaulted.

The most common and pressing problem for many of the girls, however, was their housing situation (which can also be viewed in light of the above observations to be entwined in their other difficulties). Whilst eight of the girls in the follow-up study had been shown to have experienced housing problems, three of the girls remaining in custody at the time of the follow-up would also have experienced acute accommodation problems if they had been released due to their mental health needs, housing histories and lack of housing options. One of the girls in the sample who was released, left the prison as 'no fixed abode' and was placed in B&B accommodation. This was doubly concerning in view of her mental health problems and associated vulnerability and the fact that she was assessed as a high risk of harm to the public. The other seven who experienced problems in the two months following release all experienced either hostel or B&B accommodation or spent time moving between family members' homes.

I believe that this sample certainly reflects Baroness Corston's findings with regard to adult women and their accommodation needs that:

This was brought home to me in the yet unpublished paper by Women in Prison (WIP) Finding somewhere to live: the resettlement needs of young women leaving prison, reporting on a three year project that ran from 2002 – 2005...The WIP worker felt that structural issues outside of prison made her job almost impossible and even with housing advice available in all women's prisons, women were still leaving prison with nowhere to go. (Corston 2007, p42)

The staff questioned in this study, both in and outside the prison, felt that structural forces negated much of the progress seen during the first half of their DTOs. One extremely worrying example was the young woman assessed as high risk of harm being released to bed and breakfast accommodation. Many external agencies were involved in the plans for her release but this was the only available option. Two-months later she was still residing there. This was felt by all those working with her, both internal and external agencies, as being entirely inappropriate, likely to undo all her good progress and raise her already high vulnerabilities and also raise the risk she presented to the public. This young woman's YPSMS worker commented, "I was expecting the resettlement side of it to be fairly bleak...but it really is quite de-motivating".

Many of the respondents raised the need for housing officers to be based in the juvenile units but in reality this would be very difficult due to the huge catchment areas within the estate and simply a lack of housing, particularly for this highly vulnerable group. There are housing officers based in the community teams but they also suffer from a heavy case-load and the same issues. This situation is heightened by the complexities of the girls' need in terms of support as many do not possess the skills to live independently. There also remains the ongoing risk of self-harm due to a lack of emotional support and appropriate social networks (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007). Reckless self-harming behaviour in the past can also minimise housing options further, particularly if this has taken the form of fire-setting which seems quite common amongst this group.

A landmark ruling in favour of the Howard League for Penal Reform on 26th July 2007 will hopefully have some impact however. At the Court of the Appeal a case centring upon a girl who had turned 18 that day was given a verdict in her favour which sets a precedent for local authorities to "look after children who leave custody" (Howard League 2007, p1). The press release states that "Local authorities across the country are failing to provide proper assessments and care plans for vulnerable children leaving custody. My legal team deals with cases on a daily basis where children are in danger of returning to precisely the same situations that led to their crimes and imprisonment in the first place". (ibid, p2). There is no magic wand, however, to create a stockpile of suitable housing.

It must also be remembered that if a young woman does not have an appropriate address she will also lose out on the benefit of Early Release, if applicable, and may have to serve more time in custody than a peer with different resources in their community. This should not happen but it does because the supervising officer cannot verify that B&B accommodation in all cases will either contain the risk or lead to a sustainable housing plan.

The YJB are working alongside the Department for Communities and Local Government which announced a target in November 2006 to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for all 16 and 17-year-olds by 2010 (YJB 2007b). There is also an accommodation strategy in place entitled *Suitable, Sustainable, Supported: A strategy to ensure provision for children and young people who offend* (YJB 2006b) with the hoped for outcome being "suitable and supported accommodation can cut short criminal careers, and enable this excluded group to achieve the five outcomes identified in the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*" (ibid, p3).

This all represents a start but when viewed in the context of 'girls in prison' and their particular needs which will then extend into their needs as women, as documented by those such as Corston (2007), Gelsthorpe et al. (2007) and Clarke (2004), a huge amount of structural and personal issues also need to be addressed in a holistic fashion for change to be truly brought about. To meet the criteria of the Gender Equality Act 2006 all provision needs to be "gender-informed" or "gender-specific" addressing the multiple needs women present with (Gelsthorpe et al. 2006, p200).

For girls, this holistic approach needs also to respond to the issues raised under the umbrella of child protection and safeguarding. As reviewed earlier, the YJB resettlement pathways and the areas of need for women identified by Baroness Corston (particularly the development of two extra pathways by the Prison Service's Women and Young People's Group that focus upon domestic abuse, violence and rape and involvement in prostitution) are just as relevant to girls. However, I would argue that these latter two pathways need to be adapted to recognise the different ways abuse

and exploitation manifest for this age-group. As has been discussed, in respect to domestic violence, this age-group seem to experience the convergence of historical abuse with the family and also their high vulnerability to controlling, abusive relationships both through learned behaviour, emotional neediness and the need to survive. It is also often the case that ‘relationships’ can occur with much older men at this stage due to their vulnerabilities. This all needs to be addressed on two levels; the girl’s experience of victimisation and the inherent child protection concerns. The same applies to the experience of prostitution and sexual exploitation.

Incidentally, there were also specific, individual areas that the external YOT workers felt could be improved upon both in relation to the unit and specific cases:

- A consistent procedure for assessing MAPPA eligibility on a national level and instigating the process.
- The difficulties in documenting some of the girls’ identities, date of births, NI numbers etc due to non-registration at birth.

These issues provide interesting starting points for discussion that I do not have the space to address in this study. A brief comment, however, is that a surprising number of the young women who pass through our doors cannot be documented due to either their transient lifestyles or their status as foreign nationals and have two or more identities. There are also issues around the consistency of risk management across the country which the YJB are currently in the process of rectifying. I am, however, also very interested in problems around risk management for young people, particularly girls, who do not fit easily into the adult, male-based models of risk assessment used by MAPPA. I have found that many practitioners across disciplines find it difficult to conceptualise the ways a juvenile girl’s risk may differ from an adult man’s. I have also found that this can result in a tendency to trivialise this risk. This is of course dangerous and naïve. A further problem created by this lack of understanding is that many resources both in custody and the community are risk-led and thus I believe this group may lose out to others who may fit more traditional notions of what a ‘dangerous offender’ should look like.

All of these practice-based issues will be rendered academic if the prison population continues to apply such pressures to the juvenile units. At present, the pressure on places is causing girls to be moved as soon as they turn 18 unless there are any extreme vulnerabilities in evidence. The scarcity of beds also means that girls who are placed into one of the four remaining units can at times be a long way from home. Both of these population issues undermine much of the stated original aims of the units. Removing girls from their local support networks, involved professionals and community ties clearly is detrimental to the resettlement process. The swiftness with which many of the girls move through the unit due to bed pressures also puts pay to all attempts to streamline the sentence and build professional relationships. Moving the girls into the YO wing also removes much of the resources, the sentence planning process and the holistic approach begun in the unit. I also have concerns about the impact upon the girls’ sense of worth as a move can be perceived as a rejection, of which the girls tend to have experienced many, or a lack of investment in the good work they have already begun.

To conclude, and returning to the girls’ views about their resettlement documented at the beginning of this section, a final comment is my concern that so many of them viewed their experience of

prison as being almost entirely positive despite all of the likely problems to be experienced upon release. This does not seem to be because they have found the environment to be 'too child-friendly', as concerned some of the professional respondents in this study, but because they felt generally safe upon the unit and seemed to have such low-expectations about what their futures would hold. This seems to me now, and through my observations at work, to be a very sad indictment.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

The aim of this study was to identify the age-and-gender-specific issues that affect juvenile girls in custody and contribute to their resettlement into the community. As the principle at the heart of the new regime is that “The punishment of custody lies in the loss of liberty itself” (YJB 2004, p7), the interventions made during the girls’ time in prison aim to be positive, inclusive and improve their life-chances upon release. With the over-riding objective being the reduction of re-offending rates, the bridge to ‘success’ is effective resettlement. This is particularly true due to the short nature of the custodial element of a DTO and the founding research documented in Chapter Four that many of the girls find custody the ‘easier’ section of their sentence as they are safe and removed from their immediate problems at ‘home’. Effective resettlement needs to be based closely upon research into ‘what works’ for 17 year old girls to achieve the most positive outcomes and limit the ‘revolving door’ of prison for some of the most “victimised in our society” (Morgan 08/05/07).

As stated in Chapter Four, some of the earliest research into this population found a link between girls who offend and low self-esteem. Education was, therefore, placed centrally within the regime to raise the girls’ confidence and ambition. The available research also highlighted a need to include a focus upon poor self-image, emotions, victimisation, the influence of their relationships and the culminating effect of all of these issues upon the nature and type of their offending behaviour. All of these themes are female-specific and are reflected in the recommended approaches for women throughout the criminal justice system. To address the girls’ needs as children, the principles of the regime were established as “adolescents do change, adults matter to adolescents and adolescents need care and control” (PSO 4950). They also have the same right to safeguards and resourcing as a child in the community.

I have questioned whether 17 year old girls, who are uniquely separate in the prison estate, have specific needs as opposed to their counterparts in the male estate or women and children of different ages. I have applied this to the effectiveness of the current system and highlighted areas which would benefit from development. I have also looked at the Rivendell Unit as a specific example of this regime to identify areas that are creating positive results and those that could be expanded and improved upon.

The Needs of 17 Year Old Girls

This is a difficult life-stage for all but for these girls, who have all experienced some form of abuse, it represents a collision between the troubles of their childhood and their new responsibilities and difficulties, often with very little help from anyone other than the professionals in their lives. As some of the staff noted in Chapter Five, the girls often have no support networks as there has been estrangement from their family but they have yet to form any new stability in their personal lives. This can be complicated further for girls with children of their own, who generally do not have parental responsibility in view of the chain of events that have led to prison. This creates layers of difficulties in addressing a ‘child of need’ with a child of their own who may be in greater need. The variations in the levels of maturity even in such a small population upon the unit also creates problems as some of the girls present as young women whereas some appear much, much younger

than their chronological age. I would argue that the vulnerabilities seen in the adult estate are however much more acute for all of this age group.

One of the main issues is pinpointing the distinction between control and child protection issues for this population. This has to be sustained by the Rivendell Unit on a constant basis. This relates to past and current experiences of abuse and also the way they have learned to interact with others. On an emotional level, at times relations between the girls can reflect the abuses of power and control seen in cases of domestic violence but also overlap with bullying concerns. As the majority of the young women have been damaged in terms of their emotional development, such issues illustrate the need for Baroness Corston's calls for the teaching of emotional literacy in the context of life-skills to the female estate to be extended to the juveniles too. However, this would need to be juvenile specific and be tailored to the child development and protection issues.

In terms of the resettlement pathways, I believe that Baroness Corston's comments again have much relevance to the female juvenile estate. She has called for the existing adult pathways to be reviewed in terms of gender and in the same way I believe that youth justice pathways also need further development to be truly responsive to the needs of young women. The extra pathways developed by the W&YPG to address the needs of women who have been abused, raped or experienced domestic violence and also to support women who have been involved in prostitution could also be adapted for juvenile girls to also fulfil the remit of child protection. The views of both the young women themselves and also the staff discussed in Chapter Five support this need. The centrality of emotional development for this population can not be under-estimated.

Further research into the specific needs of these young women is certainly needed at this juncture to improve the understanding we have of this very complex group. This could then inform the necessary structural changes. The recent Howard League ruling (26/07/07) will initiate some important changes to the obligations of the local authority towards young people released from custody in future but this can only progress if resources are also in place. Whilst the provision of satisfactory accommodation is certainly a first step, this also needs to be supported holistically in the context of the girls' need for support, positive relationships, development of life-skills and emotional literacy. This needs to be done in conjunction with protection from adults who may seek to exploit, groom or otherwise abuse the girls.

Recommendations

Unit-based

- To build upon good practice in the form of multi-agency working and education.
- To expand the education programme to include more life skills training.
- To provide narrative therapy-based interventions to build 'scripts for success' (Rumgay 2004b) in conjunction with the holistic approach which values working relationships, social skills, groupwork and restorative justice projects.

At a national level

- To develop resettlement pathways which recognise the duality of vulnerabilities for this group; both as women and children in terms of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation.
- To provide suitable accommodation and gender-specific support packages upon release with appropriate support networks, relationships, the building self-esteem and self-efficacy, and protection from exploitation placed centrally.
- To develop gender-and-age specific risk assessments to both provide accurate dynamic, criminogenic risk factors and also ensure effective risk management which enables the correct application of limited resources.
- To recognise the far-reaching impact of the population pressures upon this group and its potential for undermining all the good progress and plans established by the young woman and her sentence plan.

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