STUCK ON REPEAT: EXPLORING THE KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECT YOUNG PEOPLE'S REOFFENDING IN LANCASHIRE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM PRACTICE

by

Natasha Farah Mokhtar

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1. Concurrent registration for two or more academic awards

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution

2. Material submitted for another award

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

3. Collaboration

The PhD is externally funded by Lancashire County Council through the Youth Justice Management Board.

4. Use of a Proof-reader

No proof-reading service was used in the compilation of this thesis.

Signature of Candidate:

Print name: NATASHA FARAH MOKHTAR

“You get some kids who don’t have anything and they aren’t bothered are they? But I have something don’t I? I have a family. I have something to look forward to. To go home to.”

(Participant 206)

ABSTRACT

Despite the reduction in the number of children and young people in the Youth Justice System (YJS), the reoffending rate has continued to rise, suggesting a different approach to this cohort is needed. This thesis aims to explore the key factors that affect young people's reoffending and the implications for Youth Offending Team (YOT) practice. Previous research has demonstrated there are a variety of individual, situational and offending behaviours related to reoffending; but the reoffending patterns, together with the views of practitioners and young people have not been brought together to give insight into what contributes towards reoffending. Therefore this thesis uses a mixed methods approach to provide insight into reoffending and implications for YOT practice. This project was externally funded by Lancashire YOT and focused on translating the research findings into meaningful implications for policy and practice.

The research was split into three distinct phases. The first phase quantitatively explored the characteristics of young people who reoffend. Using a Lancashire YOT cohort, 245 young people's offending patterns were recorded, focusing on onset age, severity, contact with the system and prolific offending. The results demonstrate contact with the system was negatively associated with reoffending; suggesting that contact with YOTs has an adverse impact on young people. Prolific offenders are more likely to start their offending early, commit offences that are more serious overall and to experience more contact with the justice system. The second phase included interviews with seventeen practitioners who work with Lancashire YOT, analysed using thematic analysis. Five key themes related to reoffending by young people were identified: measuring reoffending, the wider justice system, the complexity of young people, what contributes to recidivism and pathways to desistance. The final phase of research used the results from Phase One and Two to explore reoffending through interviews with thirteen young people who were involved with Lancashire YOT. Four main themes were identified from the interviews: relationships, offending lifestyle, context for change and punitive measures.

Young people thought there were a variety of factors related to their offending and talked about many situational factors, which played a role.

Overall, there is consistent support for an individualised approach to working with young people who reoffend. This thesis also provides evidence for a subset of young people who re-offend. They are complex by nature, responsible for a disproportionate number of offences and commit more serious offences. The implications for YOT are that since they currently focus on a large, more diverse cohort of young people, specialised practitioners are needed to more effectively work with this smaller cohort of complex young people. Youth Justice Services should move away from dealing with young people using a risk approach and recognise that a holistic approach, underpinned by an evidence base, can help reduce reoffending. The key implications for Lancashire YOT practice are fully explored and discussed and focus on providing an individualised, specialised workforce within an integrated psychological service to support young people with complex needs.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AL	Adolescent Limited
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
LCP	Life Course Persistent
LYOT	Lancashire Youth Offending Team
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PNC	Police National Computer
PYJ	Positive Youth Justice
RFPP	Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm
RJ	Restorative Justice
RNR	Risk, Needs, Responsivity
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice System
YOT	Youth Offending Team
YRO	Youth Rehabilitation Order
YRO-ISS	Youth Rehabilitation Order with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance

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IMPACT STATEMENT

During this Ph.D, the work has achieved impact both inside and outside of academia and the findings have contributed to the field, providing future benefits for applied settings.

i. Academic Impact

The methods and results from this thesis have been disseminated across the academic community throughout the Ph.D. The findings from the practitioner interviews were presented at UCLan's Criminology Postgraduate Conference generating feedback from other academics.

The results from the case-file analysis were presented at the British Psychological Society Forensic Division conference during the final year of the Ph.D. The presentation was an opportunity for senior academics and forensic psychologists to provide feedback and their thoughts on the research project.

ii. Applied Impact

The origin of this research was generated by the Lancashire Youth Offending Team who had identified a specific need to understand the issues surrounding young people who re-offend. As the research was funded by Lancashire County Council it has ensured that the results have been disseminated across the Lancashire Youth Offending Team and practitioners have been engaged with the process. The findings were regularly presented at Lancashire Youth Offending Team meetings in order to increase awareness of the research and for practitioners to provide general feedback and thoughts on the results. Focus groups with staff members have also taken place to gather information on the types of research methods used and how best to engage young people in the research. Regular 6-month updates on the research findings to senior management have helped to integrate the recommendations as early as possible. The last section of this Ph.D provides a list of the theoretical and operational implications for Lancashire Youth Offending Team practice.

The overall findings from the Ph.D have been presented to staff at Lancashire Offending Team as well as to senior managers in the Youth Justice Management Board. The findings are also intended to be written into academic articles to be disseminated across those working in the area.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In England and Wales, whilst young people who offend account for 10.5% of the total offending population, the reoffending rate for children and young people is currently 41.9% (as of 2016), a 4.6% point increase since 2007 (Ministry of Justice, [MoJ], 2018c). Whilst the overall numbers of young people who reoffend is decreasing, those who do reoffend are responsible for 3.88 (in 2016) re-offences compared to 3.20 in 2006. In addition, young people who reoffend have a greater number of previous offences suggesting that their contact with the Justice System is associated with further offending (MoJ, 2018c). Moreover, those aged 10-14 now have the highest reoffending rate of all age groups (42.4%) with those aged 15-17 the second highest (41.7%), thus demonstrating the importance of understanding why young people reoffend.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) work with young people who offend. They have three key aims: to reduce the number of first-time entrants into the system; to reduce the numbers of those in custody; and to reduce reoffending by children and young people (Bateman, 2014). While there have been successes with the first two aims, the reoffending rate remains high (MoJ, 2018c) suggesting that the current Youth Justice System (YJS) is not effective at reducing reoffending. Therefore, in order to help YOTs work more effectively, to support young people who offend, this thesis explores the factors associated with reoffending.

This research took place in Lancashire and was funded by Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT), through their Youth Justice Management Board. In 2015, as part of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Reoffending Project, they identified that reoffending was an area of concern for their YOT and wanted to learn more about the young people who were reoffending in Lancashire. They commissioned the University of Central Lancashire to conduct a Ph.D that would explore the factors associated with reoffending and focus on the

implications for LYOT practice. The candidate was selected through an open and competitive process.

In order to examine the practical implications for LYOT, reoffending was explored through multiple perspectives. Using a mixed methods approach, reoffending was investigated. The views of those who work in the field, clients who experience the justice system, and the characteristics of those associated with persistent offending were analysed. The research was split into three empirical phases: a quantitative case-file analysis; interviews with LYOT practitioners; and finally, a set of interviews with young people involved with LYOT. There were overlapping themes, which spanned all research phases: the role of relationships; complex young people; and the variability of cases that LYOT work with.

1.3 RESEARCH JOURNEY

Shortly after the PhD started, I had the opportunity of attending a Junior Attendance Centre for young people. Arriving at the centre on a wet and windy winter's day, I was met by a group of young people dressed in tracksuits and hoodies waiting outside the building. Although initially intimidated by my surroundings, I was determined to learn from the experience. What followed was an educational and enlightening experience. These young people were engaged in their programme of work, they were respectful, friendly and interacted well with their workers. Young people who offend often face negative attitudes and are stereotyped based on their behaviour. What society forgets is that at the heart of this is a young person who needs support to change that behaviour. This research had three empirical phases, with each developing my learning journey and increasing my knowledge of the area.

The case-file analysis of young people was the most challenging aspect of the Ph.D The original aim was to replicate the national reoffending measure but this was not considered suitable due to the number of data systems involved and access challenges to the Police National Computer (PNC). The data instead came solely from what was recorded on LYOT data systems, and the wealth of

data was often overwhelming. I quickly learned how to develop my coding and statistical skills and I was constantly aware of ensuring that the data and analysis was meaningful to LYOT. I learned the complexities of data systems of public services; the reliability and complicated nature of the data. I personally developed during this stage, working hard to finish the phase of work and ensuring that it had value to LYOT.

As part of the research, I interviewed YOT practitioners about their experiences of working with people who reoffend. They are a rarely interviewed group and I was appreciative of their commitment and determination to help support some of the most complex and vulnerable young people. They acknowledged that while some of the young people they worked with had committed violent and dangerous acts, they were able to see past the behaviour and saw their client as more than just their offending. The injustice of the hardships and disadvantages that young people who offend face, motivated practitioners to try to encourage their cohort to become positive members of society. These interviews taught me about methods to build rapport quickly and how listening to the experienced and skilled workforce could increase knowledge and understanding of the area.

The final phase consisted of interviews with young people involved with LYOT. The interviews were enlightening, with young people engaging well, offering their opinions on their behaviour and what contributed towards it. They acknowledged that their actions had been harmful but were reflective of the circumstances that had led them to the offence. Some of their backgrounds were upsetting; young people experiencing chaotic family lives, the care system, homelessness and drug addiction, yet they were willing to share their journey with me, to help improve services in the future. The interviews gave me the opportunity to bring my research to life by talking to the young people in the justice system. It made me consider that if we are to move forward to better supporting complex and vulnerable young people, those in the area need to be willing to listen to their views and experiences. Offending by young people is rarely about the offence but about a wider combination of factors, therefore to

reduce reoffending, such factors need to be acknowledged, enabling the cycle of reoffending to be broken.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research is to explore the key factors associated with young people who reoffend in Lancashire and the implications for LYOT practice. In order to achieve this aim, a number of objectives were set:

1. To provide an overview of the context of Youth Justice and the system in England and Wales.
2. To provide an overview of reoffending both nationally and locally in Lancashire.
3. To collate the previous research in the area which examines what factors are associated with reoffending.
4. To conduct a series of interviews with YOT practitioners to explore their opinions on reoffending by young people.
5. To explore the reoffending patterns of young people who are involved with offending in Lancashire.
6. To conduct a set of interviews with young people who have reoffended, to explore their opinions on reoffending.
7. To assess the extent to which the findings are supported or disputed by previous literature.
8. To understand the key factors related to reoffending and the implications for LYOT policy and practice.
9. To disseminate research findings to the key stakeholders, wider profession and address operational impact.

1.5 NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

At the request of the funding body and due to the stigmatising nature, the term ‘young offender’ is not used in this thesis, but instead this group are referred to as ‘young people who offend’. The term ‘young people’ and ‘young people who offend’ refers to those aged between 10 and 17. In addition, the term LYOT practitioner is used to describe those who work within Lancashire YOTs, and

can include YOT workers, YOT social workers as well those who are seconded from police, probation, education or health services.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Chapter 2 sets the background for the research by describing the Youth Justice System for the reader. While the wider justice system is not fully explored in this thesis, Chapter 2 recognises that there are multiple factors that influence how young people who offend are treated. The chapter discusses the different elements of the justice system in England and Wales and covers key events such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 and the Charlie Taylor Review into Youth Justice. The second half of the chapter explores reoffending, how it is measured, the definitional inconsistencies and presents the wider statistics available on reoffending.

Chapter 3 presents the literature relevant to this thesis. The chapter begins by exploring the Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm, followed by an exploration of the individual factors related to reoffending. This includes: age, maturity, impulsivity, resilience and the role of drugs and addictions. The next section of the literature review explores the role of relationships in reoffending, by investigating family, friends and practitioners. The third section of the literature review presents the previous research on the contextual factors, which are related to reoffending by young people. Education, community and contact with the justice system are explored. The following section looks at the trends in reoffending, by examining the frequency of reoffending, along with the severity and type of re-offences. The final section of the review explores theory into practice and examines how the research evidence has been used to address reoffending. Finally, the main rationale for the research is presented.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach and methods that were used to address the aims and the objectives of the research. The individual methodological approaches used in the research phases are presented. The chapter covers the strengths of the design as well as the challenges that were encountered during the research.

Chapter 5 is the main data chapter of the thesis. It provides the findings from each of the research phases. The analysis of the case-file analysis is presented first, followed by the practitioner interviews. Finally, the results from the thematic analysis of the interviews with young people involved in LYOT are presented.

Chapter 6 presents the main discussion of the results from across the research phases. The findings are outlined in relation to the previous academic literature and the implications for LYOT practice are discussed. Five overarching themes are explored; the role of complex young people, the variability of cases, a move away from a risk focused justice system, the role of relationships and the wider context.

Chapter 7 is the final chapter of the thesis and provides the reader with the critical findings of the research. This draws together the three research phases and explores the overarching themes. The chapter begins by discussing the limitations and strengths of the research, the critical findings and the unique contribution of the research. Future ideas for research are also discussed. The final section of the chapter provides the reader with a conclusion, which draws the thesis to an end. A list of the theoretical and operational implications for LYOT practice are presented at the end of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM IN ENGLAND AND WALES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To fully understand the rationale underpinning the research objectives, it is important to understand where reoffending sits within the larger Youth Justice System (YJS). How children and young people who break the law are treated is influenced by a variety of factors, and this chapter will explore the context for youth justice, as well as explaining the YJS in England and Wales. The chapter will introduce the concept of reoffending and discuss the rising reoffending rates. Lastly, the key issues with reoffending will be discussed followed by a summary of the chapter.

2.2 THE CONTEXT FOR YOUTH OFFENDING

The behaviour of young people has been a matter of public interest throughout the ages, with concerns about the behaviour of children and young people dating back to ancient Greece (Smith, 2014). Youth offending is as pertinent today as it has always been, with the field of juvenile justice continuing to be a highly controversial and contested area of social practice (Smith, 2014). There are multiple explanations given for the causes of crime and how best to tackle it (Worrall, 2012). How to best socialise and control young people is a topic of interest to the media, the public, and is of great political interest (Smith, 2014). This influences how young people who reoffend are treated, and this section explores some of these contextual factors.

2.2.1 International Landscape

Many countries around the world are under pressure to develop and revise their youth justice policies and practices in accordance with international law (Hazel, 2008). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), is the leading international agreement which helps shape youth justice systems and protects the rights of children who are in trouble with the law. The UNCRC contains 54 articles that cover all aspects of the child's life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are

entitled to (UNICEF, 2018). The United States of America is the only country not to have ratified the treaty.

The treaty covers all children under the age of 18 and has three distinct articles relating to youth justice. Firstly, article 3 states that “the best interests of the children must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children” (UNICEF, 2018). This, therefore, means that all actions taken by courts of law or legislative parties must ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration. Secondly, article 37 provides minimum standards in the treatment and punishment of juvenile offenders (UNICEF, 2018). The article states that “children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment”. The article also states that children should only be arrested, detained or imprisoned, as a last resort and this should be for the shortest time possible. This article has been criticised regarding its application to practice (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2008). Thirdly, article 40, deals with juvenile justice, and states that a child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. Young people and children therefore have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. It is a government’s responsibility to set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court, alongside managing a justice system that enables children, who have been in conflict with the law, to reintegrate into society (UNICEF, 2018). However, the treaty remains the most influential in shaping youth justice services around the world

Although used widely across the world, the practical implications of the treaty to youth justice in England and Wales has been questioned. Smith (2010) argued that the UK has failed in its responsibility to apply the international agreement to youth justice policy and practice, which has in turn created a significant problem for those within the YJS. Furthermore, the UN Committee on the Rights of a Child (2016) concluded there were significant concerns about children in the YJS. After observing the system, they had concerns over: the minimum age of criminal responsibility (*Section 2.3.1*); the high numbers of young people in custody; the access to education and mental health services in custody; the use

of segregation in custodial establishments; as well as a concern that some children were being tried in adult courts.

2.2.2 Childhood

How society perceives childhood has implications for how children and young people who break the law are viewed and treated. Academic theories of childhood have always existed and modern views are founded in two main schools of thought (Muncie, 2015). The *romantic view* of the child, which emerged in the eighteenth century, portrayed childhood as fundamentally different from adulthood. The view believed childhood to be a natural process, with the child seen as fundamentally 'innocent'. The second school of thought was that of the *evangelical child*, which was coined in the early nineteenth century. This viewed childhood as inherently corrupt with children in need of control and moral guidance. These two views gave way to the idea that children needed moral and educational training before entering adult life and this was the responsibility of a mixture of institutions, including the church, family and the school.

Both the romantic and evangelical views of childhood have implications for how young people suspected of committing crimes are treated. The romantic view of children being innocent angels does not allow for acceptance of the notion that children might be capable of crime, violence, rape or murder (Jenks, 1996). Those who do offend and threaten the innocent view are penalised and demonised, seen as *evil devils* (Kehily, 2015). Childhood innocence is seen as the adult ideal, where adults require children to behave a certain way (Kehily, 2015). This innocence should be protected and celebrated, those who do offend are outside of the scope of a 'normal childhood'. In contrast, under the evangelical childhood view, children are seen as capable of bringing into the world a corrupt and evil disposition, so youth that offend confirm this view. Children are in need of both protection and discipline. These two schools of thought laid the foundations for Western contemporary thinking, which has resulted in multiple constructions of childhood (Muncie, 2015).

In the early nineteenth century, the models of childhood were heavily influenced by factory working (*the factory child)* (Muncie, 2015). The idea of childhood became a class divide in which only the rich could afford to indulge. For working class parents, it was difficult to embrace the idea of childhood because the parents needed their children to be economically active. The factory owners who wanted the cheap child labour further supported this. Within this time period, there was a rapid growth of industrial capitalism and factory production, which became a cause for concern for the middle classes, due to the revolutionary potential of the working class (Muncie, 2015).

Such concern led to a reconceptualisation of childhood in the United Kingdom. Childhood became a recognised universal condition, which was made possible by the changes in social and economic situations (Muncie, 2015). Children became an identifiable group in law, medical, psychological, education and welfare policies and discourses. The Factory Acts (1819 & 1833) were the first steps in acknowledging the idea of a universal childhood (Muncie, 2015). The restricted work opportunities had a variety of consequences. Firstly, it meant that children were left at home alone while the parents went out to find further work. These children were often neglected or left to their own devices. Secondly, as many children could no longer work, they had to find some way to survive in the adverse social and economic conditions and therefore turned to delinquent activities.

The various views of childhood demonstrate that the definition is fluid, depending on the view of society at any given time (Jenks, 2005; Kehily, 2008; Muncie, 2015). Childhood is a construct created by adults and this is demonstrated in cases where children offend, as their treatment is heavily influenced by society's view of childhood at the time (Kehily, 2015).

Two high profile child murder cases highlight that childhood and the romantic idea of childhood innocence are adult constructs, influenced by society at the time and in a particular cultural setting (Kehily, 2015). In Merseyside, England, in February, 1993, two-year-old James Bulger was abducted, tortured and subsequently murdered by two ten-year-old boys. Robert Thompson and Jon

Venables were prosecuted and charged with James's murder and sentenced to custody for a minimum of fifteen years. During the trial of Thompson and Venables, a crowd gathered outside the court, hurling abuse at the two boys. The boys were named publicly and demonised in the press (Green, 2008). The case is unique in many aspects. Firstly, the nature of the case was distinctive, as child-by-child murders are extremely rare (Jenks, 1996). Secondly, the public backlash against the two boys, generated a moral panic with regards to how child offenders should be treated. The public struggled to comprehend the nature of the case and as a result started a debate on child offenders. The case created a panic in the public that children can commit acts of violence, so there is the possibility that perhaps children are born sinful and they have a natural propensity for evil unless they are controlled. The other side of this debate is that children who kill are simply anomalies and these children are inherently different from normal children in terms of their intellectual, social and moral development. As a consequence of the case, society struggled to understand what children are or might become in the modern world. James & Jenks (1996) argue that it was not just the two children on trial during the case, but childhood itself.

In comparison, a case in Norway similar to the James Bulger case was dealt with differently. A year after the murder of James Bulger, a five-year-old girl, Silje Marie Redergard was playing with her two 6-year-old friends when the game turned violent (Green, 2008). The two boys assaulted her and left her to freeze to death in the snow. In contrast to England, the names of the two six-year olds were never released to the media (Green, 2008). The boys were treated as victims and not killers, and returned to infant school within a week of the murder, accompanied by social workers and child psychologists. The two boys were supported by counsellors for four years, where the aim was to help, rather than punish them (Green, 2008).

Both cases show that the way in which childhood is viewed has significant implications for those who break the law. In England, where children were deemed in need of control, the two boys were demonised in the press and subsequently punished (Kehily, 2015). Whereas in Norway, the children were

given support and guidance to deal with their behaviour which follows the welfare model of justice (Green, 2008). Believing in childhood innocence ensures that when children break the law, they are demonised, and does not fit with rehabilitation of young people. Whereas Norway, which offers an alternative view of youth crime, offences are seen on a continuum, with hope that young people can be rehabilitated.

Many aspects of society influence how youth justice should be implemented and governed. In England and Wales, the media plays a significant role (Hazel, 2008; Smith, 2014) pressurising policy makers to initiate particular reforms, often with an emphasis on punishment. This is especially true for young people who reoffend, with the media using sensationalist headlines to cover the news stories (Hazel, 2008). It is possible to identify moral panics about youth crime. This is where a condition, episode, person or group of persons become defined as a threat to societal value and interests (Cohen, 2002). These panics can be short-term or more serious and long lasting, which often has repercussions in legal and social policy. For a moral panic to exist there needs to be concern over a behaviour, hostility towards the group exhibiting this behaviour, and a consensus against the group. Often this concern is exaggerated, with examples including: satanic rituals, welfare cheats, ecstasy use, school violence and bullying, and the refugee crisis (Cohen, 2002; Garland, 2008; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). The murder of James Bulger triggered an immediate and relentless moral panic becoming a symbol for all that was wrong with society (Thompson, 1998). Public anxiety was amplified by publicity in the press, which portrayed the events as signifying a widespread and deep moral malaise and signs of social disintegration (Jenks, 2005). This is significant as it shows the public and media interest in youth crime, which can have influence on how young people who break the law are treated.

Whilst the thesis is not aimed at investigating how these influences have an impact on reoffending, it is important to understand that there are multiple influences, which help shape the justice system.

2.2.3 Justice vs. Welfare

The views of childhood as discussed earlier in this chapter are associated with the historical approaches to dealing with children who break the law. Two key models have been used in the justice system, the welfare and the justice model (Muncie, 2015). Hazel (2008) argues that these approaches have laid the foundations for youth justice systems around the world. These will be scrutinised in turn.

The welfare approach advocates that the needs of the child should take priority when dealing with young people who offend (Muncie, 2015). Any interventions or work with young people should be focused on the child's welfare rather than focusing on their control. There are a number of assumptions of the model. Firstly, it assumes that there is little difference between young people who offend and those who do not. It further suggests that those who do offend are generally products of an adverse environment, offending then becomes pathological and due to individual characteristics. Furthermore, any justice system should be informal, as formal proceedings do not focus on the welfare of a child, and the justice system should be flexible, where discretion is used when working with young people who offend. The model also assumes that by preventing neglect and deprivation, delinquency and offending can be prevented. Lastly, while public protection should be taken into consideration, child welfare is the priority. There are a number of criticisms relating to this approach. Muncie (2015) says it has been viewed as being soft on crime, and for not acknowledging the seriousness of the offences committed by children and young people. Also, as the emphasis is often away from legal proceedings, the approach leads to young people being denied their full legal rights.

By comparison, the justice model views all individuals, irrespective of age, as responsible for their actions and therefore should be held accountable (Muncie, 2015). The premise underlying this model is that offending is influenced by opportunity and is the manifestation of a rational choice. People are responsible for their actions and are therefore accountable for them, this is the same for children (Muncie, 2015). Where an offence has been committed, there should be an intervention and punishment should be given. Under the model, the

choice of disposals and sanctions help to act as a deterrent, and these should be clearly defined and used consistently. There should be equality within the law, where children are treated equally to adult offenders, and where their rights have been safeguarded. Lastly, there should be proportionality between the seriousness of the crime and the punishment given. This model argues that children enjoy the rights of citizenship and are therefore old enough to be responsible for their actions (Alder & Wundersitz, 1994). Muncie (2015) explored the main criticisms of this approach. By focusing on children being responsible for their actions, it ignores the factors which may have led them into offending (e.g. witnessing domestic abuse or other Adverse Childhood Experiences). In addition, by focusing on the seriousness of offences, it allows the justice system to deal with cases in isolation ignoring the wider contextual factors and focusing only on the crime. It does not consider that there are other factors which can play a role (Muncie, 2015).

Although the justice and welfare models can be found in youth justice systems around the world, there are also contemporary models, which move away from the welfare debate. For example, a new model of corporatism has been proposed (Muncie, 2015). This is less concerned with the philosophical argument about welfare and justice, and instead focuses on implementing policies that will deliver a cost effective and efficient method for managing young people who offend. Under this model, young people, who are thought to require incarceration, are placed in custody while a range of statutory and voluntary based agencies assist in helping to divert them from ending up in custody. Corporatism and managerial approaches are focused on the "pragmatic, economic and managerial assessment of what works and payment by results" (Muncie, 2015, pg. 298).

2.3 YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The first sections of the chapter have presented the contextual factors, which influence how young people who reoffend are treated. This section of the chapter will explain the Youth Justice System in England and Wales, and how young people who reoffend are treated within the system.

2.3.1 Criminal Responsibility

While it should be relatively straightforward to define a 'young offender' by their age alone, there is a lengthy and complex debate about at what age a child can be criminally responsible. Underlying the debate, is the definition of a child as it varies across the world (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2008). The term 'juvenile' and 'young person' may refer to someone under the age of 18, but could also refer to someone who is treated differently by the criminal justice system from an adult (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2008). The age of criminal responsibility refers to the age at which a child can be prosecuted for a crime. It is the age, in law, whereby a child is considered capable of understanding what they did was wrong (Hazel, 2008). All countries have an age of criminal responsibility although the age varies extremely. Countries in the Middle East and Asia tend to have a lower age of criminal responsibility than those in Europe, for example, India and Kuwait have an age of 7 while Iraq uses an age of 9, Indonesia has an age of 8 and Bangladesh uses age 9. Qatar and United Arab Emirates both use the age of 7 while Oman has set an age of 9 (Child Rights International Network, 2016). Most European countries set their ages of criminal responsibility between 14 and 16 years (Italy, 14, Russia, 16, Spain, 14, Germany, 14), although France (13), the Netherlands (12) and Switzerland (8) exist outside this range (Hazel, 2008). The former British colonies have a lower threshold, with New Zealand's age of criminal responsibility set at 10, Canada at 12 and Australia at 10 (Hazel, 2008). In the United States of America, the age of criminal responsibility varies between state and a child can be considered criminally responsible from between the age of 6 (North Carolina) to 10 (Wisconsin) (Child Rights International Network, 2016).

In England and Wales, the age of criminal responsibility is 10, therefore *"young offender"* refers to anyone aged between 10 and 17 who is involved with the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2018a). Prior to 1999, in England and Wales there was a presumption that children aged under 14 could not be held responsible for their actions and therefore could not be convicted of a criminal offence (Muncie, 2015). This defence of *doli incapax* (incapable of evil) meant that before 1999, the prosecution had to prove that offenders (between the age of 10 and 14) were aware that their actions were seriously wrong and

not just ‘naughty’. This defence was abolished by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and criminal law now treats children aged 10-13 the same way as those over 14 (Muncie, 2015). The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is comparatively lower than other Western countries, with children and young people criminalised at a young age.

2.3.2 Development of Youth Justice in England and Wales

The current YJS in England and Wales is a culmination of key events and reports that were published in the late 90’s and the early 2000s. Firstly, in 1996, a report by the Audit Commission reviewed the YJS and concluded that the system was ineffective, inefficient and uneconomical (Audit Commission, 1996). In a series of recommendations, the report suggested that there should be multi-agency partnerships which process and deal with young people in a timely manner and should be subject to performance management. In addition, the review recommended that there should be a focus on prevention and diversion away from the justice system, as the current YJS responses were ineffective and expensive (Audit Commission, 1996). Lastly, the report recommended a focus on risk assessment, where children and young people who were at risk of offending or reoffending were targeted for prevention (Audit Commission, 1996). Case (2018) argues that the report promoted an interventionist model, where the justice system helps to support, control behaviour and prevent future problems. Earlier in this chapter (*Section 2.2.3*), the models of youth justice were discussed, with a focus on traditional welfare and justice models. However, the Audit Commission (1996) report moved away from these models by recommending a justice system based on managerialism and prevention. Secondly, as a result of the Audit Commission (1996) report, the existing government published a white paper, ‘No More Excuses’ (Home Office, 1998) intended to reform the YJS, which built on the recommendations of the earlier report. There was a focus on responsibility and prevention of youth offending, whereby young people should take responsibility for their offending, and the justice system should focus on preventing young people at risk from getting involved in crime.

Following on from approaches introduced in the early 90's, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 made legislative changes and formalised the YJS. The model set out in the Act was a risk focused, preventative justice, which contrasted with the traditional justice and welfare models of youth justice. Case (2018) points out that the Act changed youth justice radically, with clear structures, policies and practices. It created a fully informed, comprehensive and modernised structure, which moved on from the varied responses to working with young people who offend. The new YJS was driven by a central aim; to prevent offending by young people, through prevention, intervention, clear management and a responsibility on young people to change their behaviour. The current YJS continues to work to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people (YJB & MoJ, 2018a).

The Act formed the Youth Justice Board (YJB), which provided independent guidance to YOTs as well as advice to government minsters on youth justice. The YJB have a number of responsibilities; to monitor the operation of the YJS, to advise the Home Secretary on the YJS, to identify and disseminate good practice across youth justice services, to make grants to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to support development, to commission the secure estate for children and young people and it is also responsible for placing young people in custody. The YJB is made up of 10, 11 or 12 members appointed by the Home Secretary.

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) also introduced statutory and multi-agency teams that provided localised services, known as Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). This move reflected that effective interventions are more likely to be achieved if agencies work together. YOTs should include at least one probation worker, a local authority social worker, a police officer, a health worker and a nominated education worker, who are often seconded from their original agencies. YOTs primarily work with young people who are entering or re-entering the YJS following arrest, and who are given a formal sentence or an out-of-court disposal, as well as young people in custody. YOTs are expected to apply interventions that tackle the particular factors which led to the young people offending as well as encouraging reparation to the victims and to also

work with young people who are at risk of offending. YOTs have three primary aims: to reduce the number of first-time entrants into the YJS; to reduce the numbers of young people in custody; and to reduce reoffending by children and young people (Bateman, 2014). Case (2018) points out that the new structure for the YJS has an emphasis of holding young people responsible as well as their families; it favours a more punitive and retributive system. This can be seen in the removal of the defence of *doli incapax* in 1999 (explained above). As an example, since the James Bulger trial happened prior to 1999, the prosecutors had to demonstrate that Robert Thompson and Jon Venables knew that what they had done was wrong; if this scenario had occurred after 1999 it would be assumed that they knew what they did was wrong.

The new YJS promoted open, defensive and accountable decisions based on evidence-based practice. YOTs used a risk assessment tool (ASSET) which was focused on both the risk of reoffending, as well as identifying the factors in a young person's life that explain the offending behaviour, or increase the risk of reoffending. ASSET provided a framework for working with young people who offended. There were two further events of note; the scaled approach and the introduction of ASSET plus. In 2010, the YJB published guidance on using a scaled approach within the system. There were concerns that YOTs were not linking the ASSET results and relevant interventions for young people (Case, 2018). There was a need to make a more effective use of ASSET, to determine the amount and type of intervention that young people would receive. This therefore led to a requirement on YOTs to scale the frequency, durations and intensity of planned interventions to the level of risk identified in ASSET. Further in 2014, the YJB introduced ASSET plus, which was a newer framework to help YOTs work with young people (Baker, 2014). ASSET plus was introduced as a more holistic, dynamic method of assessment. There was an emphasis on children's experiences and voices, and it was centred on identifying strengths and promoting positive behaviours. The framework encourages a move away from offending behaviours, and was rolled out to YOTs in 2016, although there were some delays. Lancashire YOT became live users of ASSET plus during 2017 (Asset Deployment, YJB, 2017).

2.3.3 YOT Outcomes

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) also introduced a range of new disposals to use with young people. Modern youth justice in the UK incorporates Restorative Justice (RJ). RJ acknowledges that crime causes harm to people and communities, therefore RJ programmes attempt to repair this harm (Restorative Justice Council, 2016). There are many community practices that come under RJ and it is arguably the most common approach to dealing with those who break the law in many societies throughout the world (Sherman & Strang, 2007). The most common use of RJ is in victim-offender meetings, which take place using mediation, conferencing or peace-making circles. Fines and community service can also be used in conjunction with RJ practices. There are six guidelines for restorative practice; restoration, voluntarism, neutrality, safety, accessibility and respect (Restorative Justice Council, 2016). The primary aim of RJ is to repair the harm caused and this can only occur if the process is voluntary. The process should be fair and unbiased to all parties and take place in a safe environment (should there be a victim-offender meeting). All victims who want to take part in RJ should be given the opportunity and the process should ensure equal respect is provided to all parties. It is now a major part of youth justice and provides an alternative method for considering crime and the response to it. A critical discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of RJ in provided in *Section 3.7.2*.

There are a variety of outcomes that young people can receive once they have offended and been apprehended by the police. Community resolutions, youth cautions and youth conditional cautions are imposed out of court, and by the police, whereas others are imposed by Youth Courts. Youth Courts hear cases where young people have offended. They have no jury and are presided over by a district judge or three magistrates (lay-people) (Criminal Courts, 2015). They are less formal than adult courts in that members of the public are refused admission and young people are called by their first name. The courts can issue a range of sentences but must take into consideration age, the seriousness of offence, the likelihood of further offences being committed and the harm likely to be caused (Sentencing Guidelines Council, 2009). *Table 1* outlines the most common outcomes given to young people. Final warnings and police

reprimands have been discontinued and replaced by youth cautions (MoJ & YJB, 2013; YJB, 2013).

Table 1. Types of Disposals and Outcomes for Young People.

Type of Order	Details	Length
Community Resolution	Used for minor offences or anti-social behaviour incidents. Aimed at first time offenders who have admitted a level of guilt and the victim's views have been taken into account.	N/A
Youth Caution	Alternative to formal prosecution for young people. Used when an offence has been committed which is not suitable for a trial. The young person needs to admit the offence and there is evidence to convict them. Seriousness of offence and criminal history are taken into account. Not recommended for sexual offences or violent or weapon offences.	N/A
Youth Conditional Caution	Similar to a Youth Caution but includes a number of conditions that the young person must comply with. Conditions may include community reparation, specific offence work, and reparation with victims.	N/A
Criminal Behaviour Order	Replaced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Can be used to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour and those who are involved in criminal behaviour. Courts need to be satisfied that the offender has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to a person.	12-36 months
Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO)	Generic sentence for young people with a choice of requirements and interventions available. It is an alternative to custody and should consider the seriousness of the offence. Choice of requirements on the order include: unpaid work, curfew, education requirement, drug testing, electronic monitoring.	Up to 3 years
Referral Order	Young person enters into a contract with a panel. Young person must have no previous offences and must plead guilty to the offence. Panel is made up of two volunteers from the community and a member of the youth offending team. Can include reparation for the victim.	12-36 months
Detention and Training Order (DTO)	Custodial sentence where half is served in custody and half in the community. Crown court can impose a longer sentence. Custody type is dependent on age of young person; Young Offender Institutions for 15 to 21 year olds, Secure Training Centre for 14 to 17 year olds and Secure Children Home for 10 to 14 year olds.	4-24 months.

2.3.4 The Charlie Taylor Review

A review into the YJS in England and Wales was commissioned in September 2015, led by Charlie Taylor. Although modern youth justice had seen successes associated with a decrease in arrests, offences and custody sentences, reoffending remained a serious problem. Bateman (2017) argued that even though there were less young people entering the justice system, those who did had complex needs. They were disproportionately more likely to have mental health problems, learning difficulties, a history of being in care, originate from a lower SES background and were more likely to be from minority groups. There was a concern that the young people in the YJS were continuing to reoffend; the review therefore questioned if the current arrangements for dealing with this smaller group were appropriate (Taylor, 2016). The review explored the nature and characteristics of offending and the strategies to prevent criminality. The report investigated how effective the YJS was in responding to offending by young people, repairing the harm and rehabilitating those who offend. Additionally, the review aimed to examine the leadership in the YJS and if this was effective at meeting its aims. The Taylor review, published in December 2016 included a range of recommendations spanning the following areas: devolution in the YJS, initial contact with the YJS, children in court, the introduction of secure schools and the role of central government (Taylor, 2016). The review concluded:

- The youth court and police contact with young people should be at a low level to avoid escalation through the justice system. YOTs should form part of an integrated service where welfare needs are paramount.
- Young people should be diverted out of the YJS wherever possible. For more serious crimes, child panels should be formed which would understand the causes of crime and work with the child, family, health and education workers to address the offending behaviour.
- Victims should be at the heart of the YJS and restorative principles should be used where possible.
- Where a custodial sentence is necessary, the emphasis should be on providing education through the use of secure schools. They should work

on the causes of offending, and focus on behaviour, mental health and educational attainment.

- The majority of young people who offend do so in their adolescence and that when a young person offends, rehabilitation should be the focus so they can become functioning members of society.

Taylor (2018) made two distinct recommendations, the introduction of children's panels and secure schools. The premise behind children's panels was that they would consist of three specially trained magistrates working alongside the child and parents, local authorities, lawyers and other relevant professionals. The panel would investigate the causes of youth offending while continuing to consider the welfare of the child. Secure schools would replace youth custody establishments, and focus on education, and help children and young people to gain qualifications, skills and knowledge. They would be inspected as a school.

Three key recommendations, as identified by Case (2018), demonstrated the breadth of the review. Firstly, the YJS should consider young people who offend as children first and offenders second. They should be held accountable for their actions but with an understanding that for change to occur, education, health and welfare all need to be improved. Young people should be encouraged to focus on their own strengths and resources. A change in language is needed to ensure that young people are viewed as children rather than *'young offenders'*.

Secondly, only with an integrated response from government and local partners, can change in the YJS occur. Taylor (2016) recommended that children who offend are given access to the same services that other young people, who have welfare needs, have access to. He drew attention to integrated YOT services, which were co-located within other children's services. Taylor (2016) considered that the current justice response was narrow in terms of the other factors that affect young people and offending.

Thirdly, Taylor (2016) recommended that local authorities were given more freedom to develop progressive models. The overall vision provided by the

Ministry of Justice was unhelpful in finding local solutions to youth crime. Local authorities should be allowed to develop their own diversion schemes and their own assessment tools. Taylor (2016) argued that the YOT model was out-dated and instead, local authorities should be allowed to form appropriate partnerships to deliver and oversee services for the children in their areas to help tackle youth offending.

Taylor (2016, pg. 49) concluded that the YJS should move away from a "*justice system with some welfare"* to a "*welfare system with justice"*. He proposed that the YJS could improve its effectiveness by working with the smaller group of young people who continually reoffend and who have multiple needs. The MoJ (2016) responded to the review and acknowledged that whilst education should be at the heart of the YJS, the YJS also has a role in *"punishing crime"* (MoJ, 2016, pg.8). They proposed funding for two new secure schools to improve custodial settings for young people while other recommendations were not considered (Case, 2018).

2.4 REOFFENDING BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The MoJ defines reoffending as:

"someone who has received some form of criminal justice sanction (such as a conviction or a caution), who goes on to commit another offence within a set time period" (MoJ, 2018a, pg.4)

2.4.1 Measurement of Reoffending

A proven re-offence is defined by the Ministry as any offence which is committed that resulted in a court conviction or caution in the follow up time (MoJ, 2018a). The data required for measuring proven reoffending comes from a range of sources; prison data, probation data, secure accommodation data and criminal records from the PNC, with a number of agencies involved in the production of the data: the National Offending Management Service, YJB, local authorities and the National Police Improvement Agency (Ministry of Justice, 2018a).

To be included in this measure, an offender must have been: released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a caution in a three-month period. The 'cohort' is then followed up for a year time period in which all re-offences are counted. The cohort previously included all offenders who met the above criteria in a year period but this was reduced to three months in April 2016 (MoJ, 2017). The measure allows for a six-month waiting period which allows for the offence to be proven in court (*see Figure 1*) (MoJ, 2018a).

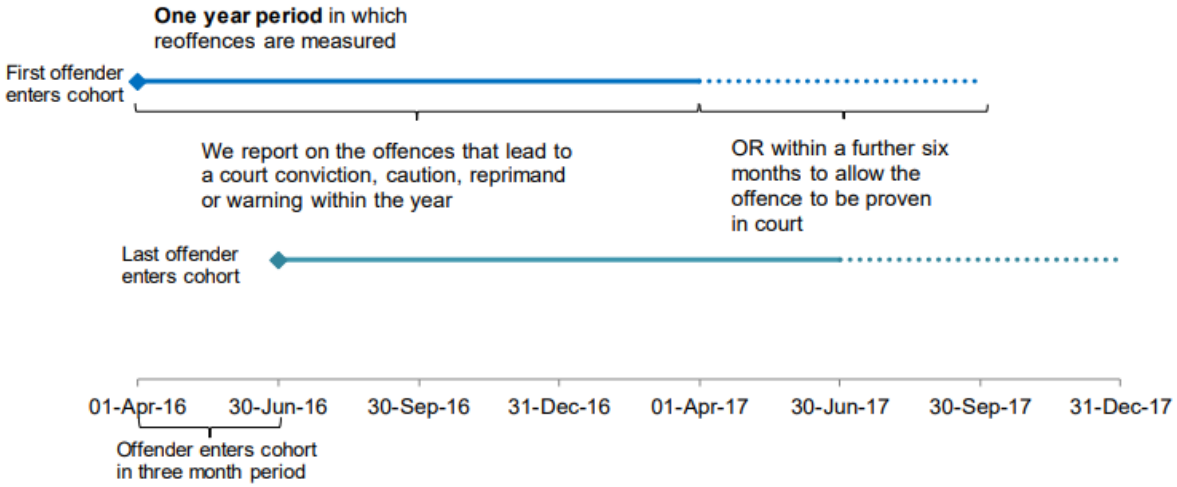

Figure 1. Reoffending Measure (MoJ, 2018a)

The MoJ publishes details of reoffending every year. This includes data on a quarterly cohort, which refers to all offenders who receive a caution, final warning, reprimand, a non-custodial conviction, or are released from custody and whose further offending is measured over a year. An annual cohort is also published which takes an average of the four preceding three-month offender cohorts. When comparing periods which span this recording change (before and after April 2016), the difference in measurement has to be taken into account (MoJ, 2017). To fully understand the measure of reoffending, there are a number of terms which are important to define (MoJ, 2018a);

- *Index Offence:* In order to enter the cohort, an offender must have committed an offence which is recordable, committed in England and Wales, is prosecuted by the police and is not a breach offence.

- *Start Point:* The start point of the reoffending measure for each person is the date of prison release, court conviction, or caution (reprimand or final warning prior to 2012).
- *Follow-up period:* This is defined as 12 months from the start point.
- *Waiting period:* There is a six-month waiting period at the end of the follow-up period. This is to ensure that all offences committed in the follow-up period can be proven in court.
- *Proven re-offence:* An offence is counted as a re-offence if it is recordable, committed in England and Wales, prosecuted by the police, and if it is proven by a caution, reprimand or final warning or a court conviction. Offences which are dealt with by other responses from the YJS are not counted (e.g. community resolutions). Breach offences are not counted as a re-offence.

It is important to note that if an offender commits multiple offences on the same day, then they are counted as individual offences. Due to the measure, there are a number of multiple offender entries in the cohort; if an offender enters the cohort, commits a re-offence, and then receives a caution (for example) in the same time period, they would have entered the cohort at multiple times. In previous years, the measure has avoided double counting these multiple offender entries, however, since the change from a twelve-month cohort to a three-month cohort, a person could appear four times in the annual cohort (if they committed a re-offence across all four quarters). Therefore, prolific offenders may be counted multiple times in publications. Due to the lengthy follow-up period and the waiting period, all reoffending data is 18 months behind the present year (MoJ, 2018a).

2.4.2 Issues with Definition and Measurement

Although the term reoffending can be defined as repeated criminal activity, there is no widely used operational definition. Reoffending is used interchangeably with the terms recidivism and repeat offending and can refer to offenders who are chronic, prolific, frequent and who commit multiple offences (Payne, 2007). The term is used internationally to describe an offender who commits a further offence (Zara & Farrington, 2016). The lack of a consistent definition means that

often research is not comparable. Reoffending rates can differ depending on how the concept is measured, as it can be measured by re-arrest, re-incarceration or reconviction (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Zara & Farrington, 2016). These multiple methods of measuring reoffending further complicate the comparability of research. Other issues involve crimes going unreported, offenders not being apprehended or escaping conviction, therefore the true amount of reoffending may never be known (Zara & Farrington, 2016). Reconviction is the most common measure of reoffending, as it is more reliable than either re-arrest or re-incarceration (Zara & Farrington, 2016). Individuals can be arrested and released without charge and breaches of orders can result in a recall back to prison, although no new offence has been committed. Reconviction is used as a measure of reoffending and is taken to mean when a re-offence is proven in court or other criminal justice setting (Zara and Farrington, 2016).

Studies, which focus on reoffending by young people, are dependent on the definition of a "*young offender".* This further creates problems of accuracy. The country of offence will have an impact since legal systems differ. As *section 2.3.1* discussed, the age of criminal responsibility varies across the world, which then has implications on the comparability of studies (Abrams, Jordan & Montero, 2018). For example, in mainland Europe the age of criminal responsibility is in the mid-teens, which contrasts with England and Wales, where the age is ten. Academic research on young people who offend often includes young adults (up to age twenty-four) which does not allow for comparison between study groups (Cottle, Lee & Heilbrun., 2001).

Secondly, there is a further issue surrounding data collection as methodology differs with self-report and official methods provide different accounts of offending behaviour (Farrington et al., 2003). Whilst this is disputed by Piquero, Schubert and Brame (2014), who found that self-report and official measures largely provided similar agreements, there still remain questions over the validity of both measures. Self-report methods include asking the participant to divulge information on offending while official measures use data collected by criminal justice organisations. Both methods have similar limitations of their data

accuracy and validity. Self-report methods are dependent on the information supplied by the participants, whilst official measures do not capture unreported crime, unsolved offences or multiple offences committed by the same offender (Bryman, 2016; Zara & Farrington, 2016). For example, the measure of reoffending in England and Wales does not distinguish between those young people who commit multiple re-offences and those who commit one re-offence. Lastly, the length of follow-up also varies between studies, which impacts on the amount of reoffending captured by research (Cottle, Lee & Heilburn, 2001). It is accepted that offending varies over time and therefore reoffending will also vary (Zara & Farrington, 2016). Longer follow-ups are preferable but often study designs do not allow for this due to the large costs and complex nature of longitudinal research. A longer follow-up increases the likelihood that reoffending is captured accurately.

It is important to note that although international and European agreements exist on how countries should deal with youth crime, there is still extreme variation which can make it hard to compare research across countries (Hazel, 2008). The MoJ (2012) found that there are a range of difficulties in allowing comparative analysis. Firstly, there are differences in the way in which crimes are counted, for example, some countries register a crime as soon as it is reported while others only do so after a named suspect has been found, or when the case is being prosecuted. Secondly, there is a wide variation in offence categorisation between countries, with sentence types also varying. Thirdly, there are frequent changes in measurement rules and definitions, which evolve as recording practices and laws change. Lastly, there is a wide variation in the timeliness of data, when the data becomes available and is published. In England and Wales, data is published on young people every quarter but not all data from the police is included. These differing legal and justice systems, along with the way in which reoffending is defined have hindered the comparability of research.

2.4.3 Reoffending Rates for Young People

While the numbers of young people offending has reduced over the last ten years, the reoffending rate has remained high. The number of first-time entrants into the YJS has reduced by 85% in the last ten years, while the numbers of children and young people in custodial establishments has reduced by 74%. As *figure 2* shows, the number of proven offences by children and young people has also decreased in the last 10 years, as has the number of arrests (YJB & MoJ, 2018a, 2018b & 2018c).

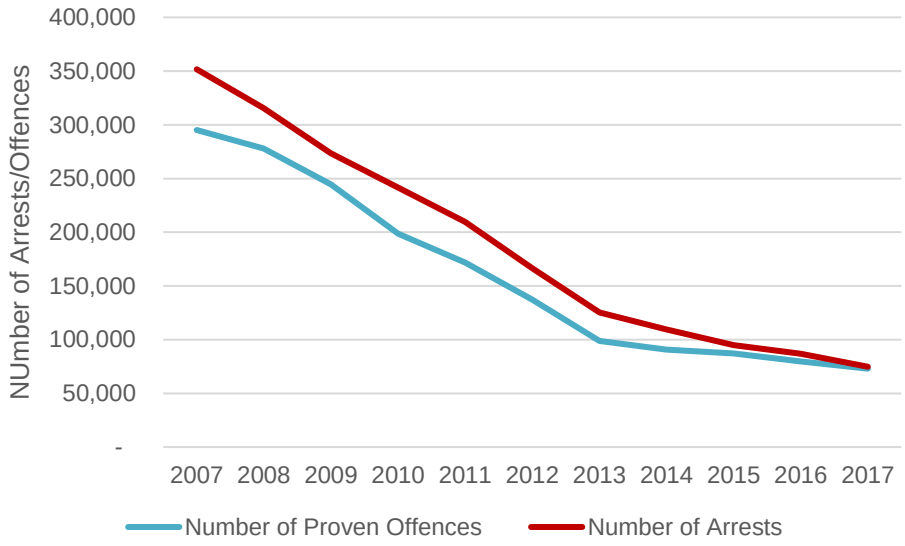

Figure 2. Number of Offences and Arrests.

However, as *figure 3* shows, the reoffending rate for young people has remained high, with the current reoffending rate of 41.9% (MoJ, 2018c). The reoffending rate for young people in Lancashire is also high, at 41.4%. Before moving to the new measure of reoffending, the reoffending rate was 42.5% nationally, and 47.7% for LYOT area. This demonstrates the need to explore reoffending rates further (MoJ, 2018c).

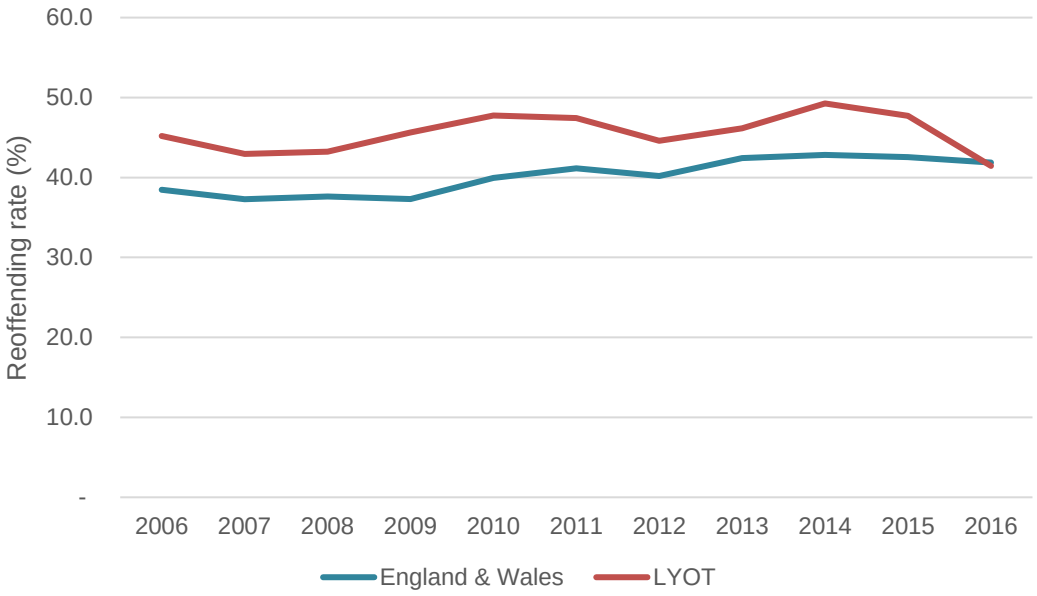

Figure 3. Reoffending Rate for Children and Young People.

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The number of re-offences and numbers of young people reoffending has reduced nationally (*Figure 4*). In 2016, there were 35,442 offenders who entered the reoffending cohort, with 14,841 of them committing a re-offence. In total, there were 57,596 re-offences committed by this group in 2016, and these had been involved with the YJS previously. What is noticeable that although the numbers of young people reoffending has reduced, the reoffending rate has increased, demonstrating that those who remain in the system are continuing to reoffend (MoJ, 2018c).

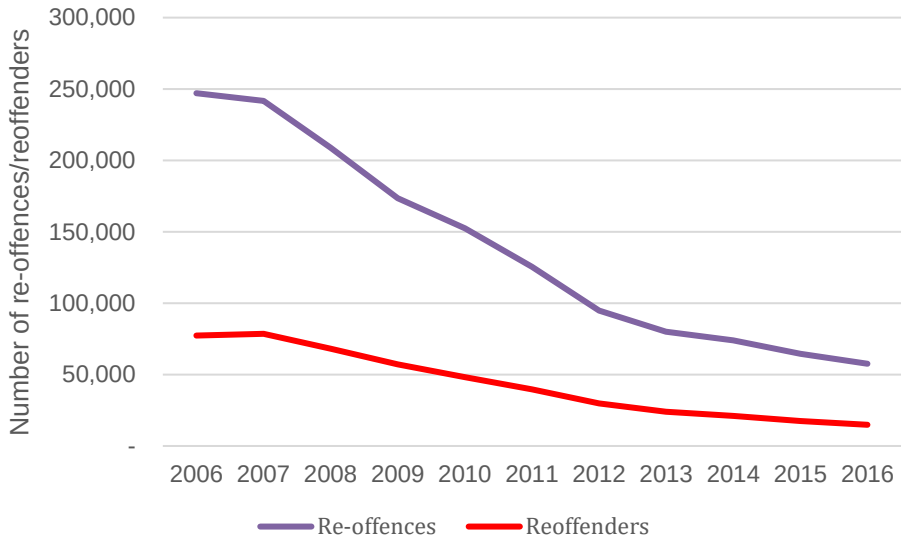

Figure 4. Number of Re-offences and Reoffenders

Finally, other statistics provide an insight into reoffending rates although they cannot explain the heightened reoffending rate. For instance, the average number of re-offences per reoffender has been increasing since 2006; nationally, young people commit 3.79 re-offences each (YJB & MoJ, 2018a, 2018b & 2018c). In Lancashire, this figure is higher at 4.40 re-offences. Whilst the measure does not account for the potential for some young people to commit a greater number of re-offences than others, it does demonstrate that young people, who do reoffend, are reoffending at a higher rate. In addition, the number of previous offences for each young person who reoffends has also been increasing over the last ten years; in England and Wales, young people have an average of 3.56 previous offences, whereas in Lancashire this is higher at 5.46, indicating that once a young person has committed an offence, they are more likely to commit further re-offences. Therefore, the statistics indicate, that regardless of the decrease of the number of young people entering the YJS, those young people who do go onto reoffend, have a higher number of previous re-offences and are on average, committing more than one re-offence (YJB & MoJ, 2018a, 2018b & 2018c).

In terms of gender, males have a higher reoffending rate in comparison to females (44.7% to 31%) but there is little difference between the average number of re-offences, with males committing 3.83, and females 3.47 (MoJ, 2018c). This suggests that the high reoffending rate cannot be explained by gender. The breakdown of reoffending by age helps to differentiate the high reoffending rate; young people aged between 10 and 14 have the highest reoffending rate of all the age groups including adults (43%). 3930 young people in this age category reoffended and were responsible for 15,845 re-offences (an average of 4.03). In comparison, those aged between 15 and 17 had an overall reoffending rate of 42%, with 12,254 committing a re-offence and responsible for 45,424 re-offences (an average of 3.71). While there were considerably more young people reoffending in the 15 to 17 category, the younger category had a higher average of re-offences, suggesting that the younger an individual commits an offence, the more likely they are to reoffend at a higher rate (MoJ, 2018c).

The type of offence and their association with reoffending rates also provides some insight. A full breakdown of the types of offences, outcomes and previous convictions with their reoffending rates are presented in *appendix 1* (MoJ, 2018b, 2018c*)*. Public order offences have the highest reoffending rate (52.2%), followed by miscellaneous (49.7%), theft offences (47.1%) and robbery (46%) offences. Sexual offences have the lowest reoffending rate (15.2%). Custodial orders are also associated with the highest reoffending rate (68.1%), followed by youth rehabilitation orders (YRO; 65.4%). Reprimands, warning and cautions have the lowest reoffending rate of all disposals (30.8%) (MoJ, 2018b). This indicates that there are types of crimes associated with a higher reoffending rate, and also with the type of outcome.

Overall the landscape of youth justice has shown substantial change in the last ten years; the number of offences committed by young people has reduced, as has the number of first-time entrants into the system. However, this changing landscape has shown that those young people who remain in the YJS are responsible for a disproportionate number of re-offences, leading to a high reoffending rate, with previous contact with the system and a younger age of first offence associated with further reoffending. Therefore, it is crucial to explore the characteristics of the young people who remain in the YJS, as well as the factors associated with reoffending, to understand the high reoffending rate and how reoffending can be reduced.

2.5 KEY ISSUES WITH REOFFENDING BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

There are three main issues when looking at reoffending by young people. Firstly, the statistics have shown that while the numbers of young people reoffending in the YJS has reduced, the reoffending rate has increased. In addition, the number of average re-offences has increased, suggesting that those young people who do reoffend are responsible for a number of re-offences and are not just committing one re-offence. The current YJS was set up when the numbers of young people offending and reoffending were higher,

these young people have now been diverted out of the system, indicating that those young people left in the system are responsible for the high reoffending rates. Whilst there have been initiatives to reduce reoffending, the focus has been on diverting young people out of the YJS. There is less known about who these young people who remain in the system are, and if they are responsible for the increase and maintenance of the reoffending rate.

Secondly, the main aim of the YJS is to prevent offending and reoffending by young people. It is important to note the difference between a reduction of reoffending and the prevention of reoffending. While the YJS as a whole focuses on the prevention of reoffending, YOTs are measured on their success to reduce reoffending. There is a difference between these two aims; the YJS as a whole works to prevent reoffending, while individual YOTs work to ensure that the young people they work with reduce their overall reoffending. As this research has been commissioned by LYOT, and the need for practical implications for LYOT, the focus of this research is on reducing reoffending rather than preventing young people from reoffending.

Thirdly, the way in which reoffending is defined has implications for any research into the field. This chapter has demonstrated that there are multiple definitions of reoffending, the term has been used to describe young people who commit one or more re-offences, and also those young people who are 'prolific' offenders and who commit multiple re-offences. For the purposes of this research, reoffending is defined as when a person commits a second offence after their first index offence. This will therefore include young people who only commit a small number of re-offences and those who reoffend at a higher rate, and who are referred to as *'prolific'* offenders.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter had two aims; to provide an overview of the YJS in England and Wales and to explore reoffending levels. The first half of the chapter presented an overview of the YJS and explored the contextual factors which influence how young people who break the law are treated. The way in which society views

childhood, moral panics about youth crime, and historical approaches to youth justice all contribute to the current system. The chapter then explored the YJS in England and Wales, with a discussion around the impact of the age of criminal responsibility. In England and Wales, children aged 10 and above are considered to be criminally responsible, which is lower than many other European countries. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was also reflected upon, alongside the Taylor Review (2016), which reformed the YJS. These changes introduced an alternative justice model in England and Wales to work with young people who offend. However, due to other political events at the time of the Charlie Taylor review, it no longer held government endorsement. This lack of development, and a reduction in resources, has hindered changes in the YJS, Bateman (2017) argues that the YJS should not be seen in isolation from other services, which support young people, although the government response has continued to view the YJS as a separate system (MoJ, 2016).

The chapter then explored the reoffending rate by children and young people and highlighted that although the number of young people who offend and reoffend has reduced, the reoffending rate continues to remain high. This demonstrates that young people who remain in the justice system are reoffending at a higher rate with figures showing that the younger a child is at first offence, the more likely they are to reoffend. Those who reoffend also have a high number of previous offences indicating that contact with the justice system is associated with further offending. The chapter has provided a rationale for the research; the reoffending rate for children and young people is consistently high which does not reflect the numbers of young people in the justice system. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what influences young people to reoffend to assist a reduction in the reoffending rates.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the previous literature in exploring why young people reoffend and highlights knowledge gaps. The chapter focuses first on the Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm and explores the individual factors which are associated with reoffending. The chapter then explores the relationships which are connected to reoffending as well as the contextual factors that play a role. Trends in reoffending are covered along with how theory has been put into practice. Lastly, the chapter presents the rationale for the research along with the research question.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the contextual factors which influence how young people who break the law are treated, as well as outlining the YJS in England and Wales. The chapter demonstrated that reoffending rates within the YJS remain a significant problem as the rates have increased, in contradiction to the lower numbers of young people both offending and reoffending. One of the significant points from *Chapter 2* was the discussion on how reoffending is defined and measured. There are multiple ways to measure reoffending, all including different terminology, therefore it is challenging to compare reoffending across literature and statistics. As *section 2.4.2* highlighted, addressing reoffending has been seen as both a complete cessation of offending and a reduction in offending. Although the focus of this thesis is on reoffending, it is also important to introduce the concept of desistance. Desistance refers to the cessation of offending, although various definitions exist (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Kazemian, 2007). McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler and Maruna (2012) argue that desistance is at the core of all criminal justice systems with the focus on helping offenders to move away from an offending lifestyle. While there is consistent research on what factors are related to offending, the field of desistance is an emerging one and the factors that encourage desistance from crime are not well researched (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Kazemian, 2007). Zara and Farrington (2016) argue that desistance is not necessarily the opposite of reoffending and the predictors of reoffending are not the opposite of those which predict desistance. Research has sought to identify

why offenders stop offending, and how this is understood and conceptualised has implications for reducing reoffending by young people. There are several studies presented in this literature review, which focus on desistance rather than on reoffending as this provides an extra dimension in explaining reoffending by young people.

3.2 THE RISK FACTOR PREVENTION PARADIGM

Chapter 2 discussed how the Crime and Disorder Act created the YJS which is risk focused and concentrated on the factors that increase the risk of reoffending. Therefore, the Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm (RFPP) model influences policy and practice in the UK and in other countries (Haines & Case, 2008; Farrington, 2007; O'Mahony, 2009; Taylor, 2016). Research in criminology has sought to explain why some young people become involved in criminal activity, while others do not (YJB, 2005). The paradigm identifies the factors which are associated with an increased risk of offending (*risk factors*) and factors which decrease this risk (*protective factors*) (YJB, 2005). *Table 2* shows the different risk factors which research has identified, grouped into individual, family, community and school factors (YJB, 2005). For example, poor parental supervision has been found to be one of the strongest and most reliable predictors of offending (Farrington, 2015). In using risk factors to prevent youth crime, the strength of the relationship between risk factors and youth crime needs to be assessed (YJB, 2005). In addition which risk factors are susceptible for change; for example, being male is associated with a higher risk of offending, but this is a static risk factor and not easily changed. It is also important to note that risk factors are often related to many other factors and outcomes and should not be viewed in isolation. For example, hyperactivity is associated with offending, however, hyperactivity alone may not account for offending, but in conjunction with impulsivity and socializing with criminal peers may indicate that a young person is at risk of offending behaviour.

Table 2. Risk Factors Identified by YJB (2005).

Individual	**Family**
Hyperactivity	Poor parental supervision
Impulsivity	Family conflict
Low intelligence	History of criminal activity
Drug misuse	Low income family
Socialising with criminal peers	Poor housing
Community	**School**
Disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Low achievement
High availability of drugs	Aggressive behaviour
Disorganisation and neglect	School disorganisation
High population turnover	Lack of commitment to school

The model also encompasses protective factors, which are under researched, partly because the term has been defined ambiguously by different researchers (Farrington, 2015; McGee, Farrington, Homel & Piquero, 2015). Whilst some view them as an opposite of risk factors, others have defined the term as a factor that nullifies the effects of a risk factor (Farrington, 2015). In a review of the risk and protective factors associated with offending, the YJB (2005) found that being female, having a sense of self-efficacy, being resilient and having a positive outgoing disposition, all act as protective factors against offending. Having a strong bond of attachment with one or both parents with a stable, warm and affective relationship, has also been found to generate protective factors against offending (YJB, 2005). Based on the RFPP approach, interventions can be created that target the factors that will reduce offending and reoffending (Farrington, 2007).

The RFPP has been widely criticised by a number of academics, who argue that the approach does not take into account personal agency, values and free will (Case, 2007; 2015; 2018; O'Mahony, 2009). There is no consensus on whether the same risk factors predict involvement with offending for all crime types or if they change according to offence (Case, 2007; 2015; France, 2008; O'Mahony, 2009). The interaction between risk and protective factors is also unexplained; whilst certain factors are associated with an increased risk of reoffending, there is no understanding of why this is (Case, 2007; 2015; France, 2008; O'Mahony, 2009). While the majority of work published into risk factors has focused on offending, the model has been applied to reoffending (Kennedy,

Edmonds, Millen & Detullio, 2018). The model provides a clear framework for grouping risk factors. It is also widely used in YOTs to assess young people to explore the factors that contributed to their offending. To provide meaningful implications for LYOT, this literature review will explore the factors associated with reoffending using a risk factor approach. The following sections will focus on the individual factors, relationships and contextual factors, which have all been found to be associated with reoffending by young people.

3.3 WHAT INDIVIDUAL FACTORS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH REOFFENDING?

Individual factors relate to personal characteristics, which are associated with reoffending for young people. There are a variety of factors found to be related to offending, such as impulsivity, low intelligence, attitudes that condone offending, early involvement in offending and drug misuse (YJB, 2005). The following factors were chosen due to the reliability and consistency of findings, which suggests that they contribute to reoffending. The section will discuss the impact of age, maturity and impulsivity, resilience and the influence of drugs on reoffending.

3.3.1 Age

The relationship between age and crime is one of the most established in research (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Rocque, Posick & Hoyle, 2016). The age-crime curve shows that crime increases in early adolescence, peaks in the early to mid-20s and then declines (Rocque et al., 2016). However, despite the extensive research in the area, there remains debate about the variation in the age-crime curve. Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) argued that this curve is constant across all crimes and time-periods therefore it is not necessary to know whether a young person started their offending at twelve or fifteen. They believed that longitudinal studies did not further the study of crime, and that social factors played little or no role in offending. However, the opposing argument is that age distribution for all crimes is not the same and social factors do play a role in explaining onset, frequency (number of offences), duration and desistance (Rocque et al., 2016). Further recent research on the age-crime curve has demonstrated that examining different stages of a criminal's career

provides insight about offending (Piquero, Farrington & Blumstein, 2003). Research has shown that those who begin offending early, use drugs, are unemployed, are more likely to have a high frequency of offending, with much focus on high levels of offending although these individuals are hard to identify early (Piquero, Farrington & Blumstein, 2003). The focus on age has been highlighted as a key factor in understanding and predicting how long a person will offend for, and if they will commit numerous re-offences.

The developmental taxonomy of antisocial behaviour differentiates offenders based on their onset age and the length of time they offend (Moffitt, 1993). The original theory proposes that there are two groups of offenders; life-course persistent (LCP) and adolescent-limited (AL). LCP offenders exhibit antisocial behaviour as children, offend across their life course, and demonstrate chronic and frequent offending although they represent a small group of offenders. This group are characterised by neurological impairments (hyperactivity, impulsivity, low self-control and a difficult temperament). They exhibit a pattern of progressively more serious offending and Moffitt (1993, pg. 679) describes them as “biting and hitting at age 4, shoplifting and truanting at age 10, selling drugs and stealing cars at age 16, robbing and rape at age 22 and fraud and child abuse at age 30”. Conversely, the AL group constitute the vast majority of offenders and they do not experience the same disadvantaged childhood that the LCP group does (Piquero, 2015). Their offending begins and ends in their adolescence and is often about wanting to achieve adult status. Moffitt (1993) described this offending as normative and these young people are able to desist from crime once they reach adulthood. The theory has been expanded to include those who abstain from offending and those who begin offending as adults (Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, & Milne, 2002). Many have applied the taxonomy groupings and it remains one of the most influential theoretical models for a typology of offenders (Barnes & Beaver, 2010; Piquero, 2015). The ability to predict these groupings helps target interventions (Farrington, 2015) as those who go on to offend over their life course are reoffenders and often labelled as persistent and prolific offenders.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that the earlier a young person begins their offending, the longer their criminal career is likely to be and

the higher the number of re-offences they will commit (Farrington, 2003:; Piquero, Farrington & Blumstein, 2007). As such reoffending can be predicted from the age at which a person has contact with the justice system (Cottle et al., 2001; Farrington, 2003). Although it is widely accepted that age of onset is a predictor for offending, it is unknown what aspects onset age actually predicts: frequency, prevalence, seriousness or duration (Piquero et al., 2007). In the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, which followed up a cohort of young boys born in 1953, the most common age of onset was 14 with those who started earlier more likely to have a higher number of offences by age 40. Early onset (as denoted by those who began offending before the age of 14) is related to a higher number of offences, an older age at last conviction, and a longer career length than those who began their offending late (over the age of 14) (Piquero et al., 2007).

The age at first offence is also related to violent reoffending, as well as to severity of reoffending. This indicates that those who begin their offending early, are more likely to commit violent re-offences and more serious offences (Mulder, Brand, Bullens & van Marle, 2010). Young people who start offending before the age of 14, commit serious offences by age 18 (Piquero & Chung, 2001) and are more likely to reoffend (Barrett, Katsiyannis & Zhang, 2010). This link is further supported by the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study, which followed a group of young people in Scotland and investigated their offending. When comparing early (under 12 years) and late onset offenders (over the age of 12), early onset offending was related to deprivation, being truant from school, being more likely to have taken drugs and been excluded from school by age 12 than the late onset group demonstrating that an early onset of offending is related to negative outcomes (McAra & McVie, 2007; 2010). The early onset group had complex family lives and a worsening of these was related to the maintenance of offending.

Research has also established that there is a small group of young people who are disproportionately responsible for a large amount of offending, which causes both harm to society and to individuals (Baglivio, Jackowski, Greenwald, & Howell, 2014; Farrington, 2003; Johns, Williams & Haines, 2017). They can be identified by patterns in their onset, duration and seriousness of offending

and there is an inherent uniqueness about the group who commit serious and violent crimes (Baglivio et al., 2014). Using a large sample of young people's records, Baglivio et al. (2014) found that those who were serious, chronic and violent offenders were significantly more likely to have started their offending before the age of 12 and were more likely to have been arrested by this time point. This further demonstrates the importance of age in offending behaviour, with early onset providing a warning sign for predicting a lengthy criminal duration, and a high number of re-offences. Those who offend over a long time period are re-offenders and are often responsible for a high number of re-offences. Understanding how age contributes towards reoffending, and what the views of young people who do reoffend are would provide a unique perspective on the influence of age.

3.3.2 Maturity and impulsivity

Research has previously found a link between immaturity and offending, indicating that young people who are immature are more likely to offend than those who are more mature. In addition, researchers have also consistently argued that impulsivity is an independent factor which is exclusively linked to offending behaviour (Farrington & Walsh, 2007; Higgins, Kirchner, Ricketts & Marcum, 2013; Moffitt 1993) and that they are two different personality traits. Immaturity has been defined as a cognitive difference between adolescents and adults, or in an adolescent's social and emotional capability (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000). On the other hand, impulsivity has been defined as a predisposition towards reacting quickly or in an unplanned way without regard for the consequences (Shin et al.2014).

Chapter 2 (*Section 2.3.1*) discussed the age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales, which does not take account of the ways and time taken for young people to mature and develop (Bryan-Hancock & Casey, 2011). This is a concern as all young people who break the law are treated the same, regardless of their levels of maturity. Maturation theory (Glueck & Glueck, 1974 as cited in Rocque, 2015) proposes that young people offend because they are immature, with desistance from crime occurring through the natural process of maturity. The theory argues that maturation can occur at any age and it is the

act of maturing that plays a significant role in either the persistence or desistance of offending. However, this theory largely ignores the role of situational influences on offending, such as employment, family, school and relationships. Under this theory, the use of interventions to reduce re-offending will not be effective as young people will naturally grow out of it (Barry, 2009). In addition, Moffitt (1993) used maturity to distinguish between LCP and AL offenders. She argued that young people who only offend in their adolescence, and who commit less re-offences, do so because of the maturity gap; young people have reached biological maturity but they are not allowed to partake in adult activities (drinking, driving, sexual promiscuity), therefore fill this gap by offending. In comparison, those who offend over their life course and commit re-offences are not affected by this maturity gap and achieve this maturity by other antisocial activities. This maturity gap has been found to be predictive of minor but not serious offending for males (Barnes & Beaver, 2010). This evidence suggests that young people, who are immature, are more likely to offend initially, and to re-offend until they have reached a point of maturity.

In addition to maturity, support has been found for the link between criminality and psychosocial maturity, with low levels related to offending and therefore reoffending. High levels of psychosocial maturity have been found to be related to desistance from crime (Wakeling & Barnett, 2017). Cauffman and Steinberg (2000) proposed that this type of maturity was related to the ability to control impulses (temperance), being able to take account of other views (perspective) and the ability to take personal responsibility and found that these were predictive of antisocial decision making. This is further supported by Cruise et al. (2008) who found that temperance and perspective were negatively correlated with delinquent acts, as those who had control of their impulses and can regulate their behaviour commit fewer delinquent acts than their peers. Temperance was found to be predictive of violent, non-violent and total delinquent behaviour for boys. More recent research has found that young people whose antisocial behaviour persisted with their reoffending into adulthood had lower levels of psychosocial maturity in their adolescence compared to other antisocial young people (Steinberg, Cauffman & Monahan, 2015). The research found that desistance from crime is linked to general maturity, the development of impulsive control and future orientation. This

provides further evidence that maturity, psychosocial maturity and reoffending are related, although questions remain whether maturity alone can account for reoffending.

High levels of impulsivity predict offending and reoffending, in both general and violent offending (Higgins et al., 2013; Farrington, Jennings & Piquero, 2013; MoJ Analytical Series, 2013). This relationship has been found independent of age (Leverso, Bielby & Holter, 2015) and for both male and female offenders (Travers & Mann, 2018). Young people who had committed a sexual offence were significantly more likely to reoffend if they were impulsive or had impulsive lifestyles (Miner, 2002). However, while the relationship between impulsivity and reoffending has been found across contexts, a lack of impulsivity has not been related to desistance, suggesting that it does not independently explain reoffending behaviour or desistance (Basto-Pereira, Comecanha, Riberio, & Maia, 2015). This evidence demonstrates high levels of immaturity and impulsivity contribute to understanding why some young people reoffend, and how YOTs can use this information to help deter young people from reoffending. Understanding how young people view their own reoffending behaviour in terms of their maturity and impulsivity could help YOTs understand how to support young people.

3.3.3 Resilience

Research has suggested that resilience may protect young people from reoffending (Efta-Breitbach & Freeman, 2004). The term is used to describe individuals who achieve good psychological outcomes despite adversity (Rutter, 2006). As part of the European Social Research Council (ESRC) funded work, young people involved in YOTs were interviewed with regards to their outlook in life (Kemshall, Marsland & Boeck, 2006). The interviews showed that this group often felt hopeless about their prospects and thought that the future was predetermined. They did not believe that their actions could change their future and expressed a level of passivity. This demonstrates that some young people who offend do not feel able to overcome adversity.

Research is however inconclusive about the role that resilience plays in encouraging desistance from crime. While Dutch research has found that resilience alone was not enough to predict desistance from violent crime, when supported by: pro-social involvement; strong attachment and bonds; a positive attitude towards intervention and authority; and a strong commitment to school, it was (Lodewikes, de Ruiter & Doreleigers, 2010). This is in addition to more recent Australian research on young people who offend, finding no relationship between the two concepts (Fougere, Daffern and Thomas, 2015). However, this is in contrast to English research which has found that resilience alone can predict desistance from crime (Rennie & Dolan, 2010). Further Australian research, which included a large sample of young people in custody, found that non-repeat offenders were more likely to have resilient personality traits than those who did reoffend (Shepherd, Luebbers & Ogloff, 2016). Low resilience was found to be a predictor of general recidivism but not violent reoffending (Shepherd, et al., 2016). The previous literature has shown mixed results on the relationship between resilience and recidivism; however, the potential impact of this association could be used by YOTs to encourage resilience, through positive activities with young people, to reduce reoffending.

3.3.4 Drugs and Addictions

The final factor explored under individual characteristics is the influence of drugs and addictions on reoffending. Extensive research has investigated the link between substance use and reoffending with the odds of offending between 2.8 and 3.8 times greater for drug users than non-users (Bennett, Holloway & Farrington, 2008). Problematic drug use can increase offending behaviour, and therefore those with drug misuse are more likely to be found in the justice system (UK Drug Policy Commission, 2008). Substance misuse disorders are prevalent in youth offender populations; Dutch research has found the prevalence to be at 37.2% with problematic behaviour and 29.8% who had moderate problems (Mulder et al., 2010). In a Canadian sample of reoffenders, the prevalence of drug use was 87.8%, while 56.1% had sold recreational drugs (MacRae, Bertrand, Paetsche & Hornick, 2011). In addition, substance misuse has been linked to prolific offending in young people ensuring that drugs and other substances are a focus for work by YOTs (YJB Cymru, 2012). Substance

misuse has been found to be a predictor of reoffending. Those identified as having a drug use problem have higher rates of recidivism, including higher rates of property, drug and violent re-offences (Mallett, Fukushima, Stoddard-Date & Quinn, 2013; MoJ Analytical Series, 2013; van der Put, Creemers & Hoeve, 2014). Young people (in Lancashire) who have previously recognised their drug use as a problem were more likely to see an intervention as helpful, compared to young people who did not view their drug use as a problem (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). Drug abuse has also been found to be related to persistent offending by young people (Assink et al., 2015). This demonstrates that drug misuse is linked to reoffending but that young people need to acknowledge there is a problem before an intervention can work. This provides evidence that by focusing on working on drug misuse, YOTs can help young people reduce their risk of reoffending. However, the use of drugs does not solely account for reoffending.

Evidence has also highlighted that those who offend often exhibit gambling behaviours (May-Chahal, Measham, Brannock, Amos, & Dagnall, 2004). Research conducted on young people found that 4% of juvenile crime is associated with gaming machines, with 3.9% explicitly linked to the offence, although the reason for this association could not be found (Yeoman & Griffiths, 1995). Currently the YJB does not include gambling dependency in their assessment, thus the scale of gambling behaviour in young people who offend is unknown (May-Chahal et al., 2004). Research on adult offenders has demonstrated that they are more vulnerable to gambling and this is largely because of poor impulse control. Gambling problems predicted future criminal behaviour, as well as in addition to substance misuse and impulse control issues (Lloyd, Chadwick & Serin, 2014; May-Chahal, Humphreys, Clifton, Francis & Reith, 2017). Research by the YJB Cymru (2012) found that out of a sample of young prolific offenders, the majority had gambling problems. American research has further demonstrated that those who have a gambling disorder are at an increased risk of reoffending (April & Weinstock, 2018). This evidence suggests that other addictions also have influence on why young people reoffend and indicates that YOTs should be widening their work to include a greater number of addictions.

3.3.5 Summary

This section has explored the numerous individual factors, which have been linked to reoffending. The younger an individual begins offending, especially if they are immature, impulsive with low resilience and misuse substances, the more likely they are to reoffend. Not all factors which are related to reoffending have been explored in this literature review: these include psychopathic personality traits (Zara & Farrington, 2016) and behavioural disorders (such as Conduct Disorder), which have also been linked to reoffending and violent reoffending (Cottle et al., 2001; Mulder, et al., 2010). Furthermore, conduct disorder has been found to be strongly associated with problematic drug use, which can also lead to offending (Roy, 2008). However, these factors were not considered relevant to the thesis content as the thesis focuses on the factors which can be impacted by YOTs and were therefore not included in the literature review. This section has demonstrated that a range of individual factors are related to reoffending, although the cause and effect relationship remains unanswered; these characteristics may increase the criminal propensity of some young people or other factors may also be relevant.

3.4 WHAT RELATIONSHIPS PLAY A ROLE IN WHY YOUNG PEOPLE REOFFEND?

The previous section has explored the personal characteristics that research has associated with reoffending. This section examines the relationships that influence why young people reoffend. Specifically, this section will look at the influence of family, friends and peers as well as the influence of practitioners. These groups have been identified as having the greatest influence on young people (Larkins & Wainwright, 20214; Prior & Mason, 2010).

3.4.1 Family & Attachment

Research has established a link between attachment to family members and offending (Farrington & Walsh, 2007; YJB, 2005). Family members provide the foundations for a young person to become sociable and interact with others along with learning what behaviour is morally right and wrong (Worrall, 2012). Research funded by the European Social Research Council (ESRC) found that after interviewing 51 youth justice professionals, they attributed the blame for

offending with the families of the young people or the young people themselves (Phoenix, 2005). The quality of attachment in childhood and adolescence has implications for subsequent social, emotional, mental development and self-control (Zara & Farrington, 2016). It therefore follows that if attachment style is related to offending, it could also help to explain reoffending. Evidence from the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development has shown that chronic offenders had childhood characteristics of deprivation and parenting issues, which contributed to insecure and ambivalent attachments. However, cross-cultural comparison of attachment styles has found differing 'ideal' attachment behaviours, therefore this may not be representative research (van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988; Zara & Farrington, 2016). Studies which have investigated attachment and reducing reoffending, found that having strong attachment and bonds was predictive of desistance of violent offending, although more recent research has contradicted this (Lodewijks et al., 2010). However, strong attachment and bonds were more common in young people who did not reoffend (Shepherd et al., 2016). This suggests that the attachment style between a child and their primary care giver has significant implications for whether a young person offends and goes on to reoffend.

In addition to attachment style, the family environment has been found to differentiate between young people who reoffend and non-reoffenders (Carr & Vandiver, 2001). Significant family problems, a history of physical or sexual abuse, raised in a single parent home, poor supervision, parental conflict, harsh discipline and having a greater number of out of home placements are related to increased chances of reoffending (Cottle et al., 2001; Farrington, Tfofi & Coid, 2009). Further research has found that all parenting dimensions appear linked to offending behaviour, whilst negative aspects of support (neglect, hostility and rejection) had the largest effects on delinquency, as well as a lack of parental monitoring (Hoeve et al., 2009). Poor parenting skills in childhood is a predictor of general recidivism, with family circumstances and parenting significantly associated with violent offending (Lai, Zeng & Meng-Chu, 2016). More recent research has further supported this relationship; Kennedy et al., (2018) found that family factors were a significant predictor of number of arrests as a criminal family history was significantly associated with chronic offending (although family violence was not). The Social Learning Theory (SLT) provides a

theoretical explanation for why family conflict may lead to young people offending. The theory proposes that children learn from those around them and when they see antisocial behaviour, they are more likely to also act antisocially (Bandura, 1978). This wealth of research demonstrates the importance of the family environment in explaining why some young people reoffend. It indicates that an understanding of a client's family life could help YOT workers to support young people differently. While this research does demonstrate that family factors play a role in reoffending, they cannot alone account for re-offences, and it may not be a factor that practitioners and young people identify as having a contribution.

3.4.2 Friends and Peers

There is a significant body of research which has consistently found that those whose friends offend, are themselves more likely to offend, and reoffend if these peers do not change (Watts & McNulty, 2015). Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that young boys who have friends who offend, commit more violent offences. Further, those who start offending early are more likely to have friends who offend, than those who start offending later (McAra & McVie, 2010). Reoffending is also more likely to occur for young people who have antisocial friends (Barry, 2009; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cottle et al., 2001; Haigh, 2009). Those who persistently reoffend can also be identified based on their level of peer delinquency, as serious persistent offenders are more likely to have peers who offend than young people who desist from crime (van Domburgh, Loeber, Bezemer, Stallings & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2009). Larkins and Wainwright (2014) found that young people were able to recognise their peer groups played a significant role in their offending behaviour and they thought YOTs should provide opportunities for them to make new connections. This was further supported by the HM Inspectorate of Probation (2016), which found that young people were able to desist from crime when they moved away from negative peer groups. However, the research found that YOT practitioners often found it difficult to address this issue with young people. More recent research has provided further evidence of the link between peer groups and chronic offending. Kennedy et al. (2018) found that peer influence was a significant predictor of chronic offending. In addition, having peers who sell drugs or who

commit theft were also significant predictors of chronic offending. Although this research demonstrates that there is a link between negative peers and reoffending the causal relationship has yet to be established. It is not known if young people commit more offences because of their friends or would have committed them regardless of friendship groups.

Youth gangs receive extensive political, public and research interest, with established links found between gang membership and increased chances of offending (Farrington & Walsh, 2007; Medina, Cebulla, Ross, Shute, & Aldridge, 2013; O'Brien Daffern, Chu, & Thomas, 2013). The effect of gang membership on offending has been found to be independent of having negative peer groups (Battin, Hill, Abbott, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1998). Offending by youths in gangs is diverse in nature with involvement in both minor and serious offences (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005). This is further supported by research, which has demonstrated that young people who are part of a gang are disproportionately responsible for general crime as well as violent and serious offences (Chu, Daffern, Thomas & Lim, 2012). In the UK, a study conducted in 2008, found 82% of young people identified themselves as belonging to a group, 13% admitted to using force or violence against another group, and 34% admitted to carrying knives (compared to 15% who were not part of a group and carried a knife) (YJB, 2009). This further demonstrates that where young people are part of a group, they are more likely to reoffend. In addition, research in the USA, found that gang membership was a significant predictor of chronic offending but there was no effect found for having friends in a gang, demonstrating that it is gang membership, which is key for reoffending behaviour (Kennedy et al., 2018).

The *age graded social control theory* provides theoretical support for the importance of social relationships in the maintenance of offending (Sampson & Laub, 1995). The theory proposes that there are a number of social ties and bonds between an individual and society. These link people to members of society through work, school, family or the community and when these are broken or if a young person has no attachment to these societal norms, then offending can occur (Sampson & Laub, 1995; Laub & Sampson, 2001). Adolescent experiences can impact on the strength of these ties, which can

explain why offending is common during the teenage years; therefore encouraging social bonds and ties is important to achieve desistance from crime. Laub and Sampson (2001) found that men who desist from crime do so because of individual, situational contexts and structural influences, while work and marriage life events help to support this transition. This has been supported by further research using longitudinal data where marriage reduced the odds of offending by 35% (Sampson, Laub & Wimer, 2006). Marriage was found to lead to a reduction in offending for the two younger age groups (18-21, 22-24) (Theobald & Farrington, 2009). This effect is consistent across countries; research from the Netherlands has shown consistent evidence that marriage reduces offending (Bersani, Laub & Nieuwbeerta, 2009), where the reduction in odds of offending are strongest for the youngest age group. Although questions remain as to whether marriage quality is more pertinent than marriage itself, young people who marry early experience a reduction in offending (Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998). This demonstrates the significance of personal relationships in the lives of young people who reoffend; this evidence indicates that young people who have negative peer groups are more likely to reoffend; conversely when a young person moves away from their negative friendship group and who develop relationships with those who do not offend, are then more likely to not reoffend.

3.4.3 Practitioners

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of the relationship between the YOT worker and young person in helping to reduce reoffending. Qualitative research has consistently found that respectful and empathic relationships between young people and their YOT workers can encourage positive behaviour (Larkins & Wainwright, 2016). Where young people have a designated worker and where the relationship is healthy and stable, this can encourage positive outcomes (McLeod, 2010). This is similarly reflected in clinical literature, the stronger the alliance between the therapist and young person, the greater the change the young person will experience (Kazdin, Marciano & Whitley, 2005). In youth justice, the relationship between young person and YOT worker remains central, but has not been fully researched (Drake, Fergusson & Briggs, 2014). While the YJS has changed over the years,

this relationship remains a critical element. Drake, Fergusson and Briggs (2014) argue that there is a need for a stronger evidence base which explores the relationship between young person and YOT worker, to understand how this relationship influences behaviour. The relationship should be built on respect and trust but, a strong relationship does not always generate change due to other structural differences - often being outside of a young person's or justice system control. Drake, Fergusson and Briggs's (2014) research interviewed YOT practitioners who provided evidence for the importance of this relationship but acknowledged that it took time to build a stable and consistent rapport. Practitioners in these interviews discussed how behaviour change could only happen if the young person was engaged in a programme of work and wanted to change. The research concluded that there was a clear need for extensive research on the practitioner-young person relationship, which involved both the voices of practitioners and young people. A Lancashire study (Larkins and Wainwright 2014) found that young people thought having a positive relationship with their YOT workers was an effective way to reduce reoffending. This evidence demonstrates the importance of a positive relationship between YOT worker and young person.

Previous research from the HM Inspectorate of Probation (2016), shows young people need to build stable relationships with at least one worker. These relationships should be balanced, trusting and consistent, in order to feel respected and want to instigate changes in their life. Furthermore, a poor relationship between a young person and their YOT worker was seen as a barrier to moving towards desistance. McLeod's (2010) research has indicated that young people need continuity which supports the finding, that young people need to build stable relationships with at least one worker and not be subject to the constant changing of workers (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016).

This demonstrates the importance of finding the right YOT worker who young people can develop a meaningful relationship with. The importance of relationships has been found in recent research on YOTs, where trusting, respectful and good listening relationships were important for young people who prolifically offend (Johns et al., 2018). The trauma model which targets the underlying causes of offending, has also highlighted the importance of trusting

relationships between young people and their YOT workers (YJB, 2017). This suggests that behaviour change, and a reduction in reoffending can be achieved by ensuring that there is an open and balanced relationship between YOT worker and young person.

3.4.4 Summary

This section has explored and presented evidence of the importance of relationships in the lives of young people who reoffend. Research suggests that young people who form poor attachments with their primary care giver and who live with familial conflict are more likely to reoffend than other young people. In addition, there is substantive evidence which indicates that the presence of anti-social peer groups has a negative impact on young people, and encourages them to reoffend and commit further offences. The importance of a healthy and consistent relationship between a practitioner and young person should not be overlooked. Research has demonstrated that young people need a consistent and trustworthy working relationship with their YOT worker in order to help and reduce reoffending.

3.5 WHAT CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ARE RELATED TO REOFFENDING?

The previous two sections have explored the influence of individual factors and relationships in the lives of young people. There is extensive research evidence which suggests that there are many factors which play a role in explaining reoffending. This section examines the research evidence on the contextual factors related to reoffending. Under the RFPP, these factors refer to community factors as well as school factors. These have been presented together to represent the structural factors in a young person's life. The section will explore the impact of education, community and contact with the justice system on reoffending.

3.5.1 Education

While research has consistently shown that poor educational achievement is related to an increased propensity for offending behaviour and further reoffending, there have been inconclusive results relating to the causation

(Cottle et al., 2001; YJB, 2005). A history of special education has been found to be a predictor of reoffending in young people, whilst school attendance and educational achievement have not (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cottle et al., 2001). More recent research has found a significant link between academic achievement and reoffending within young people, with low academic achievement associated with reoffending and those who receive special education at particular risk (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann, 2008). Longitudinal studies such as the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study and the Pittsburgh Youth Study both have found a link between education and reoffending. In Edinburgh, school exclusion at age 12, self-reported truancy and bad behaviour at school, significantly differed between the early and late onset offenders (McAra & McVie, 2007; 2010). In Pittsburgh, having low academic achievement was associated with becoming a life course persistent (LCP) offender (Jolliffe, Farrington, Piquero, Loeber & Hill, 2017), demonstrating that reoffenders are more likely to have low academic achievement. Low school motivation was found to be linked to LCP offending, AL (Adolescent-Limited) and late onset offending, demonstrating that education alone does not account for persistent reoffending. Research has established that reading achievement and being held back at least a year in school were significant predictors of the number of offences committed (Kennedy et al., 2018). These authors argue that low academic achievement could be linked to low communication ability and therefore these youths may not socialise as regularly with prosocial role-models, which in turn isolates them and puts them at risk of reoffending. This suggests that young people who become disengaged with education are more likely to offend and go on to reoffend, indicating that YOTs should focus on garnering educational opportunities for the young people they work with.

One study interviewed young people who having been permanently excluded from school, had contact with YOTs (Kemshall, Marsland, Boeck, Dunkerton, 2006). Out of the 110 young people questioned, 68% had been permanently excluded from school, 55% had contact with their local YOT and 50% had a statement of needs for extra learning support. When young people were interviewed about school exclusion, many thought that they had simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time, and that others in their school had displayed similar behaviour but had not been excluded. Interestingly, out of the school

exclusion group, only one young person thought it was a predictor of their own offending. However, the direction of causality is unknown, exclusion from school often precedes offending, but this is not always the case, and sometimes children are removed from school on a voluntary basis which is not counted as exclusion (Kemshall et al., 2006).

More recent research on the viewpoints of young people, found in a sample of young males in custody, that attendance at school was related to later offending (Worrall, 2012). Being excluded from school starts a downward spiral, with a lack of qualifications generating difficulty in finding work, thus making them more vulnerable to offending. Research conducted in Lancashire with young people who have offended, found that education was a suitable method for reducing reoffending. Young people who were interviewed thought that YOT provided the opportunity to get involved in education and training (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). The Charlie Taylor Review (2016) emphasised the role that education should have in working with children who offend, with evidence to show that a good education is a gateway to positive outcomes for young people. He was concerned that a majority of children in the YJS had been out of school for long periods through truancy or exclusion. This area of research is significant as it indicates that young people who reoffend and persistently reoffend are disengaged in education and lack educational achievement.

3.5.2 Community

Research has largely ignored the role of the community in offending behaviour, although the most serious offending is more likely to occur in the most deprived areas (Webster, MacDonald & Simpson, 2006). The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development provides evidence for the link between deprivation and reoffending. Research found that low family income at adolescence was a significant predictor of those who were persistent offenders (compared to those who were not) (Farrington, Coid & West, 2009). Socio-economic status (SES) has been found to be a predictor of both offending and reoffending in young people, but not a desistance predictor in adults (Basto-Pereira et al., 2015; Cottle et al., 2001). Poor quality housing, which is a sign of SES, distinguished between those who were persistent offenders and those who were moderate

offenders (van Domburgh et al., 2009). The same research found that good quality housing was significantly more likely in those who had desisted from crime compared to those who reoffended. Young people who offended early (before the age of 12) were significantly more likely to live in the most deprived areas of Edinburgh, than those who offended at a later age (McAra & McVie, 2010). In Canada young people who thought they lived in a neighbourhood with gangs were significantly more likely to have a higher number of re-offences than those who did not (MacRae et al., 2011). Crime in the neighbourhood has also been found to be a predictor of number of arrests; young people who had witnessed a neighbourhood shooting had a significantly higher total of re-offences than those who had not (Kennedy et al., 2018). This demonstrates the importance of the community and deprivation in understanding why young people reoffend.

3.5.3 Contact with the Justice System

There is a growing body of evidence, which illustrates contact with the justice system increases the risk of reoffending rather than reducing it (McAra & McVie, 2007). Arrest and sanctioning have been found to have no effect on reoffending, and where there is an effect, the risk is increased (Huizinga, Schumann, Ehret & Elliott, 2003). The Edinburgh Youth Transition Study found that specific groups of young people were more likely to be targeted by the justice system (those who were from deprived areas or on free school meals). Young people who are deeply involved in the justice system are inhibited in their desistance process and therefore instead, reoffend. The study also provides evidence that repeated and long-term intensive contact with the justice system has long-term negative impacts on young people (McAra & McVie, 2007). Further evidence from the study shows that young people in the system are stigmatised and labelled, creating a "*permanent suspect population"* (McAra & McVie, 2010, p. 200). The authors argue that the current justice system is unable to meet its aims and has a negative rather than positive impact on young people (McAra & McVie, 2007). This effect has been found internationally, with a Campbell (2010) review finding that juvenile justice has no crime control effect and where there was an effect it was iatrogenic (increases the risk of reoffending). Although there are concerns over the lack of control groups in research as well as

publication bias this adds to the literature which finds that the justice system is not delivering on its aims (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Guckenberg, 2010).

Canadian research has highlighted that young people exposed to a court conviction between 12 and 17, were then significantly more likely to have committed an offence as an adult, as well as committing both more violent and non-violent offences than the group who did not receive a formal court conviction (Petitclerc, Gatti, Vitaro & Tremblay, 2013). Formal processing in juvenile court may put adolescents on a more criminal path, therefore providing support to divert individuals from the criminal justice system would be beneficial. This area of research is significant as it suggests that those who work with young people who offend may promote a negative rather than positive impact on reoffending rates. However, this research has been largely conducted in Scotland and in the USA and therefore it is unknown what would be the effect of the YJS in England and Wales on young people's reoffending.

When looking at sentence types used by the YJS in England and Wales, the most serious sentence a young person can receive is a custodial sentence (as described in *section 2.3.3*). The guidelines on custodial sentencing advise that this should be the last resort for young people and it should be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence (Sentencing Guidelines, 2017). The numbers of young people in custody has fallen over the last ten years but the reoffending rate for those who have been in custody has increased. 40.1% of young people with no previous custodial sentence go on to reoffend after release, which increases to 69.1% following one previous custodial sentence (MoJ, 2018b). The reoffending rate increases as the number of previous custodial sentences increase (MoJ, 2018b). In addition to the high reoffending rates, custody for young people is a violent and hostile environment, which does not effectively rehabilitate young people (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017; Lambie & Randell, 2013). Prison is associated with a high level of mental health diagnoses, greater educational needs and aggressive and disruptive behaviour, with young people in prison representing some of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and complex young people (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero & Berk, 2011; Hughes, Williams, Chitsabesan, Davies & Mounce, 2012; Kroll et al., 2002; Jacobson, Bhardwa, Gyatend, Hunter & Hough, 2010). However, young people who offend

and who are supervised in the community also have high levels of poorer mental health, educational and social needs (Chitsabesan et al., 2006). This suggests that custody while used for the most serious young people, has a negative impact and interrupts the natural process of maturation, helping to maintain the cycle of reoffending (Lambie & Randell, 2013).

Research has also suggested that there is a negative impact of having involvement in both the justice and the care system (Herz, Ryan & Bilchik, 2010). Previous research on young prolific offenders in Wales has shown the majority were involved with care assessment, either subject to a care order, on the child protection register, or involved in other referrals (YJB Cymru, 2012). The Lord Laming Review found that there was an over representation of young people in care who have also offended, with those in care exhibiting low emotional, behavioural and psychological health (Prison Reform Trust, 2016). Furthermore, the review found that the risk factors for offending were very similar to the risk factors for entering care: neglect, abuse, poor parental supervision, substance misuse and poor educational engagements, which combine to create a complex environment for YOT workers to work in (Prison Reform Trust, 2016). It is therefore feared that young people in care homes are being inappropriately criminalised (Schofield et al., 2012), a finding, which is supported by the Howard League for Penal Reform (2016). This research indicates that young people in children's homes were twenty times more likely to be involved with the justice system than those who were not in care. This demonstrates the significant damage that being involved with multiple systems has on offending behaviour.

3.5.4 Summary

The contextual factors section of the literature has provided an insight into the structures which can contribute to why young people reoffend. The research evidence suggests that young people who are disengaged in education, who live in deprived areas and who have continued contact with the justice system are more likely to reoffend. However, young people who have contact with the justice system commit more serious offences and are therefore expected to have contact with justice agencies. It is not known if there are elements of the

justice system contact which lead to reoffending, or if it is the individual factors that contribute to reoffending by young people. The majority of the research has been conducted in Scotland or in other countries, a distinct lack of research has looked into the influence of contact with the YJS in England and Wales on reoffending, although custodial sentences for young people are associated with higher reoffending rates. To fill theses gaps, the views of young people in the system, together with YOT practitioners could shed light on these issues. Furthermore, an investigation of reoffending data held by YOTs could show if contact with YOTs leads to reoffending.

3.6 TRENDS IN REOFFENDING

This section explores the trends in reoffending to examine if they offer further understanding of how young people reoffend in terms of frequency, seriousness and the type of re-offences committed. These trends have been identified by research which shows a pattern in the re-offences committed by young people.

3.6.1 Frequency of Offending

Research has established a small group of offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime (Cohen & Piquero, 2009; Johns, et al., 2018; Kennedy et al., 2018; Wolfgang, Figlio & Sellin, 1972). However, there are multiple definitions and classifications to identify this group of prolific offenders (Johns et al., 2018), with the term also used to describe offenders who are chronic. Svensson (2002) defined chronic offenders as those who had over nine convictions, whereas Gittens (2011) defined career offenders as those who had over twenty convictions. In the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, the original classification defined chronic offenders as those who had over five offences which was later amended to those who had offended at least ten times (Piquero et al., 2007). As *section 2.4.2* discussed, there are numerous issues with the way in which reoffending is defined and measured.

Previous literature has found that chronic offending is related to a variety of negative outcomes. In the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, chronic offenders offended over a number of years, began their offending early and committed a high number of violent offences (Piquero et al., 2007). This

research is supported by Baglivio et al. (2014) whose American research found chronic offenders were linked with serious and violent offences, which signifies this group require targeted intervention. Therefore, young people who are involved in prolific offending represent a group who are fundamentally different from other young people who offend only a handful of times. Chronic juvenile offenders have received limited interest in research, but research which explores the early stages of offending by young people would help to understand the behaviour of those who go on to become chronic offenders (Kennedy et al., 2018).

The term ‘prolific offender’ has been recently applied to a cohort of young people, who had been convicted of more than 25 offences in a given year (specific research has used 2009) and who reoffended the following year (YJB Cymru, 2012). This differs from the previously discussed definitions of chronic offending which tended to be applied to adults, as this used a child population. Their sample of 303 prolific offenders had a reoffending rate of 81.5% and committed an average of 4.49 offences each after being sampled. This group of young people represented a complex group with many involved in the care system, having low educational achievement, high levels of substance misuse and many witnessing or being victims of abuse (YJB, Cymru, 2012). Further analysis on this cohort found that using the term prolific masks underlying dimensions. Johns et al. (2018) suggest that offending by young people should be viewed in terms of volume (the total number of offences), persistence (the length of offending), frequency (how often an offence is committed) and seriousness (high and low), as these dimensions are not constant and can change for a young person. They argue that this presents a more holistic picture of offending, where those who commit a high number of offences, are a consequence of complex, chaotic and difficult life circumstances, where substance misuse plays a large role. Research which explores the early stages of persistent offending by young people is necessary to understand the behaviour of this group (Kennedy et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2018). Johns et al., (2018) research was unique in that it examined a sample of prolific offenders who were young people and quantified a high level of reoffending by young people into groups. The justice system has changed significantly in recent years, with the cohort reducing, but those who are left in the system are

reoffending; understanding these patterns further could help YOTs understand the current cohort of young people.

3.6.2 Severity of Reoffending

There has been comparatively very little research done on the severity of offences and re-offences committed by young people. This is hindered by the term being used to describe both frequency and seriousness of offending (Liu, Francis & Soothill, 2011). The seriousness is considered in courts when a young person is sentenced; the sentence should be proportionate to the seriousness, level of harm caused and culpability of the young person (Sentencing Council 2017). Despite the concept being used in courts, there is no widely used measure of severity. Previous research has measured severity using both public perceptions and official court data (Francis, Soothill, Humphreys & Bezzina, 2005; ONS, 2016; Wolfgang, Figlio, Tracy, Singer, 1985). The ONS (2016) created a new measure of severity which considers the volume of offences committed and the severity by creating a weight for each offence type and is based on sentencing information although does not focus on young people. The YJB has its own measure of offence seriousness, which is based on the 2001 cohort of young people involved in YOTs, and updated in 2015 (YJB, 2016b: 2010). Scores are derived from the sentencing pattern for each offence with lower scores receiving less intensive outcomes, compared to more serious offences. Scores range from 0 (least serious) to 8 (the most serious), although there is discretion in allocating the marks (Knight, 2012; YJB, 2010; 2016b). Previous research has demonstrated that the younger an individual begins their offending, the more serious their offending will become (Mulder et al., 2010). This relationship is especially pertinent for boys, which can be explained by their peer involvement, in comparison to girls whose serious offending can be explained by family variables (Tolan & Thomas, 1995).

Severity has also been measured using violence as a proxy measure (Piquero et al., 2007; Mulder et al., 2011). In the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, chronic offending was a significant predictor of violent offending suggesting that violence increases as the number of offences increase (Piquero et al., 2007). Mulder et al. (2011) found that severity of re-offence is predicted

by a range of factors including neglect, conduct disorder, age at first offence and offending against a stranger. Further research found that serious, chronic and violent offenders (severity defined by felony offences) were more likely to reoffend and constituted a unique subset of young people (Baglivio, et al., 2014). In terms of crimes committed nationally by young people, whilst there has been no change in the number of offences, the proportion of violent offences has increased (MoJ, 2018a). This suggests YOT practitioners are dealing with more violent offenders. In addition, the number of weapon offences involving young people has also increased in the last year (2017-2018), indicating that young people are carrying and using weapons (MoJ, 2018d). However, it is not known if this is due to recording practices or whether more young people are being stopped for weapon searches. This research demonstrates that while severity has received limited research attention, it is an important area that needs to be examined further. While LYOT collects data on the seriousness of offences, as per the YJB measure, the scores are not widely used in research. Francis and Liu (2016) argue that it is important to understand how offending seriousness develops to help identify and support those who offend seriously. At present, there is limited research on the patterns of young people's reoffending and on the severity of offences committed by young people. Such information would provide YOT with data to help target their resources towards the more serious offenders.

3.6.3 Type of Re-offences

Previous research has sought to investigate offending patterns (Klein, 1984). Svensson (2002) argues that the first point at which criminal intervention can occur is after the initial offence has been committed, therefore it is useful to explore the type of offending to establish a link with later chronic offending. Svensson's research (2002) has shown that those committing shoplifting, drink-driving, drug and motoring offences have the lowest risk of becoming chronic offenders, whereas 40% of those who committed vehicle theft as a first offence went on to become chronic offenders. The research explored the first and second offence and found that the highest risk for further reoffending were those who committed a vehicle theft at both of these time points. Theft and vehicle theft were also a high-risk combination when predicting further

reoffending. The lowest risk pairings included vandalism and assault as well as drink-driving and further drink-driving, demonstrating that the type of offences that are committed are related to the frequency of offences a person will commit. This has been further explored by Owen and Cooper (2013), who found that when looking at young people, 17% of those who committed a robbery or vehicle offence went on to become reoffenders, and have a high number of re-offences, concluding that vehicle related crime should act as an indicator.

In addition, it is important to consider the specialisation of offending and its relationship with reoffending. This refers to when an offender commits only one particular type of crime, in comparison to versatile offenders who commit a variety of different criminal offences (Francis, Lui & Soothill, 2010). While research has found evidence of specialisation and escalation in offending behaviour of adults, this effect is reduced when background characteristics are considered (family factors, alcohol/drug problem, gang association) indicating the importance of these factors in offending patterns (Armstrong & Britt, 2004). Previous research has found that offending tends to occur within distinct categories and only those who commit a high number of re-offences commit a diverse amount of offences (Piquero et al., 2007). This is further supported by van Domburgh et al. (2009) who found that serious persistent offenders are significantly more diverse in their offending compared to those who are moderate offenders and those who desist from crime. This indicates that the diversity of offending increases as the number of offences increase. Although this is disputed by Piquero, Jennings and Barnes (2012) who found that offenders are generally non-specialised apart from violent offenders who are also frequent offenders. Further research has found that the best predictor of type of re-offence was the nature of the prior offence demonstrating a lack of versatile offending by those who offend (Baker, Falco Metcalfe & Jennings, 2013). However, the majority of this research has focused on adults and it is not known if young people who reoffend, commit similar offences as previously or if they are general offenders. This highlights the importance of research which focuses on young people's reoffending patterns.

3.6.4 Summary

This section of the literature review has examined if there are patterns in young people's reoffending that could help provide insight into why and how young people reoffend. Recent research has categorised young people who are prolific offenders, this would enable further research which explores which young people are more likely to commit a high number of re-offences. While the cohort of young people offending has changed, it is imperative to understand who the young people remaining in the system are, and what contributes towards their reoffending. The type of offences committed by young people is an under researched area with no indication of if young people who reoffend are specialist offenders (commit one type of offence) or if they are generalist offenders (commit many different types of offences). This is a similar picture when looking at the severity of offences committed by young people. Research has not examined if young people who reoffend are escalating in terms of the seriousness of the offence committed, if they are maintaining their seriousness or if they are de-escalating. It is important for policy makers and YOT workers to understand the patterns of reoffending of their young people to identify trigger points which lead to reoffending, or more serious reoffending.

3.7 THEORY INTO PRACTICE

This section of the literature examines how the theory of youth justice and reoffending is put into practice within YOTs. The section will cover how YOT practice aims to reduce reoffending, as well as the limitations in implementation of theory into practice. Lastly, this section will demonstrate that the recent change in YJS towards a positive youth justice has changed the landscape and work that YOTs do with young people.

3.7.1 Reducing Reoffending

Models of offender rehabilitation have been based on the concept of risk, which is a fundamental part of working with those who offend (Crighton, 2004). Carson and Bain (2008) define risk as an occasion when one or more consequences could occur, which can be harmful or beneficial and the likelihood of them occurring is unknown. Risk for those young people who offend depends on individual, situational and environmental factors (Baker, 2014). The YJS utilises

the *Risk, Needs and Responsivity (RNR)* model which is also used in the adult justice system (Adler et al., 2016). The RNR has three principles which underlie effective offending rehabilitation (Andrews, Bonta & Hodge, 1990). The risk principle refers to using more intensive levels of intervention for the highest risk offenders, whilst the needs element refers to targeting interventions matched with the criminogenic needs of offenders. The responsivity principle refers to matching the style and mode of intervention to the offenders learning style and ability (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2011). The original ASSET framework, which is a structured youth justice assessment tool is based on these principles and helps to ensure that resources are given to those who have the highest risk of reoffending (Adler et al., 2016). Previous research has established that the ASSSET framework is a good predictor of proven re-offending, with static and dynamic factors both related to reoffending (Wilson & Hinks, 2011). However, the RNR model has been criticised for failing to acknowledge the importance of human needs in desistance from crime and changing behaviour (Andrews et al., 2011). Whilst risk has remained the dominant discourse in the YJS, older research conducted by the ESRC on 51 youth justice professionals found they used generalised notions of risk, and formed their opinions from a variety of sources which did not include formal risk assessment tools (Phoenix, 2005). They relied on their own observations and interactions with young people. The study found that practitioners did not take account of the social factors, discussed earlier in this chapter (deprivation, education, family conflict) when considering explanations for offending or reoffending.

A review into best practice in managing young people who break the law was published in 2016 (Alder et al., 2016). The review found seven key features which are effective in reducing reoffending with young people:

- Services should be matched to the level of risk of reoffending.
- Programmes should take account of the needs of an individual; these should be targeted through rehabilitation and service provision.
- Approaches should be tailored to individual learning styles, motivation, abilities and strengths.
- Therapeutic programmes are more effective than those which are focused on control and punishment. They need to focus on skills building, restorative work, and counselling.

- Programmes should address a number of factors (which are associated with reoffending), instead of focusing on a single factor.
- Programmes should be implemented to high quality with fidelity to the design and the service provided.
- The wider offending context should also be considered (family, peer and community issues).

In order to reduce reoffending, young people should be encouraged to develop agency, autonomy and respect for others and themselves. Those who work with them should be committed to this approach, with communication between young people and practitioners based on mutual understanding, respect and fairness. The review included a majority of studies from the United States and the transferability of these interventions to an English context should be considered. In addition, the studies in the area have largely been conducted with white males, aged between 15 and 17, therefore it is unknown if these findings are transferable to a younger age group.

These findings were supported by HM Inspectorate of Probation (2016) research, who found that to help young people stop offending, there needs to be a balanced and trusting working relationship between the young person and caseworker. This should include stable personal relationships for the young person together with emotional support as well as interventions which encourage problem-solving solutions; the focus being on relationships instead of offence focused work (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016).

This is further reflected in research from 2014, that found that to reduce reoffending, interventions should engage young people and families, and combine both accountability and well-being to be the most effective (Henry, Henaghan, Sanders & Munford, 2014). This research is echoed in YJB guidance published in 2016 (2016a), which advised that in order to support young people, YOTs needed to work to three key principles; 1) young people need to be motivated to change which YOTs can help to facilitate; 2) there should be a consistent and positive relationship between the young person and case worker while maintaining boundaries; 3) intervention should take account of individual needs, risks and strengths (YJB, 2016a). This was further

encouraged by the YJB in 2018, which revealed that the current caseload held by YOTs involved young people who have ingrained offending behaviour, therefore tackling reoffending is a national priority (YJB, 2018). These findings are also supported by recent work conducted in Wales which found that when working with a complex young person, they need to be supported through the transition from offending to desistance by the promotion of a positive pro-social lifestyle (Johns et al., 2018). Johns et al. (2018) research into young people who offended prolifically in Wales, recommended that young people who engage in high-volume, high-frequency offending are a different group of young people and have different needs. In order to work with this group, YOTs need to build stable relationships, set boundaries, involve young people in their justice outcomes, continue to support, and create an environment which is focused on the future and on young people's strengths. Young people need to be encouraged to transition away from offending, and this can only be achieved when the context of offending is understood.

3.7.2 Methods Used

Section 3.5.3 of this literature review established that contact with the justice system increases the likelihood of further offending, diversionary programmes on the other hand, can move young people away from formal sanctions (YJB, 2018). This can include making referrals to other agencies and are used for lower level offences (YJB, 2018). However, it is difficult to compare across research studies as there are a variety of interventions which are classed as diversionary (Alder et al., 2016; Schwalbe, Gearing, Mackenzie, Brewer & Ibrahim, 2012; Wilson & Hoge, 2012). There have been inconsistent findings from meta-analysis reviews of the impact of youth diversion programmes on reoffending; Schwalbe et al. (2012) did not find a significant difference between diversion and traditional forms of justice, which contrasts with Wilson and Hoge (2012) who found that diverted young people had a significantly lower reoffending rate than those who had formal intervention with the justice system. Wilson and Hoge (2012) found no differences between diversion approaches which included cautions and other programmes. The decline in the number of first-time entrants into the YJS has been largely attributed to diversionary

programmes but there is little known about what programmes are being used and how effective they are (Bateman, 2014).

Restorative Justice (RJ) has been prioritised in YOTs, and this approach underpins much of the work that YOTs conduct with young people and is arguably the most common approach to dealing with those who break the law (Sherman & Strang, 2007; YJB, 2015). The focus of RJ is on direct or indirect communication between the offender and victim in order to recognise and repair the harm caused by offending (Restorative Justice Council, 2016). All victims should be given the opportunity to take part in RJ and any communication should take place in a controlled, safe and voluntary manner (Restorative Justice Council, 2015). The process of RJ has been questioned on its suitability for young people as it requires a level of maturity to take responsibility for the offence and to want to repair the harm caused (Cunneen & Goldson, 2015). It requires willingness from all parties in order to go ahead and young people need to understand the impact and purpose behind RJ (Restorative Justice Council, 2015). A meta-analysis conducted in 2007 found that young people who took part in restorative methods were significantly less likely to reoffend when compared to traditional justice methods (Rodriguez, 2007). A more recent meta-analysis found that young people who took part in RJ reduced their reoffending, however, there was a great variation in the studies which were included (Wong et al., 2016). By contrast, research on the views of young people on RJ, has found that some young people do not acknowledge the value of RJ, and did not want to engage with their victim, or thought it would create a risk (for violent offences) (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). The same research found that young people who had taken part in an RJ conference found the method helpful in challenging their own behaviour. RJ is a promising method for reducing reoffending providing support for its use by YOTs.

An additional method used to support young people is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is based on the premise that cognitive deficits and distortions are learned and not innate; therefore, CBT, in a justice setting, helps offenders work on their thoughts and attitudes and thus change their behaviour (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007). However, implementation of CBT in youth justice has led to a number of challenges: there are a wide number of

programmes which incorporate aspects of CBT and therefore it is hard to assess the impact; projects often struggle to get referrals, therefore lowering the number of young people who are involved in CBT; and young people do not attend regular sessions, which disrupts the structured design of interventions (Feilzer, Appleton, Roberts & Hoyle, 2004). CBT with adult offenders has reduced offending by more than one and half times in comparison to those who did not have CBT (Lipsey et al., 2007). Further research has demonstrated that CBT can reduce reoffending, with studies including young people up to the age of 25 (Alder et al., 2016). Although there is a wide variation in the types of CBT programmes used, there are promising results for this type of intervention.

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of dealing with trauma to help young people to move away from offending (YJB, 2017). Trauma occurs when an event overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope; leading to feelings such as fear, terror, helplessness, lack of control and hopelessness (Liddle, Boswell, Wright, Francies & Perry, 2016). The traumatic event can lead to a range of reactions, for instance internalising symptoms, such as depression, withdrawal, or anxiety, and externalising symptoms such as aggression, substance use and risky activities (YJB, 2017). Examples of traumatic events include abuse, neglect, assaults, family violence, community violence, war, acts of terror, racist victimisation and serious injuries. Young people who offend come from the most disadvantaged families and they experience high levels of social, economic deprivation, neglect and abuse (Liddle et al., 2016) with many experiencing childhood trauma (Morris, 2015). Research on 200 young people in custody, found that 31% had experienced substance misuse, 39% had a child protection plan, 33% had an absent mother, 28% had witnessed domestic violence, and 20% of them had self-harmed (Jacobson et al., 2010). Experiencing trauma can disrupt a young person's ability to judge social situations, cope with stress, consider long-term consequences and negotiate out of difficult situations, as well as exhibiting a lack of emotional self-control and aggressive behaviour (Liddle et al., 2016; YJB, 2017).

Many of the examples of traumatic events, described in the previous paragraph, are a result of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs were first studied in health research where it was established that ACEs were linked to many

causes of death (Felitti et al., 1998) and have been linked to delinquency (Wolff, Baglivio & Piquero, 2017). The research indicated that there were 10 adverse categories: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, violent treatment towards mother, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce and having an incarcerated household member (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Based on a sample of American youth who had been given a referral in Florida, research found high rates of ACEs in the sample; with the top three including family violence, parental separation or divorce, and household member incarceration (Baglivio et al., 2014). Many in the sample had three or more ACEs, demonstrating the high rates of trauma within those youths who offend. Previous research into ACEs has also established their predictive validity with serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders (Fox, Perez, Cass, Baglivio & Epps, 2015). Young people who were classed as serious, violent and chronic had more than double the number of ACEs than the comparison group. The authors provided support for Moffitt's (1993) taxonomy (*Section 3.3.1*) demonstrating that young people who began offending early, experienced multiple traumatic events, had high levels of impulsivity and were more likely to become LCP offenders and offend into adulthood (Fox et al., 2015). This work was supported by Wolff et al. (2017) who found that young people who had a higher number of ACEs were more likely to reoffend than other youths. In addition, ACEs increase the risk of further arrest, with a shorter time to re-arrest found. The authors indicate that interventions with young people should match the ACEs and trauma that they have experienced (Wolff et al., 2017).

In 2017, the YJB published guidance, which provided advice on trauma-informed youth justice, and recommended that practitioners needed training to understand development and attachment issues of young people. In addition, those who had experienced trauma required specialist care where the underlying needs behind the behaviours were tackled (YJB, 2017). Practitioners needed to be able to work flexibly with young people to tailor plans, build trust and encourage stability. Furthermore, acknowledgement that trauma can make young people less resilient to changes was essential, and not all young people would want to share their experiences of trauma. The Trauma Recovery Model (Skuse, & Matthew, 2015) utilises a psychology-led method of working with

complex young people. The premise behind the model is that young people need to be ready to make changes in their lives and that requires a number of steps. Young people first need structure and routine in their lives followed by a positive and trusting relationship (Skuse & Matthew, 2015). Thirdly, young people need to feel able to talk about difficult issues, which is where specialist staff can assist. This then allows the young person to form insight and awareness providing a platform for change in behaviour, which leads to a move away from offending (Skuse & Matthew, 2015). This model is the theory behind a Welsh initiative, Enhanced Case Management (ECM), which is an assessment approach. ECM focuses on the developmental causes which have led to the current offending behaviour, and requires psychologist leadership. The approach explains how chronic, underlying and unresolved trauma can affect behaviour, with interventions aimed at the underlying trauma, to help young people move away from offending (YJB Cymru, 2012). A recent trial of ECM in Wales concluded that there should be a further implementation and trial of the approach as there is strong support from all stakeholders (Cordis Bright, 2017).

3.7.3 Limitations in Implementation

The next section will explore the limitations in implementing interventions in a crime and justice context. A meta-analysis into the factors that play a role in effective interventions with juvenile offenders found that the risk of a young person, the type of intervention and the quality of the implementation were the most important factors in reducing reoffending (Lipsey, 2009). Furthermore, the meta-analysis demonstrated that effective interventions are not always branded models, and what is important is the way in which the programmes are implemented.

There is a lack of evidence of how research into effective programmes has been translated into real-world practice (Koehler, Hamilton & Lösel, 2013). There are a number of challenges when applying research to practice as the delivery of an intervention can be difficult. Policy makers do not always understand the complexity of the crime prevention process, therefore, work is often simplified (Ekblom, 2012; Jacobson, Millie & Hough, 2006). For an

intervention to work, the theory, project delivery, evaluation and available resources need to be taken into consideration (Wandersman, 2009). For a crime reduction programme to reduce the frequency of crime, there needs to be a theory which underlies the process; if the theory is unsound or invalid, the intervention is unlikely to be successful (Wandersman, 2009). Furthermore, interventions can only work in suitable contexts, for example, neighbourhood watch schemes may reduce crime in a middle-class area (where strangers are identified and there is high collective efficacy), but would not have the same impact in high crime, low cost housing areas (Laycock & Tilley, 1995). Sherman et al. (1997; 2002) point out that interventions often fail when the role of the context is not acknowledged. Secondly, challenges arise with implementation when the programme does not follow the original plan. This can happen when no individual takes ownership, when practitioners are not engaged or organisational issues materialise (Wandersman, 2009). Programmes often fail when they are transferred from one area to another, as not all offender, victim and place characteristics are the same across areas (Tilley, 2009).

Thirdly, the evaluation of a programme should also be considered. Evaluations of crime reduction programmes are often poorly designed as a number of factors are associated with offending behaviour, therefore, evaluations need to be able to control for these (Wanderson, 2009). The Maryland Scientific Methods Scale uses a five category system, including: correlational design; pre and post intervention measures; pre and post intervention measures with a comparison group; pre and post intervention measures with multiple groups which control for extraneous variables; and the top level which is randomised control trials (Sherman et al., 1997; 2002). There is a need for systematic evaluation in European countries to assess the evidence base behind an intervention and provide practitioners and policy makers with a greater understanding of what works (Koehler et al., 2013; Koehler, Lösel, Akoensi & Humphreys, 2012). In essence, the type of programme and how it is implemented needs to be taken into consideration when working with young people who offend.

Alder et al. (2016) when reviewing what works with young people, found a number of distinct programmes related to reoffending by young people;

diversionary methods, restorative justice, cognitive behavioural therapies and custodial sentences. These will now be discussed in turn with reference to current literature, in addition to the impact of trauma-informed practice in youth justice settings.

3.7.4 Critique of Risk and the Introduction of Positive Youth Justice (PYJ)

This literature review ulitised the RFPP framework as a way of organising the factors which have been previously found to be associated with reoffending. This allows for a structured discussion of the individual, relationship types and the research evidence that indicates those factors strongly linked to explaining why young people reoffend. However, the RFPP framework provides a one-dimensional view of the factors associated with reoffending and does not seek to explain the interaction between different risk factors. The framework does not explain individual differences; for some young people, some factors are more crucial and these differ between young people. The framework has also been criticised for not explaining why some young people associated with risk factors do not offend, or reoffend.

Contemporary developments in youth justice have moved the field away from a risk focused approach towards a more positive and holistic view of youth crime and those who reoffend. Risk should not be the only focus of work conducted by YOTs, and YOT practitioners have a responsibility to work on preventing negative outcomes (such as reoffending). A holistic approach towards youth crime encompasses the context and situation where offending occurred (Baker, 2014). ASSET plus, which is the updated structural assessment tool used by YOTs takes account of these contextual factors and uses multiple approaches in working with young people. The Good Lives Model (GLM) was utilised in the ASSET plus framework as it seeks to work with offenders using a positive strengths focused approach (Good Lives Model, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Fortune, 2013; Ward, Yates & Willis, 2012). The model is built on the idea that individuals need to build skills and strengths to reduce reoffending (Andrews et al., 2011). Under the model, offenders are encouraged to develop meaningful and fulfilling lives by working to their interests, abilities and aspirations (Fortune, 2018). While the model incorporates the RNR model, the

focus is on building primary tools to help reduce reoffending. In terms of youth justice, the GLM framework presents a way of engaging clients by focusing on their strengths and is a natural fit for young people who offend (Fortune, 2018). Based on desistance theory and research, ASSET plus was intended to use both the RFPP as well as a strengths focused approach to encourage a process of change (Baker, 2014).

The Positive Youth Justice model: Children First, Offenders Second (PYJ) (2015) is an alternative model of juvenile justice and is based on twenty years of evidence which supports the transition away from traditional justice models (Case, 2018; Haines & Case, 2015). It is based on five core principles; 1) child-friendly and appropriate; 2) diversion and system management; 3) promoting positive behaviours and outcomes; 4) evidence-based partnership and 5) responsibilising adults. In this model, young people play an active role in their justice outcomes. The model provides a framework for the prevention of offending and reoffending, and aims to achieve an effective well-designed partnership approach, which focuses on early intervention, prevention and diversion, reducing reoffending and the effective use of custody and a resettlement and reintegration process (Cordis Bright, 2017). In order to help ensure children's rights and needs, under the model, responsibility is given to the adults surrounding the children (Byrne & Case, 2016).

Labelling children and young people, who break the law, as '*young offenders'*, ignores the vulnerability and the need to protect this group of young people. By responding to them as children first, it ensures that that their needs, problems and rights are taken into account (Case, 2018; Haines & Case, 2015). The PYJ model understands offending as a normative aspect of childhood, which most children grow out of. Secondly, where necessary, diversionary programmes should be child-friendly and the focus should be on promoting positive behaviours rather than offence focused work. Thirdly, where interventions are used with young people, they should focus on positive behaviour and outcomes, and include the child in the justice intervention. Fourthly, PYJ supports the use of evidence to inform YJ through partnerships which are between children, families, youth justice professionals, academics, policy makers and politicians. These principles can only occur if they are supported and facilitated by adults

who are responsible for delivering effective youth justice for children in conflict with the law (Case, 2018; Haines & Case, 2015).

This approach is supported and recommended by a range of professional bodies; the Taylor Review (2016) refers to a new system of youth justice which views offenders as children first and offenders second. Taylor (2016) suggested that when young people offend, this should not lead to a loss of childhood. The focus should be on helping young people who offend and reoffend to improve their health, education and welfare, not just on punishment. There was a concern in the Taylor review (2016) that young people who reoffend, and who commit a high number of re-offences often face a multitude of factors, almost all of them outside the control of the justice system, therefore the YJS needs to be flexible and adaptable to the young people within it. The Welsh government strategy on young people who offend indicates a similar narrative (Case, 2018; Johns et al., 2018). Sentencing guidelines also advise courts that sentencing should be specific to a young person. They emphasise that the purpose of the YJS is to encourage children and young people to take responsibility for their behaviours and to promote rehabilitation, rather than punishment (Sentencing Council, 2017). As such, PYJ moves away from the welfare-justice debate and instead recognises the needs and rights of the child with them being treated as such and not as “mini adults within a mini-criminal justice system” (Case, 2018, p. 280).

3.7.5 Summary

This section has explored how theory is put into practice in youth justice. The concept of risk has been discussed along with methods to reduce reoffending. Diversionary methods, CBT, and trauma informed practice have all been highlighted as ways in which reoffending can be addressed, however there are limitations in the implementation of any methods introduced. Lack of motivation from staff and structural barriers are difficult to overcome for new initiatives. The risk approach has been criticised for a number of reasons; specifically it does not take account of individual differences, and does not explain why certain factors increase the risk of reoffending. Changes in youth justice have been reflected in a move towards a more positive justice, which works with children

first and their offending second. This is in addition, to the introduction of ASSET plus which has provided a more holistic framework allowing for YOT practitioners to conduct an assessment of a child that takes account of the contextual influences, and focuses on protective factors, which encourages desistance.

3.8 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This literature review has examined the previous research in the area on the factors which are associated with reoffending. The first section of the review investigated the influence of age, maturity, impulsivity, resilience and drugs on reoffending. This demonstrated that the younger a person begins offending, their levels of maturity and impulse control and substance misuse all influence on further reoffending, whereas high resilience can reduce the risk of reoffending.

The second section of review explored the relationships, which influence reoffending; there is substantive previous research which indicates that poor parental attachment and family conflict, along with negative peer groups increase the risk of reoffending. Positive and healthy relationships with friends and YOT practitioners (or other professionals) have helped young people to not reoffend. The third section of the literature review investigated the contextual factors, which have been found to be related to reoffending. When young people disengage from education they are at risk of reoffending, along with living in a deprived neighbourhood. There is also a wealth of research which demonstrates that contact with the justice system is associated with reoffending, a finding which needs to be explored in the YJS in England and Wales. Young people who are released from custody are more likely to reoffend which increases as the number of custodial orders a young person is given. The final section of the review explored how theory about risk, is translated into practice, the methods used to reduce reoffending, and reflected on the changes in the YJS with the emergence of positive youth justice and ASSET plus.

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the factors which affect young people's reoffending and the implications of any findings for practice for LYOT. This

literature review has laid the foundation for the research; by exploring the previous literature in the area, it has demonstrated several gaps. Firstly, while there are a number of factors related to reoffending (individual, relationship and contextual factors), the focus has been on assessing risk factors for offending and not on reoffending. Previous research has not explored the contribution that these each make towards reoffending and how these might differ between young people. Therefore, the previous research has demonstrated little clarity and consensus on why young people are reoffending. Secondly, the literature has highlighted that while both young people's and practitioners views have been included in some research, there is a gap in understanding how young people perceive their own reoffending, along with practitioner knowledge on reoffending and the factors that contribute. Thirdly, while trends in reoffending have been examined for adult offenders, they have not been investigated for young people, with YOT data remaining largely untouched.

Previous research has shown the impact of a criminal history, being young at first offence, having been in prison, being convicted for a violent crime, having a high level of diversity in offending and having used a weapon are associated with persistent offending demonstrating the importance of understanding offending patterns of young people (Assink et al., 2015). Understanding how a young person reoffends, in terms of the number of re-offences, the seriousness of re-offences and the type of offence committed could help YOT practitioners identify trigger points for young people. This information from practitioners, young people and YOT data has not been brought together before to provide an in-depth picture of why young people reoffend.

The evidence presented in *Chapters 2 and 3* demonstrates that the YJS has changed significantly in recent years; where there used to be high numbers of young people offending and reoffending, this has now reduced, with YOT practitioners working with a smaller cohort than previously. Young people are often diverted away from the justice system ensuring that when young people do come into contact with the justice system, they tend to have committed more serious offences. Research in the area has been conducted on the larger cohort of young people, and there is less known about young people who currently reoffend. The justice system should be able to work for both first time entrants

and reoffenders. Young people who reoffend experience contact with the system which often ensures that the cycle of offending is maintained. While the numbers of those in the YJS has reduced, reoffending increases, with those who reoffend responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, indicating that research needs to understand who the young people who reoffend are, and if a different approach to working with this group is needed.

Zara and Farrington (2016) point out that out of everyone who offends in their lifetime, some will desist without intervention while others require some support. Some of this group will reoffend once or twice while others will reoffend frequently. A small proportion of this group will have lengthy criminal careers while others will offend over a short period. It is therefore crucial to support young people early in their reoffending patterns to help prevent later prolific offending. This thesis provides an in-depth exploration of the key factors associated with reoffending provided by multiple perspectives, which give weight to the findings, and help to explore what YOTs can do to help the most vulnerable of young people. This thesis aims to explore the following overarching research question;

What factors are associated with why young people reoffend?

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research consisted of three distinct research phases: a quantitative case-file analysis of young people captured on the LYOT system, interviews with LYOT practitioners and interviews with young people involved in LYOT. This chapter will explain this methodology in more detail. The chapter then, presents the method the case-file analysis, followed by the interviews with practitioners. Lastly, the methodology for the interviews with young people is presented.

4.2 MIXED METHODS

It is argued that criminal justice research has largely been focused on quantitative research methods, which often involves data rigorously collected from questionnaires or surveys (Brent and Kraska, 2010). Using this method, the focus has been on prediction of offending, construction and generalisability of research. In contrast, qualitative research has been rarer in criminal justice, which involves data in textual form, usually from interviews or focus groups (Maruna, 2010). A third type of research design is a mixed methods approach (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods and was thought to best suit the aims and objectives of this project. The approach compensates for the weaknesses in both quantitative and qualitative approaches and serves as a method of triangulation. This is where a concept is viewed from multiple perspectives and provides a more complete picture (Denscombe, 2010). For example, quantitative research provides a general overview of a field of research while qualitative research can present a personal perspective and wider understanding (Kelle, 2006).

Whilst there is debate over how best to conduct mixed methods research, this project utilised an explanatory sequential design, where quantitative work is carried out prior to qualitative methods. The advantage of this approach was that the quantitative work explored reoffending patterns and the characteristics of those who reoffend, allowing for these findings to be discussed with those who work in the area and young people who are part of the system. The

diagram below shows the development of the project and demonstrates how each individual phase influences the next. A mixed methods design was chosen to provide a broad perspective for LYOT about reoffending in Lancashire, explored from multiple angles. The case-file analysis took place first in order to explore reoffending in Lancashire and examines the types of offences and outcomes which were associated with reoffending. This phase provided a wealth of data to LYOT about the young people who reoffend in their area. Phase 2, which involved interviewing LYOT practitioners, explored the main findings from phase 1. Although practitioner views have been included in previous research (*Section 3.4.3*) the changing nature of the YJS provided a rationale for asking practitioners about their opinions on the changes in the systems. The final phase, which consisted of interviews with young people involved in LYOT, investigated the key issues as identified in the first two phases in order to get their opinions on the research findings. This phase was designed to take place towards the end of the research, as young people are at the heart of the justice system, and their voices are key to prompting change. *Figure 5* shows the progression through the individual research phases.

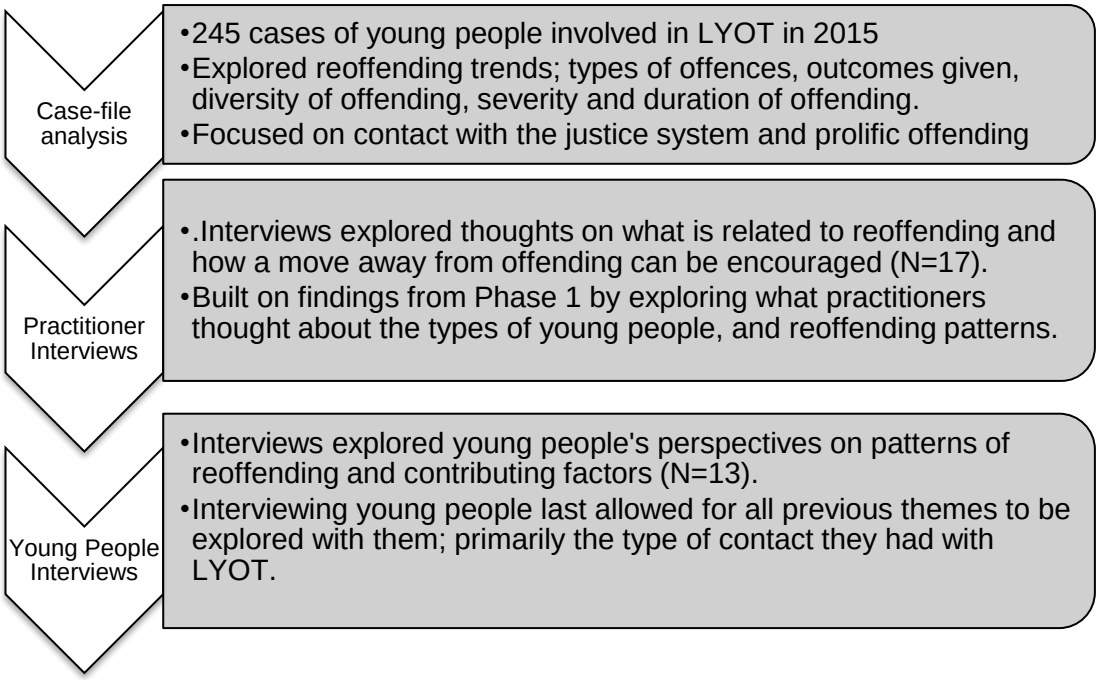

Figure 5. Progression of Research.

4.2.1 Quantitative: Secondary Data

Phase 1 of the research used secondary data already collected by LYOT. Access was granted to their data management system and the information used to explore reoffending in Lancashire. Secondary data refers to information which has already been collected and can be in the form of surveys or archival data (Gray, 2018). The primary aim of the data collected by LYOT is to keep track of the young people they work with. Their data management system includes a wealth of information relating to offences, outcomes, hearings, interventions, restorative justice, family factors and education. This data is not often used in research and therefore provides a unique opportunity to explore reoffending from a local perspective. The use of secondary data helps to provide a well-rounded exploration of a construct, in this context reoffending, and this is suited to the overall mixed methods approach for the research. Andersen, Prause and Silver (2011) argue that secondary data should be used in conjunction with other methodologies as there are some limitations to this method. The data is often complex, there is no control over data quality and as the data was not collected for research purposes, there could be an absence of key variables (Bryman, 2016). However, it is also important to note that secondary data is often high quality and allows for exploration of a larger sample than could otherwise be collected.

There are two main methods used to establish the frequency of offending: self-report data and official records. Official records of offending depend on police data and count only recorded crime and are used in this research to explore reoffending and the relationship with offending behaviour. However, as discussed in *section 2.4.2* official records may underestimate the true number of offences committed. The police only record reported crime, and not all offences or offenders are detected, and not all who are arrested are found guilty of an offence (Payne, 2007).

It is important to note when using official records of offending, the LYOT system may not include all young people who have offended within a time frame, and some offences may go unreported and therefore unrecorded. LYOT uses CareWorks, which provides a data management system to many YOTs across

England and Wales. It supports a wide range of risk assessment tools including youth offending, prevention, probation and drug and alcohol misuse (Careworks, 2018). The system includes case-files for young people involved with YOT, and includes information on their offence history, outcomes given, hearings, intervention work, restorative justice work and the family and education. The system was used for the quantitative section of the research project in order to explore reoffending behaviour of young people in Lancashire

4.2.2 Qualitative: Semi Structured Interviews

The research involved two sets of semi-structured interviews (*phases two & three*). This method was chosen as semi-structured interviews allow for consistent questions to be asked, providing the flexibility to respond and react to participants' responses. This type of interview is more commonly concerned with the *'why'* phenomenon. The questions and areas can be changed during the interview to address what is important to participants but also ensures that the same core topics are covered across interviews.

In *phase 2*, views of LYOT practitioners were sought. As this was an exploratory piece of research, it was possible that they could introduce new topics and the interviewer could respond. This was similar in the interviews with young people, and although two stages of empirical research had been conducted by this point, young people needed the opportunity and flexibility to talk about the issues that were important to them.

Semi-structured interviews are considered to be time consuming but they do provide a wealth of information, which is rich in detail (Bryman, 2016). In addition, these interviews offer the researcher the personal perspective of a field of research. This style of interviewing allows for adjustments to be made during the interview which further develops the research and adds to the knowledge base (Gray, 2018). However, interviews (and qualitative work more generally) are often considered to be subjective and the analysis is unique to the researcher. Interviews are not considered reliable as they are based on a specific context and individual (Gray, 2018). This disadvantage can be overcome by interviewing a number of participants which allows for patterns to be more easily identified.

A further concern with interviews is the required numbers for the research. Generally, qualitative samples are smaller than quantitative but there is no definitive guide regarding recommended sample size. Kvale (1996) suggested there should be a minimum of 15 participants, plus or minus ten. Furthermore, Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) conducted a systematic review of sample size in qualitative research and found that data saturation occurs after twelve participants, and after this, very few new themes are identified. Therefore, the sample size should be between twelve and twenty.

4.2.3 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a technique, which focuses on what is being said, rather than how it is being said (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The approach takes textual materials (interviews, newspapers for example) and analyses them to find key patterns in the text. The method is most commonly used for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data (Howitt, 2010). Thematic analysis can be used to summarise large amounts of data with the findings accessible to the general public. There are two main approaches to carrying out thematic analyses; an inductive or a deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Using an inductive approach, the themes are coded independently of the research question with no pre-existing ideas about the themes. By contrast, using a deductive approach allows the researcher to code for a specific research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This research used both an inductive and deductive approach, thus allowing for some pre-existing themes from the literature to be mapped on the data, but with the flexibility for new themes to emerge.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested six guidelines of how to conduct thematic analysis, which this research adheres to. The first phase is familiarisation with the data, which includes the transcribing of data, reading and re-reading the data and noting down any initial ideas. The second phase requires the researcher to generate some initial codes, which involves finding interesting features of the data in a systematic method. The third phase identifies potential topics and collates data into themes. Step four is where the researcher reviews

the themes, a process which involves checking and re-checking the data for its relevance. The fifth phase is defining and naming the themes, which is an on-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the story that the analysis tells. The last step is where the researcher produces the report, which involves the final opportunity for analysis. This is written up and explained using quotes direct from the data. It is important to note that these guidelines need to be applied with flexibility to ensure thematic analysis is not a linear process.

There are on-going debates on the place of reliability and validity in qualitative research (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman & Marteau, 1997). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) point out that qualitative analysis is affected by a researcher's own personal perspective which is influenced by cultural, environmental and other contextual factors. However, in order for qualitative research to have an impact, there must be consistency, trust and confidence in the research findings (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). Researchers have therefore employed techniques to establish the consistency of findings, one of which is inter-rater reliability – a process by which thematic codes created from analysis of interview data are checked by a second person. This is the degree to which evaluators make consistent judgements of the same data (Multon & Coleman, 2018). As this research was intended to influence LYOT practice, it was important to ensure that there was consistency across the findings from the interviews. Therefore, a member of the research staff in the Policing Department at UCLan coded the interviews, along with the lead researcher. The scores from the inter-rater reliability will be discussed in more detail in *section 4.4.7* and *section 4.5.7*.

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4.3 PHASE 1: EXPLORATORY CASE-FILE ANALYSIS

4.3.1 Aim

The main aim of this phase of research was to answer the following research question:

How can YOT data explain what influences reoffending by young people?

This first phase of research provides a record of the reoffending in Lancashire and the level of frequency to establish offending trends. By understanding these trends, tailored responses can be designed to support young people. Previous literature has demonstrated that contact with the justice system is associated with reoffending, therefore this was investigated in the dataset. Prolific offending (where young people commit a high number of re-offences) was also explored to provide evidence of if a small group of young people were disproportionately responsible for reoffending. This phase sets out the broader context of reoffending by looking at the key issues, by analysing the data held by LYOT in order to inform them about themes associated with reoffending and how this can be addressed.

4.3.2 Design

Originally, this case-file analysis was planned to replicate the official reoffending measure as published by the YJB and MoJ (MoJ, 2018a). However, due to the complex nature of the measure, and the variety of sources needed to generate the measure, this was not possible to replicate. The data required for measuring proven reoffending comes from a range of sources; prison data, probation data, secure accommodation data and criminal records from the PNC. A number of agencies are involved in the production of this data: the National Offending Management Service, YJB, local authorities and the National Police Improvement Agency (Ministry of Justice, 2018a). It was not possible for the researcher to gain access to all of these data sources due to time constraints and ethical considerations; therefore, the decision was taken to use the data that LYOT held, allowing LYOT to monitor this once the research was completed. To ensure that the data was meaningful for LYOT, a cohort of young people were chosen, with their offending history focusing primarily on the period between the first recorded offence and the first recorded re-offence. Therefore, the case-file analysis consisted of a cohort of young people involved with LYOT during 2015. Access to the LYOT data system, CareWorks, was granted and the relevant data was coded for analysis. Based on the findings from the previous research (*Section 3.5.3 & Section 3.6.1*) two key areas were explored in this phase; contact with YOT and prolific offending.

4.3.3 Sample

The main sample included 245 young people who had received an outcome, either at court or from the police in 2015 and were recorded on the LYOT database. The year 2015 was chosen as the index year as it was the most recent year with data available at the time of collection. 87.8% of the sample were male and 12.2% were female, with the majority from a white background (93.1%) and 6.9% from an 'other' background. 41.6% of the young people came from the South/Central based team with 30.2% from the North team and 28.2% from the East team. The average age at the time of first recorded offence was 12.94 (*SD*= 2.02), with ages ranging between 10 and 17. For the first re-offence, the average age was 13.75 (*SD*=1.83), with an age range between 10 and 17.

4.3.4 Procedure

A spread sheet, which contained the details of young people who received an outcome between January and December 2015, was created. A total of 1001 outcomes were recorded during this time period relating to 245 young people, as some young people received multiple outcomes. Using the name of the young person, their case file was retrieved from LYOT CareWorks database. The researcher was granted access to CareWorks for the duration of the research project and received training on the database. CareWorks contains details on the offences, outcomes, intervention work, family, education, health and behaviour for young people who are supervised by LYOT.

For the purposes of the study, only demographic, offence and outcome related information was recorded. Details about these were recorded on an Excel spread sheet, and then transferred to SPSS for statistical analysis to be conducted. All offences and outcomes received for each young person were recorded from the point of their first offence until April 2017. This allowed for an in-depth exploration of young peoples' reoffending trajectories. Information about the first recorded offence and the first re-offence were coded along with the frequencies and types of offending and outcomes received prior to 2015, during 2015 and following 2015.

4.3.5 Ethical Considerations

The UCLan ethics board granted approval for the research along with LYOT who also gave their permission (*Appendix 2 & Appendix* 3). To ensure anonymity of the young people, their case files were assigned a participant number. A master copy which was password protected was created in case further information was required from the case files. The project fulfilled the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

4.3.6 Analytical Procedure

Descriptive statistics (total, means, and standard deviations) were produced using SPSS and graphs were created using Microsoft Excel. Due to the diversity in the types of variables in the data, different statistical analysis techniques were conducted. Normality tests were conducted for each variable and consequently the most appropriate parametric or non-parametric test was used. Differences between the grouping variables and type of offences and outcomes were explored using chi-square tests. Spearman's rho correlations were used to investigate the relationship between scale variables. Mann Whitney U tests, or independent t-tests were conducted for continuous or interval data. Kruskall-Wallis tests were also used where data was non-parametric and there were more than two groups. Cohen's d (*d*) effect size statistics were presented for continuous and ordinal variables. Eta-squared effect sizes were presented for Kruskall-Wallis tests, and Cramer V was used for chi-square tests.

4.3.7 Coding

The initial coding recorded 60 variables for each young person and were included in SPSS (full list in *Appendix 4*). The following section details the specifics of the coding variables. *Table 3* presents the coding information for the demographic variables, which were collected.

Table 3. Demographic Coding Information.

Variable	Explanation
Gender	Gender was recorded for each young person as male or female. This was then converted into numerical figures for the data analysis.
Date of Birth	The date of birth for each participant was recorded from the information on CareWorks. This was used to calculate the ages of young person at particular time points in the dataset.
Ethnicity	This category originally had three categories; *any white background*, *any mixed background* and *other*. Due to the numbers of those in the *other* category, this variable was compiled into two categories; *any white background and* any *other background*.
Area of Lancashire	The team which young people were involved with was recorded in the dataset. LYOT is split into three teams: South/Central, North and East team. This was then converted into numerical figures for the data analysis.

4.3.8 Core Area 1: Contact with YOT

This variable was dependent on the type of outcome young people received for their first offence; contact with YOT or non-YOT contact. This was information gained from discussion with LYOT. *Table 4* provides a breakdown of the outcomes, which were included in each group. These groupings were used to explore the association between contact with the system and reoffending. This variable was coded as a categorical variable with 1 or 2 representing the groups.

Table 4. Outcomes by Contact Group.

YOT Contact	Non-YOT Contact
Detention and Training Order (DTO)	Victim Surcharge
Section 90-92 Custodial	Withdrawn/Dismissed
Young Offenders Institution (YOI)	Diversionary/Triage
Licence Recall	Conditional Discharge
Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO)	Costs
Youth Referral Order	Fine
Reparation Order	Discontinued
Youth Caution (YC)	Compensation Order
Youth Conditional Caution (YCC)	Adult Community Order
Final Warning	Absolute Discharge
Police Reprimand	
Referral Order Extension	
Youth Rehabilitation Order with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (YRO- ISS)	
Order Related (revoked, continued, varied)	

4.3.9 Core Area 2: Prolific Offending

This was based on previous research by the YJB Cymru (2012) and John et al. (2018) who identified prolific young people as those who had committed 25+ offences at the point of the index year (by 2009) and who had reoffended the following year. This definition was used in the current study, although due to the nature of the dataset, all young people who met the criteria for prolific offending had re-offended in the following year. Young people who had offended 25 times or whose 25th offence was the 2015 offence, were classed in the prolific offender group.

4.3.10 Onset Age

The onset age groupings were pre-determined by the previous literature in the area, with early onset young people defined as those who offended before 14 years old and late onset who have an onset age of 14 or older (Baker, et al., 2013, Kennedy et al., 2018; Piquero, et al., 2007). In the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development, Piquero et al. (2007) found that the most common age for onset of criminality was 14, and that those who started to offend in early adolescence were more likely to have negative criminal outcomes. Similarly, Baker et al. (2013), used the age of 14 to denote early and late onset, to test

the theoretical arguments proposed by Moffitt (1993), and to address the confounding effects of age of onset. Therefore, this research categorised early onset as any offence committed aged 13 or younger, whilst late onset related to young people who committed their first offence aged 14 or older. By distinguishing onset in this way, rather than as a scale variable, the theoretical arguments proposed by Moffitt (1993) and others could be explored more consistently.

4.3.11 Time Points

There were two main time points in the dataset: the first recorded offence and the first re-offence. At both of these time points, the age of young person, the type of offence, type of outcome received, gravity of offence and if multiple offences or outcomes occurred at the same time were recorded.

4.3.12 Reoffending

A young person was deemed to have reoffended if they had a re-offence recorded. A young person who committed multiple offences at the same time would not be classed as reoffending. Therefore, the first re-offence refers to the next incident of offending.

The second measure of reoffending examined the total number of offences that a young person had committed in the time period. This was created by summing the number of offences committed pre-2015, in 2015 and post 2015 which generated a chronicity of offending score for each young person.

4.3.13 Types of Offences

The type of offence committed was documented for the first recorded offence and for the first re-offence. In addition, the types of offences and frequency was recorded pre-2015, in 2015 and post 2015. This created a total number of offences in each category. Based on research by Almond, McManus, Worsley and Gregory (2015), and Coleman (2016), fifteen offence categories were used along with six offence categories which were specific to the cohort: arson, burglary, criminal damage, criminal justice matters, driving, drug supply, drug

possession, weapon, kidnap, miscellaneous, assault/obstruct a constable in the execution of their duty. In addition to: fraud, robbery, sexual contact, sexual threat, theft, vehicle related offence, violent contact, violent threat, affray and racially aggravated offences. Offences were recorded on CareWorks if the police or courts had notified LYOT, therefore the offences were reflective of arrest or an outcome at court-level.

In order to conduct meaningful statistical analysis on the data, some categories were amalgamated. Within the dataset, there were only two offences in the sexual threat category and both referred to the making and distributing of indecent images. The sexual threat and sexual contact offence categories were therefore combined. There was a similar process for drug offences as the number of drug-supply offences were too low in frequency for any statistical analysis, therefore both the drug supply and possession categories were coupled together. Affray, defined as a person using or threatening to use unlawful violence was joined together with the violent threat category. There were 19 instances of fraud in the dataset, which was too low a frequency to conduct any meaningful statistical analysis, the category therefore was combined with the miscellaneous category. Although there were relatively low numbers in both the arson and kidnap offence categories, these were left separate, as the seriousness of these offences were vastly different to those in the other categories. The motivation for both of these offences was also considered different to the other offence categories (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2007). After this amalgamation, there were 17 categories included in the dataset (*Table 5).*

Table 5. Offence Categories

Offence Category	Offences Explanation
Arson	Arson
Burglary	Burglary, dwelling burglary non-dwelling, house-breaking, school-breaking, shop-breaking, including attempts
Criminal Damage	Criminal damage, damage to property and threats to damage property,
Criminal Justice Matters	Breach of orders, contempt, perverting course of justice
Driving	Minor road traffic offences, driving whilst unfit through drink/drugs, driving whilst disqualified, no insurance, no driving licence, failure to provide breath specimen, reckless driving
Drug Offences	Possession, supply or intent to supply class A, B and C drugs.
Weapon	Possession of a firearm, ammunition or bladed/pointed article, possession of a fighting dog.
Kidnap	Kidnap or false imprisonment
Miscellaneous	Drunk and disorderly, trespass, travel on a railway (no fare), wasteful employment of police time.
Assault/Obstruct a constable in the execution of their duty	Assault or obstruct a constable in the execution of their duty.
Robbery	Robbery including attempts
Sexual Offences	Gross indecency, indecent assault, rape, buggery, including attempts, indecent exposure, possession of indecent/obscene material, outraging public decency
Theft & Handling	Offences of deception, theft and handling, theft, handling, going equipped
Vehicle Related Offences	Theft of and from a vehicle, interfering with vehicle
Violence- Contact	Assaultive crimes, common assault, ABH, GBH, wounding, battery, murder
Violence- Threat	Violent disorder, affray, using threatening, abusive, insulting words or behaviour, blackmail
Racially Aggravated Offences	Any racially aggravated offences

4.3.14 Types of Outcomes

The type of outcome received was recorded for both the first recorded offence and for the first re-offence. As well as this information, the type of outcome and frequency was recorded pre-2015, in 2015 and post 2015. This was also used to create a total outcome score. There were eleven possible outcome categories that a young person could receive, and these are detailed in *Table 6*. At the time of coding, detention and training orders and Section 90-92 custodial sentences were recorded but the frequency of these outcomes were too low which led to a custody outcome category being amalgamated.

Table 6. Outcome Categories

Type of Outcome	Outcome Explanation
Diversionary/Triage	Whereby low-level criminal behaviour is dealt with via an appropriate diversion away from the YJS. Can include multi-agency support or additional educational support.
Caution	An alternative to more formal prosecution. Can include certain conditions the young person needs to meet.
Police Reprimand	The scheme finished in 2013 but was a formal warning given by the police for a first minor offence.
Final Warning	Introduced in 2000 and provided a warning to young people. Ensured the young person worked with local YOT on an intervention programme.
Referral Order	Used when a young person pleads guilty and has no other previous convictions. Can last between 3 and 12 months.
Reparation Order	Focuses on young people making amends for their offending through reparation work, which may include the victim's input.
Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO)	Standard generic community sentence for young people. A choice of many interventions such as education, curfew and on a programme intervention.
Youth Rehabilitation Order with ISS (YRO-ISS)	The same as a YRO but with an added element of intensive supervision and surveillance.
Custody	Any custodial sentence given including DTOs and Section 90-92 outcomes.
Order Related	Any outcome related to the continuation of an order or where an order is revoked.
Other	Includes all other outcomes; fines, conditional discharge, costs, compensation order, withdrawn/dismissed or victim surcharge.
Licence Recall	A young person has broken the terms of their licence and is recalled to custody.

4.3.15 Severity

There was one main measure of severity, total severity score. The total severity score was calculated for each young person and was based on the type of offences they had committed overall. These scores were created by firstly calculating an average seriousness score for each offence category. This was based on the gravity score associated with each offence, which were from the YJB pre-set scores (YJB, 2010; 2016b). An average was calculated at the time of first offence; all offences committed in each category were used to create the average score. This score was then multiplied by the number of offences in each category and summed to create a total severity score. Therefore, in the analysis, gravity refers to the individual scores given to each offence whereas severity refers to the overall seriousness of offending (see *4.3.16 for* gravity explanation). *Table 7* presents the average gravity scores for each of the offence categories. If an offence category did not occur at the time of the first offence, the gravity score at the time of the re-offence was used.

Table 7. Average Gravity for Offence Categories.

Offence Category	Average Gravity at 1st Offence
Kidnap Offences	7
Robbery	6
Arson	5
Burglary	4.95
Sexual Offences	4.5
Criminal Justice Matters	4
Vehicle Related Offences	3.83
Violence- Contact	3.20
Obstruct/Assault a Constable	3
Racially Aggravated Offences	3
Weapon Offences	2.86
Drug Offences	2.6
Violence- Threat	2.42
Theft & Handling	2.30
Criminal Damage	2.11
Driving	2
Miscellaneous	1.89

4.3.16 Gravity

The gravity of offence was recorded at each time point. Gravity refers to the seriousness of an individual offence, whereas the severity score is the total severity score for each young person and is based on all offences committed (*Section 4.3.15*). Gravity ranged from 0 (least serious) to 8 (most serious) and the scorings were taking from the CareWorks system. These scores have been pre-set by the YJB (2013b: 2010). This was analysed across each of the core areas. Gravity scores varied by offence type although some offences spanned multiple gravity scores depending on the nature of the offence (*Table 8*).

Table 8. Gravity Score for Offences.

Gravity Score	Offences in the dataset
1	Drunk and disorderly, wasteful employment of police time
2	Violent threat, criminal damage, motoring offences, trespass
3	Theft and handling, possession of an offensive weapon, non-domestic burglary, vehicle theft, violent contact offences
4	Breach of statutory order, affray, non-domestic burglary, violent contact and violent threat offences
5	Aggravated vehicle taking, indecent sexual assault, arson, possession of a firearm, domestic burglary, intimidating a witness
6	Drugs- supply, violent contact, domestic burglary, robbery, inflicting GBH
7	False imprisonment, violent contact S18, aggravated burglary, kidnap
8	Rape, child destruction

4.3.17 Diversity

In order to establish the specialisation and versatility of offending within the sample, the number of offence categories which each young person offended in was recorded. There were seventeen offence categories and all categories were present in the dataset.

4.3.18 Duration of Offending

The first and last year of offending was recorded for each young person. A duration of offending variable was created by subtracting the first year of offending from the last year of offending which led to a duration of offending behaviour in years. It is important to note that due to the type of data, the offending start point varied for each young person. Although all young people

received an outcome in 2015, their offending could have started many years prior. Therefore, any totals which cover the time-period are not uniquely comparable across young people.

4.4 PHASE 2: INTERVIEWS WITH PRACTITIONERS

The second phase explores how LYOT practitioners understand the young people they work with. It explores their knowledge of youth offending and how they use that knowledge to tailor responses to reduce offending.

4.4.1 Aim

The main aim of the interviews with LYOT practitioners was to explore their opinions on why some of their clients reoffend more than others. This phase of research aimed to specifically answer the following question:

> *What factors do YOT practitioners consider to be associated with reoffending?*

4.4.2 Design

Interviews were semi-structured and covered four main areas: YOT processes, reoffending, desistance and the type of young person practitioners work with (*Appendix 5*). Questions were developed from the PhD aims and the research questions to explore why practitioners thought young people reoffend. This aimed to explore what LYOT practitioners understand about reoffending and built on the findings from the first phase, which found that contact with the system was related to further offending. Questions therefore focused on practitioners' perceptions on why young people reoffend, as well as exploring their opinion on the reoffending measure (*Section 2.4.1*). The questions then covered what practitioners' thought was related to reoffending, to help provide an in-depth perspective of the key factors that play a role. The literature review (*Chapter Three*) highlighted a number of factors which play a role in reoffending, and interviews with the practitioners explored these. Practitioners were also asked about what they thought would encourage desistance from crime, to help demonstrate a link between what contributes towards reoffending and how offending can be reduced. Due to the previous literature exploring the

type of offences young people commit, questions about changes in offence type were included. There has been limited research on what types of offences young people commit and if they change their offending type as they reoffend. Practitioners were also asked whether they thought young people were more challenging to work with now compared to recent years. Example questions included *"why do you think some young people reoffend?"* and *"would you say that the type of offenders you work with has changed from previous years?".*

4.4.3 Participants

All practitioners who worked within LYOT were invited to take part in the research but due to operational reasons, only seventeen practitioners were able to contribute to the study. Practitioners interviewed worked across a range of disciplines including police, probation, social work, mental health, education, physical health, safeguarding, addiction and YOT staff (*Table 9*). A practice manager and team manager also took part in the interviews.

Table 9. Job Roles of Practitioners.

Role	**N**
Management	2 (11.76**%**)
Probation Worker	2 (11.76**%**)
Police	1 (5.88**%**)
Mental Health Worker	2 (11.76**%**)
Education Worker	1 (5.88**%**)
Physical Health	1 (5.88**%**)
YOT Worker	1 (5.88**%**)
Social Worker	7 (41.18**%**)

The study utilised an opportunistic sampling technique with recruitment emails sent to all team managers, who then passed the information onto their team members. Team members then got in touch with the researcher to arrange a suitable date and time for the interviews to take place. Aside from the two managers, all participants worked closely with young people.

4.4.4 Procedure

Interviews took place in Lancashire County Council premises across the county, at locations in Preston, Burnley and Lancaster. Practitioners were asked to sign a consent form (*Appendix 6*), which reminded them about their right to withdraw

and about the anonymity of their answers. Participants were also given an information sheet, which explained what the research was about (*Appendix 7*). With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio recorded. Interviews lasted between ten minutes and one hour. On completion of the interview, a debrief form was given out reminding participants that they could withdraw using the details provided. The same researcher carried out all seventeen interviews.

4.4.5 Equipment and Materials

All interviews were audio recorded using a digital Dictaphone and transcribed at a later date. Interviews were transcribed using NVivo and only spoken words were recorded. No overlaps or pauses were recorded. An interview script was used for the interviews which ensured that all topics were covered (*Appendix 5*). This covered questions on the practitioners' experience of working with young people who offend as well as more general questions on what they thought was related to reoffending.

4.4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the UCLan ethics board (*Appendix* 8. Participants received a copy of the information sheet before they took part in the interviews as well as a copy of the consent form. The consent form detailed out the procedure for the research and the withdrawal process. The information sheet provided a more detailed explanation about the aims of the research and why the practitioners were asked to take part. This included information about their right to withdraw and the procedure. The LYOT management team also approved the research (*Appendix 9*).

4.4.7 Inter-Rater Reliability

To ensure consistency and that the interviews were objectively coded, a member of the UCLan policing team conducted the inter-rater reliability coding on 23% of the interviews. Inter-rater reliability is the process by which transcripts are analysed by a second individual to establish if similar themes are identified. This involved the following process;

1. Lead researcher analysed interviews and identified themes
2. A second rater then reviewed a sample of interviews (23.5%) along with the list of themes from the lead researcher's analysis.
3. The lead researcher and second rater then discussed the coding

The second rater did not create any new variables during their coding. Out of a possible 68 ratings, there was agreement in 85% of the cases. This was calculated using the 17 sub-themes across four interviews. The high similarity between the second coder and the researcher ensured that the themes were consistent and therefore no actions were taken as a result of the inter-rater process.

4.5 PHASE 3: INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

4.5.1 Aim

The main aim of this phase of research was to explore young peoples' perceptions on their reoffending behaviour and what they thought contributed to reoffending. The phase explores young people's perspective to understand how they see patterns of offending and how they think reoffending can be reduced. It sought to explicitly answer the following research question:

What factors do young people involved with LYOT perceive to be associated with their reoffending?

4.5.2 Design

Similar to the practitioner interviews, the interviews with young people used a semi-structured design. An interview schedule was created and focused on three areas: first referral experience, current referral and the general behaviour of young people (*Appendix 10*). The interview questions were developed based on the findings from the previous phases. For example, phase 1 outlined that contact with the justice system was a significant factor in reoffending, along with young people who become stuck in the system as prolific offenders. Young people were therefore asked about their contact with the justice system, what sort of work they carried out with their YOT worker as well as why they thought some young people continued to reoffend. Example questions included *"Do you*

think your YOT experience has changed as you've had more contact with them?" and *"What sort of work do you do with your YOT worker and what impact has it had?".* In phase 2, the practitioners identified a range of factors, which they considered to be related to reoffending, therefore young people were asked their opinions about these factors. Questions on these included *"Do you think drugs or alcohol played a role in why you are working with YOT?"* and *"What people or relationships are important in your life? Do they have an impact on you staying out of trouble?".* The interview structure also allowed for young people to talk about areas that they thought were important, and that had not been identified in earlier themes. Therefore, other questions allowed for discussion on what other factors explained reoffending and if anything could have prevented the young person from offending. Example questions included *"Is there anything else, which you think plays a role in why young people reoffend?"* and *"In an ideal world, what would have stopped you from offending in the first place?".* In order to ensure that the questions were appropriately worded, substantial discussions with LYOT practitioners took place prior to the questions being finalised. The semi-structured design allowed for consistency across interviews but also for flexibility to respond to answers.

4.5.3 Participants

Thirteen young people took part in the interviews and were either currently involved with LYOT or had finished their work with the YOT team within the last six months. There was a mix of young people who were first time LYOT entrants (*N*=5) and repeat clients (*N*=8). First time entrants were included in the dataset in order to explore their opinions on reoffending and if they thought they were likely to return to working with LYOT.

The young people involved in the research had committed a range of offences, which had led to their current referral, these varied from criminal damage offences to more serious weapon offences (*Table 10*). Violent contact offences were a common offence category with the young people. The unknown category refers to three repeat offenders who did not share the reason for their current referral; they did however talk about previous offences that they had

committed. It was important that the young person wanted to take part in the research and was able to communicate their views verbally.

Table 10. Offence Type by Young People.

Offence	N
Criminal Damage	1 (7.69%)
Weapon Offences	2 (15.38%)
Violent Contact Offences	3 (23.08%)
Vehicle Related Offences	1 (7.69%)
Drug Offences	1 (7.69%)
Burglary Offences	1 (7.69%)
Sexual Offences	1 (7.69%)
Unknown	3 (23.08%)

4.5.4 Procedure

The study used an opportunist sampling method where LYOT practitioners were informed about the research and asked to consider which young people might be suitable. They were provided with an information sheet, which explained the aims of the research and the reasons why young people were being recruited to participate in an interview (*Appendix 11*). Practitioners then approached the young people they worked with, and then contacted the lead researcher if the young person wanted to participate in the research. When a young person was interested in taking part, practitioners were provided with legal guardian consent forms which needed to be completed if the young person was under the age of 18 (*Appendix 12)*. For a young person in care, their social worker completed the form. Once the legal guardian consent form was completed, a suitable date and time was arranged with the young person and the YOT worker.

All interviews were conducted on Lancashire County Council premises. Two researchers (the lead researcher and a member of the Policing Team at UCLan) were present for the interviews but the lead researcher conducted the interviews. The young people had the option of their YOT worker staying for the interview, which nine young people (69.23%) preferred, compared to four young people (30.77%) who spoke to the interviewers alone. At the start of the interview, the research was verbally explained to them, and young people were asked to give their written assent to the project (*Appendix 13*). Young people were reminded about their right to withdraw from the research without any

negative consequences. Young people were asked for permission to audio record them, and this was granted on ten occasions. Notes were written by the second interviewer for the three young people who did not want to be recorded. At the end of the interview, participants were given a debrief sheet which explained the research and contained two helpline numbers. Young people were also given a £10 Love to Shop voucher as a thank you for taking part. The debrief form reminded young people about their right to withdraw before the end of 2017 (*Appendix 14*). After that, the interviews were anonymised and analysed.

4.5.5 Equipment and Materials

Interviews were recorded using digital Dictaphone and transcribed at a later date. Interviews were transcribed verbatim where pauses and overlaps were not recorded. NVivo was used to analyse the interviews. Notes were taken when young people did not want to be audio recorded and these were used in the analysis. The interview script included questions on what young people thought had contributed to their offending and any reoffending as well about their experience of working with LYOT.

4.5.6 Ethical Considerations

Research involving children and young people is faced with a variety of ethical challenges, and although these are often similar when working with other population groups, they take extra importance when working with children and young people (Einarsdottir, 2007). For this phase of research, extensive discussions with LYOT practitioners took place to ensure that the interview questions were suitably worded and would not cause any distress to the young person. Young people were given the option of having their YOT worker sit in on the interviews to make them more comfortable. Nine young people chose for their YOT worker to sit on the interviews, whereas four young people were comfortable to talk to the interviewers alone.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) supports the use of incentives for studies involving children and young people, and vouchers were given on the completion of the interview (NSPCC, 2012).

This was to thank young people for their time and this was provided regardless of if any young person withdrew from the research. Furthermore, the disclosure of any unknown offending was a potential challenge, which needed to be addressed prior to conducting the research. Young people who took part in the interviews had been charged with a criminal offence but there was a risk of other unknown offending being disclosed. Young people were reminded at the start of the interview about what would happen if any offending was disclosed. Discussion with the case manager and senior management at UCLan would take place and a decision would be taken on reporting the offending. Ethical approval was granted from UCLan's ethics board as well from LYOT management board (*Appendix 15 & Appendix 16*).

4.5.7 Inter-Rater Reliability

Similar to phase 2, inter-rate reliability was used for the interviews with young people. This followed the same process as the previous phase (*Section 4.4.7*). There were 30 ratings included in this analysis (10 sub themes across three interviews) with agreement in 86% of the cases. This was calculated comparing the number of sub-themes identified, and where there was agreement or disagreement. As a result of the high degree of similarity between the coding, no changes were made to the themes.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the three empirical phases of the PhD. As presented in section 3.8, the main aim of this thesis was to answer this research question:

What factors are associated with why young people reoffend?

By using a mixed methods approach, the thesis provides a multi-dimensional view on what factors are related to reoffending. Each phase was designed to answer key research questions;

Phase 1: *What factors does YOT data suggest are associated with reoffending?*

Phase 2: *What factors do YOT practitioners consider to be associated with reoffending?*

Phase 3: *What factors do young people involved with LYOT consider to be associated with reoffending?*

The chapter will explore the results from the interviews with practitioners, followed by the LYOT case-file analysis and lastly the interviews with young people. Each section will present the main findings along with a summary of the results.

5.2 PHASE 1: CASE-FILE ANALYSIS

The first phase presents the quantitative data on offending by young people in Lancashire, and provides a verifiable account as to the current pattern of offending in Lancashire. By understanding these trends, more tailored interventions can be provided. This phase therefore aimed to answer the following research question:

What factors does YOT data suggest are associated with reoffending?

The phase included all 245 young people who received an outcome (either at court or from the police) in 2015 and were recorded on the LYOT system. Offending data was retrospectively gathered from CareWorks to explore the first

offence and first re-offence for all young people in the dataset. A descriptive section is provided first, followed by exploring contact with the system and prolific offending. As there is extensive literature on the impact of age on offending trajectories, the age of onset is explored as a key area in the *appendix 17*. This is presented in the appendix, as it was not highlighted by the practitioners as being a key issue during the interviews. In addition, further analysis was conducted on the severity of offending (in isolation), but this is also presented in the appendix (*appendix 18*). The severity of offending related to contact with the system and prolific offending is covered in the following sections. The section is split into two key divisions and explores contact with the system and prolific offending. A descriptive section is also presented, highlighting the relevant demographic information about the variables.

Each section explores the effect of the variable on the type of offence committed, outcome given, reoffending measure, diversity and duration of offending. Chi-square tests were used to analyse categorical data and Cochran's Rule (1954) was followed. Where contingency tables had less than five expected counts, these categories were removed from the analysis. Fisher's Exact Test was conducted where expected cell frequencies were less than five but greater than one (Field, 2013). Expected frequencies under one were not included in any analysis and were not considered to be meaningful.

This result section is divided into key themes and a descriptive section. The demographic section is presented first followed by contact with YOT and prolific offending.

5.2.1 Demographic Information

The following sections (*5.2.1.2- 5.2.1.11)* provides an overview of the dataset and will examine the type of offence committed for the first and first re-offence. The type of outcome given at these two-time points is also explored. The reoffending statistics for this dataset are presented along with the diversity and duration of offending. By exploring demographic factors, a holistic understanding of who comes into contact with LYOT can be gained.

5.2.1.1 Age at First Offence and First Re-offence

The average age at the time of first recorded offence was 12.94 (*SD*= 2.02), with ages between 10 and 17. For the first re-offence, the average age was 13.75 (*SD*=1.83), with ages between 10 and 17.

5.2.1.2 Type of First Offence

The majority of offences committed for a first offence were property offences (*N*=119, 48.6%), followed by violent (*N*=90, 36.7%) and other offences (*N*= 36, 14.7%). There were no drug offences indicated for the first offence. A breakdown of the offences in each of the specific categories is provided in *Table 11*. Violent contact offences were the most common type of offence committed. The categories were also combined into violent, property and other offences, and from this breakdown, there were more property offences for a first offence.

Table 11. Types of Offences Committed for a First Offence.

	N	***%***
Violent- Contact	55	22.4
Criminal Damage	53	21.6
Theft and Handling	43	17.6
Burglary	20	8.2
Violent- Threat	19	7.8
Miscellaneous Offences	16	6.5
Vehicle Related Offences	12	4.9
Weapon Offences	7	2.9
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	6	2.4
Driving Offences	5	2
Arson Offences	3	1.2
Sexual Offences	3	1.2
Racially Aggravated Offences	2	.8
Robbery Offences	1	.4

5.2.1.3 Type of First Re-offence

The most common first re-offence committed was a property offence (*N*=98, 40%), followed by violent offences (*N*= 86, 35.1%) and other (*N*=32, 14.8%). No drug offences were committed for the first re-offence. Similar, to the first offence, violent contact offences were the most common type of offence committed for the first re-offence, followed by theft and handling and criminal

damage (*Table 12*). A sample of young people did not commit a re-offence (11.84%, *N*=29) and are therefore not included in the offence category breakdown presented in *Table 12*.

Table 12. Type of First Re-offence.

	N	***%***
Violent- Contact	*56*	*22.9*
Theft & Handling	*35*	*14.3*
Criminal Damage	*34*	*13.9*
Burglary Offences	*26*	*10.6*
Violent- Threat	*14*	*5.7*
Vehicle Related Offences	*12*	*4.9*
Miscellaneous Offences	*8*	*3.3*
Drug Offences	*5*	*2*
Robbery Offences	*5*	*2*
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	*4*	*1.6*
Racially Aggravated Offences	*4*	*1.6*
Arson Offences	*3*	*1.2*
Weapon Offences	*3*	*1.2*
Sexual Offences	*3*	*1.2*
Criminal Justice Matters	*2*	*.8*
Driving Offences	*2*	*.8*

5.2.1.4 Total Offences in Categories

Across the offending period (*Section 4.3.11)* the criminal justice matters category (breach of bail, breach of statutory order) had the highest number of offences (*N*=1121, 27.69%), with violent contact offences (*N*=532, 12.92%) the second highest. Theft and handling (*N*= 504, 12.45%) offences were the third highest (*Table 13*). Table 13 provides a breakdown of the total offences committed in each category as well as the numbers of young people who committed offences in each category. The largest discrepancy between the numbers of offences and young people is in the criminal justice matters category where 1121 offences were committed, by 131 individuals. This suggests that young people are being repeatedly breached for non-compliance of orders. By contrast, in the arson and kidnap categories, there is an equal number of offences by young people suggesting that individuals do not reoffend in these categories.

Table 13. Offence Category by Young Person.

Type of Offence	N of Offences	N of YP	Range	*M*	*Mdn*
Criminal Justice Matters	1121	131	1-41	8.56	5
Violent- Contact	523	159	1-29	3.29	2
Theft & Handling	504	147	1-24	3.43	2
Criminal Damage	470	154	1-17	3.05	2
Burglary Offences	254	104	1-12	2.44	1
Violent- Threat	235	112	1-7	2.10	2
Vehicle Related Offences	209	87	1-11	2.40	2
Driving Offences	202	46	1-16	4.39	3
Miscellaneous Offences	157	84	1-7	1.87	1
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	100	57	1-7	1.75	1
Weapon Offences	79	50	1-6	1.58	1
Drug Offences	70	43	1-6	1.63	1
Robbery Offences	45	31	1-3	1.45	1
Racially Aggravated Offences	37	28	1-4	1.32	1
Sexual Offences	25	14	1-6	1.79	1
Arson Offences	14	14	N/A	1	1
Kidnap Offences	3	3	N/A	1	1

5.2.1.5 Type of Outcome for First Offence

The most common type of outcome given for a first offence was a police reprimand (*N*= 87, 35.5%), followed by final warnings and diversionary methods. *Table 14* provides a breakdown of the different types of outcomes given for the first offence. The outcomes which are covered by the 'other' category are presented in the method *(Section 4.3.13)* As Table 14 shows, only one young person was given a custodial sentence for their first offence, with cautions also used less frequently. Seven (2.8%) young people had no outcome recorded for their first offence and are not included in the outcome breakdown in *Table 14*.

Table 14. Type of First Outcome Received.

	N	***%***
Police Reprimand	87	35.5
Final Warning	35	14.3
Diversionary/Triage	33	13.5
Referral Order	33	13.5
Other	26	10.6
Caution	23	9.4
Custody	1	0.4.

5.2.1.6 Type of Outcome for First Re-offence

Referral orders were the most common type of outcome given for a first re-offence (*Table 15*). This was followed by final warnings and 'other outcomes' (such as fines and compensation charges). As *Table 15* shows, custodial sentences were the least common outcome given for a first re-offence, with order related and YROs also given rarely. Five (2%) young people did not have an outcome recorded or had not received their outcome at the time of coding for the re-offence and are not included in the *Table 15*.

Table 15. Type of Outcome for First Re-offence.

	N	***%***
Referral Order	75	30.6
Final Warning	38	15.5
Other	28	11.4
Caution	25	10.2
Diversionary/Triage	15	6.1
Police Reprimand	11	4.5
YRO	10	4.1
Order Related	6	2.4
Custody	3	1.2

*This does not include young people who did not reoffend (N=29, 11.84%).

5.2.1.7 Total Outcomes in Categories

A total of 3811 outcomes were received during the offending duration, with the range between 1 and 75 outcomes in each category of disposal. There was an average of 15.56 (*SD*= 14.06) outcomes for each young person. Using 2015 as a snapshot year, 1001 outcomes were given, with an average of 4.09 (*SD*= 4.42). Young people received between 0 and 29 outcomes.

There was a disproportionate number of outcomes given for young people in each category (*Table 16*). 'Other' outcomes had the highest number of occurrences (*N*= 1913) followed by 'order' related outcomes (*N*= 737). 'YROs' were the third most common outcome (*N*= 417) given in the dataset. *Table 16* shows the number of outcomes given in each category and the number of young people who received them. 'Other' outcomes were given to 213 young

people in the dataset; an average of 8.28 per person. This is in comparison to the number of YRO-ISS outcomes given (*N*= 60), with only 39 young people receiving this outcome.

Table 16. Outcome Category by Young Person.

Outcome Category	N of Outcomes	N of YP	Range	*Mean*	*Mdn*
Other	1913	231	1-35	8.28	6
Order Related	737	148	1-25	4.98	4
YRO	417	121	1-11	3.45	3
Referral Order	226	178	1-3	1.27	1
Custody	128	57	1-7	2.25	2
Police Reprimand	103	98	1-2	1.05	1
Final Warning	87	86	1-2	1.01	1
Cautions	86	75	1-2	1.15	1
YRO-ISS	60	39	1-4	1.54	1
Reparation Order	28	19	1-3	1.47	1
Licence Recall	26	20	1-3	1.30	1

5.2.1.8 Reoffending from First Offence to First Re-offence

The discrete measure of reoffending examined if young people had committed a re-offence after their first offence. Within the dataset, 88.2% (*N*= 216) of young people committed a re-offence compared to 11.8% (*N*=29) who did not commit a re-offence

5.2.1.9 Reoffending- Total Number of Offences

A total of 4048 offences were committed by young people in the dataset. This was over a number of years (from 2007 to 2017) and provided an average of 16.52 (*SD*= 18.17) offences each (*Mdn*=9). Young people committed between 1 and 106 offences across the offending time period (from 2009 to 2017) although this varied between young people, depending on when they started offending.

5.2.1.10 Diversity of Offending

The number of categories young people offended in offered an insight into reoffending behaviour with an average of 5.21 (*SD*=3.15) offence categories. The most common number of offence categories was three with 13.06% (*N*=32), with young people also offending across four and five categories

equally. As the number of categories increased, the number of young people decreased suggesting that young people are not diverse in the types of offences they commit, although a small group of young people offended across multiple categories. No young people offended across all categories.

5.2.1.11 Duration of Offending

Young people offended on average for 3.49 years (*SD*= 2.28), with the duration of offending between 0 (less than a year) to 8 years. The cohort captured offending history from between 2007 and 2017, with most first-time offences committed in 2015.

5.2.2 Core Area 1: Contact with YOT

The amount of contact with YOT that young people receive is dependent on the type of outcome they receive. To explore the relationship between contact with YOT and reoffending, young people were split into two groups: contact with YOT and no contact with YOT. This group was created based on the outcomes received for the first recorded offence. An explanation of the orders for each group are covered in the method chapter (*Section 4.3.13).*

The next section details the demographic information for each group and explores the impact of offence type and outcomes received. Diversity, duration, age and severity are also explored. 73.06% (*N*=76) young people received YOT contact following their first recorded offence, compared to 59 (24.08%) who did not receive any YOT contact. Seven (2.86%) young people did not have outcomes recorded for their first offence and therefore were excluded from this section of the analysis. This database was based on the LYOT data which contained both young people who required YOT intervention and those who did not. These were recorded on the LYOT database once the police or court had notified the team of the outcome given.

5.2.2.1 Demographic Information

Proportionally, there was a split of males within each contact group, with the proportion of females higher in the non-contact group (*Table 17*). The majority

of young people in both groups came from a white background, with low numbers from other backgrounds. There were more young people in the contact group who were early onset offenders, than in the non-contact group. By contrast, in the non-contact group, a larger proportion were late onset offenders.

Table 17. Demographic Information for Contact Group.

	Contact with YOT	**No contact with YOT**
Male	160 (89.4%)	48 (81.4%)
Female	19 (10.6%)	11 (18.6%)
White	168 (93.85%)	54 (91.53%)
Other	11 (6.15%)	5 (8.47%)
South/Central Team	78 (43.58%)	19 (32.20%)
East Team	48 (26.82%)	20 (33.90%)
North Team	53 (29.61%)	20 (33.90%)
Early Onset	131 (73.18%)	24 (40.68%)
Late Onset	48 (26.82%)	35 (59.32%)

5.2.2.2 Onset Age

There was a significant association between the contact groups and their onset of offending age, χ^2 (1, N=238) = 20.65, p<.001, V= .295. There were significantly more early onset young people in the YOT contact group than the late onset group.

5.2.2.3 First Offence

When looking at the type of first offence committed by the two outcome groups, the most common offence was a violent contact offence (*Table 18*). There was a greater number of violent contact offences among those young people who received a YOT contact outcome, compared to those who did not. For the violent contact and criminal offence categories, there were similar proportions in each group who committed these offences. This changes in the miscellaneous offences group with 6.78% of the non-YOT contact group committing a miscellaneous offence, compared to 3.91% in the YOT contact group. The non-

YOT contact group committed more driving offences. There were no criminal justice matter offences, drug or kidnap offences at this time point.

Table 18. Type of First Offence by Contact Group.

	YOT Contact	No YOT Contact	Total
Violent- Contact	42 (23.46%)	13 (22.03%)	55
Criminal Damage	38 (21.23%)	13 (22.03%)	51
Theft & Handling	33 (18.44%)	10 (16.95%)	43
Burglary Offences	16 (8.94%)	4 (6.78%)	20
Violent- Threat	14 (7.82%)	4 (6.78%)	18
Miscellaneous Offences	7 (3.91%)	7 (11.86%)	14
Vehicle Related Offences	8 (4.47%)	3 (5.08%)	11
Weapon Offences	7 (3.91%)	0 (0%)	7
Driving Offences	2 (1.12%)	3 (5.08%)	5
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	4 (7.82%)	1 (1.69%)	5
Arson	3 (1.68%)	0 (0%)	3
Sexual Offences	3 (1.68%)	0 (0%)	3
Racially Aggravated Offences	1 (0.56%)	1 (1.69%)	2
Robbery	1 (0.56%)	0 (0%)	1

There were no significant differences in the type of offence committed for the first recorded offence and contact group ($p>.05$).

5.2.2.4 Type of First Re-offence

Of the 216 young people who committed a re-offence, violent contact was the most common offence committed (*Table 19*). There was no significant difference between the contact groups and the type of offence committed for a first re-offence. Although, a higher number of young people in the YOT contact group committed a violent contact offence for their first re-offence than compared to the non-YOT contact group.

Table 19. Type of Offence for First Re-offence by Contact Group.

	YOT Contact	No YOT Contact	Total
Violent- Contact	49 (28.99%)	7 (17.50%)	56
Criminal Damage	26 (15.38%)	8 (20%)	34
Theft & Handling	25 (14.79%)	7 (17.50%)	32
Burglary Offences	22 (13.02%)	2 (5%)	24
Violent- Threat	6 (3.55%)	7 (17.50%)	13
Vehicle Related Offences	8 (4.73%)	4 (10%)	12
Miscellaneous	7 (4.14%)	1 (2.50%)	8
Drug Offences	4 (2.37%)	1 (2.50%)	5

Robbery	4 (2.37%)	1 (2.50%)	5
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	4 (2.37%)	0 (0%)	4
Weapon	3 (1.78%)	0 (0%)	3
Sexual Offences	3 (1.78%)	0 (0%)	3
Racially Aggravated Offences	1 (0.59%)	2 (5%)	3
Criminal Justice Matters	2 (1.18%)	0 (0%)	2
Driving	2 (1.18%)	0 (0%)	2
Arson	3 (1.78%)	0 (0%)	0

5.2.2.5 Type of Outcome for First Re-offence

Table 20 presents the frequencies for the type of outcome given for the first re-offence by the contact group. As the table shows, final warnings were the most common outcome received for a first re-offence although the no YOT contact group did not receive any. Proportionally, the no YOT contact group had more other outcomes given than the YOT contact group. The largest difference between the two groups is in the number of referral orders received, with 36.09% of the YOT contact group receiving a referral order for their re-offence. Of those who received a custodial sentence, they had all been given YOT contact after their first offence.

Table 20. Type of Outcome for First Re-offence by Contact Group.

	YOT Contact	**No YOT Contact**	**Total**
Final Warning	38 (22.49%)	0 (0%)	38
Other	17 (10.06%)	11 (27.50%)	28
Caution	16 (9.47%)	6 (15%)	22
Diversionary/Triage	6 (3.55%)	8 (20%)	14
Referral Order	61 (36.09%)	12 (30%)	12
Police Reprimand	8 (4.73%)	3 (7.50%)	11
YRO	10 (5.91%)	0 (0%)	10
Order Related	6 (3.55%)	0 (0%)	6
Custody	3 (1.78%)	0 (0%)	3
Not Recorded	3 (1.78%)	0 (0%)	3
Not Given Yet	1 (0.59%)	0 (0%)	1

There was a significant association between the level of contact given for the first offence and the type of outcomes given for a re-offence, χ^2 (3, N= 161) =18.33, p<.001, V= .337. Young people in the YOT contact group received 83.6% of the referral orders compared to 16.4% that were given to the non-YOT contact group. Young people in the YOT contact group also received more cautions than the non-YOT contact for their first re-offence.

5.2.2.6 Exploring Contact and First Re-offence

There was a significant association between if contact with YOT was received after a first offence and if the young people received more contact following their re-offence, χ^2 (1, *N*= 205) = 22.26, *p*<.001, V= .330. *Table 21* shows that there were 142 (65.74%) young people who received YOT contact for their first offence and who then went on to receive YOT contact for their re-offence. In comparison, 21 young people (9.72%) received no YOT contact for their first offence and went onto to receive YOT contact for their re-offence.

Table 21. Relationship between Contact Group for First Offence and Re-offence.

	YOT Contact 1st Offence	**No YOT Contact 1st Offence**
YOT Contact Re-offence	*142*	*21*
Non-YOT Contact Re-offence	*23*	*19*

5.2.2.7 Reoffending

Young people in the YOT-contact group were significantly more likely to reoffend than those in the no contact group, χ^2 (1, *N*= 238) = 29.38, *p*<.001, V=.351. 169 (78.24%) of the YOT contact group committed a re-offence compared to 40 (18.52%) of the no YOT contact group.

There was a significant difference between the contact groups and the total number of offences committed, *U*=2905.50, *Z*=-5.19, *p*<.001, *d*=.568. Young people who received YOT contact for their first offence were significantly more likely to have committed more offences (*M*= 18.98, *SD*= 18.80) overall, than young people who received no YOT contact for their first offence (*M*= 9.44, *SD*= 14.54).

5.2.2.8 Diversity of Offending

There was a significant difference between the two contact groups and the number of offence categories, *U*= 2764.50, *Z*=-5.51, *p*<.001, *d*= .897. Young people who had YOT contact for their first recorded offence committed offences

in a greater range of categories (*M*= 5.82, *SD*= 3.16) than the young people who received no YOT contact (*M*= 3.31, *SD*= 2.38).

5.2.2.9 Duration of Offending

A significant difference between level of contact and offending duration was found, *U*= 1943.50, *Z*= 7.34, *p*<.001, *d*= 1.33. Young people who received YOT contact for their first offence offended over a longer time period (*M*= 4.17, *SD*= 2.20), than those who received no YOT contact (*M*=1.52, *SD*= 1.77).

5.2.2.10 Gravity of Offending

There was a significant difference between the contact groups and the seriousness of their first offence, *t* (236) =2.66. *p*=.008, *d*= 0.40. Young people in the YOT contact group committed significantly more serious offences (*M*=3.08, *SD*=1.04) for their first offence than those in the no YOT contact group (*M*=2.66, *SD*= 1.06).There was also a significant difference in the seriousness of the first re-offence by contact group, U= 2573.50, Z=- 2.47, p=.013, d= 0.44. The YOT contact group had significantly higher seriousness scores (*M*= 3.38, *SD*=1.35) for their re-offence than those in the non-YOT contact group (*M*= 2.85, *SD*= 1.05).

5.2.2.11 Severity

Using the total severity score (as explained *in Section 4.3.14),* there was a significant difference between the contact groups and their total severity, *U*= 2841, *Z*=-5.32, *p*<.001, *d*=.57. The YOT contact group had a significantly higher severity total (*M*= 60.70, *SD*= 63.46) than the no YOT contact group (*M*= 28.69, *SD*= 46.92).

5.2.2.12 Summary

The second section of the results has explored the influence of contact with YOT on reoffending. There are a number of key findings;

- Although for the first re-offence, young people in the YOT contact group committed more violent contact offences than those in the no YOT contact group, these differences were statistically non-significant.

- Young people in the YOT contact group (for their first offence) received significantly more referral orders for their first re-offence than those in the no YOT contact group
- A larger proportion of the young people in the YOT contact group received more YOT contact for their re-offence than those in the no YOT contact group (at first offence).
- A larger proportion of young people in the YOT contact group reoffended than those in the no YOT contact group. The YOT contact group committed more offences overall than the no YOT contact group. These findings were statistically significant.
- The YOT contact group were significantly more versatile in their offending than those in the no YOT contact group.
- Young people in the YOT contact group offended over a longer time period than those in the no YOT contact group.
- There was a significant difference in the gravity of the first offence and first re-offence for the two contact groups. The YOT contact group committed significantly more serious offences at these time points than the no YOT contact group.
- There was a significant difference in the total severity score. Those who received YOT contact for their first offence had higher total severity scores than those who did not receive YOT contact for their first offence.

5.2.3 Core Area 2: Prolific Offending

Previous research (Kennedy et al., 2018) has shown that there was a unique group of young people who were responsible for a disproportionate amount of offending. Therefore, a series of analyses were conducted to explore if this was similar in Lancashire. Based on previous research by Johns et al., (2018) prolific offenders are defined as those who by the index year, had committed 25+ offences, or their 25th offence was the crime that included them in the cohort (YJB Cymru, 2012). The terms chronic and prolific offender refer to those who have committed a high number of offences. Prolific offending has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes including the number of serious and violent offences, and an early age of onset (Baglivio et al., 2014; Piquero et al., 2007). Therefore, young people were split into two groups; prolific offenders

and non-prolific. Those who had committed more than 25 offences prior to 2015, or had their 25th offence in 2015 (which led to them entering the cohort), were defined as prolific offenders (*N*= 37, 15.10%), compared to the rest of the cohort who were defined as non-prolific (*N*=208, 84.90%). The following section will explore the offending characteristics of these groups.

5.2.3.1 Demographic Information

Males were the majority in both offender groups, with smaller numbers of females (*Table 22*). In both groups, the majority were managed by the South/Central team, although there were a small number of prolific offenders who were managed by the East team in LYOT. In the prolific offender group, the majority were from early onset young people with a small number in the late onset age group.

Table 22. Demographic Information of Prolific Offending Groups.

	Prolific Offenders	**Non-Prolific**
Male	35 (94.6%)	180 (86.5%)
Female	2 (5.4%)	28 (13.5%)
White	35 (94.6%)	193 (92.8%)
Other	2 (5.4%)	15 (7.2%)
South/Central Team	15 (40.5%)	87 (41.8%)
East Team	9 (24.3%)	60 (28.8%)
North Team	13 (35.1%)	61 (29.3%)
Early Onset	33 (89.2%)	126 (60.6%)
Late Onset	4 (10.8%)	82 (39.4%)

5.2.3.2 Onset Age

There was a significant association between prolific offender group and onset age group, X^2 (1, *N*= 245) = 11.29, *p*<. 001, V = .215. Young people in the prolific offending group were significantly more likely to be in the early onset group (89.2%), compared to the non-prolific offending group (60.6%). There was also a significant association between being a late onset offender and being a non-prolific offender (39.4% to 10.8%).

5.2.3.3 First Offence

Offences were recorded using the seventeen offence categories (see *Section 4.3.12*). A greater proportion of young people in the prolific offender group committed a criminal damage offence compared to the non-prolific offenders *(Table 23).* There was a greater proportion of young people in the non-prolific group who committed a violent contact offence for their first offence than the non-prolific group but this was not significant. There were no significant differences between the type of offence and the prolific offending groups ($p>.05$).

Table 23. Types of First Offence by Prolific Offending Groups.

	Prolific Offenders	**Non-prolific**	**Total**
Violent- Contact	4 (10.8%)	51 (24.5%)	55
Criminal Damage	12 (32.4%)	41 (19.7%)	53
Theft & Handling	6 (16.2%)	37 (17.8%)	43
Burglary	4 (10.8%)	16 (7.7%)	20
Violent- Threat	2 (5.4%)	17 (8.2%)	19
Miscellaneous	2 (5.4%)	14 (6.7%)	16
Vehicle Related Offences	2 (5.4%)	10 (4.8%)	12
Weapon	3 (8.1%)	4 (1.9%)	7
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	0 (0%)	6 (2.9%)	6
Driving	0 (0%)	5 (2.4%)	5
Arson	1 (2.7%)	2 (1%)	3
Sexual Offences	0 (0%)	3 (1.4%)	3
Racially Aggravated Offences	1 (2.7%)	1 (0.5%)	2
Robbery	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	1

*No criminal justice matter, drug or kidnap offences were committed for a first offence

5.2.3.4 First Outcome

Table 24 provides the frequency breakdown for the outcomes received for the first offence, by offender groups. There was a significant association between the offender groups and the type of outcome given for the first offence, χ^2 (5, N=237) = 30.12, $p<.001$, V = .356. As the table shows, young people in the non-prolific offending group received more diversionary and cautions than the prolific group. Final warnings were more common with the prolific offender group and the non-prolific group received more referral orders. One young person in the prolific group and six (2.88%) in the non-prolific group did not have a recorded outcome for their first offence and therefore are not included in *Table 24.*

Table 24. Type of First Outcome received by Prolific Offending Groups.

	Prolific Offending	Non-Prolific	Total
Police Reprimand	17 (45.9%)	70 (33.7%)	87
Final Warning	14 (37.8%)	21 (10.1%)	35
Diversionary/Triage	0 (0%)	33 (15.9%)	33
Referral Order	3 (8.1%)	30 (14.4%)	33
Other	2 (5.4%)	24 (11.5%)	26
Caution	0 (0%)	23 (11.1%)	23
Not Recorded	1 (2.70%	6 (2.88%)	7
Custody	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	1

5.2.3.5 First Re-offence

Table 25 demonstrates the dispersion of offences committed for the first re-offence of violent contact offences compared to the non-prolific group. There were also a greater proportion of offences committed in the criminal damage category for the prolific offending group compared to the non-prolific group. While there were no significant differences between the type of offence committed and the offending group, the frequency table provides an interesting breakdown.

Table 25. Type of First Re-offence by Prolific Offending Groups.

	Prolific Offending	Non-Prolific	Total
Violent- Contact	11 (29.7%)	45 (21.6%)	56
Theft & Handling	5 (13.5%)	30 (14.4%)	35
Criminal Damage	9 (24.3%)	25 (12%)	34
Burglary	2 (5.4%)	24 (11.5%)	26
Violent- Threat	3 (8.1%)	11 (5.3%)	14
Vehicle Related Offences	1 (2.7%)	11 (5.3%)	12
Miscellaneous	0 (0%)	8 (3.3%)	8
Drug Offences	0 (0%)	5 (2.4%)	5
Robbery	1 (2.7%)	4 (2%)	5
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	1 (2.7%)	3 (1.4%)	4
Racially Aggravated Offences	1 (2.7%)	3 (1.4%)	4
Arson	1 (2.7%)	2 (1%)	3
Weapon	2 (5.4%)	1 (0.5%)	3
Sexual Offences	0 (0%)	3 (1.4%)	3
Criminal Justice Matters	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	2
Driving	0 (0%	2 (1%)	2

* This does not include young people who did not commit a re-offence.

5.2.3.6 Outcome for Re-offence

Table 26 shows the frequency for each outcome category for the first re-offence by offending groups. There was a significant association between offender group and the type of outcome received for the first re-offence, χ^2 (6, *N*= 202) = 13.34, *p*=.038, V = .257. Young people in the non-prolific group were more likely to receive diversionary/triage, caution and custodial sentences. In comparison, a greater proportion of young people in the prolific group received a referral order for their first re-offence than in the non-prolific group. One young person in the prolific offending group did not have a recorded outcome at this time point.

Table 26. Type of Outcome for First Re-offence by Prolific Offending Groups.

	Prolific Offending	**Non-Prolific**	**Total**
Referral Order	19 (51.4%)	56 (26.9%)	75
Final Warning	5 (13.5%)	33 (15.9%)	38
Other	6 (16.2%)	22 (10.6%)	28
Caution	0 (0%)	25 (12%)	25
Diversionary/Triage	0 (0%)	15 (7.2%)	15
Police Reprimand	3 (8.1%)	8 (3.8%)	11
YRO	2 (5.4%)	8 (3.8%)	10
Not Recorded	1 (2.70%	4 1.63%)	7
Order Related	1 (2.7%)	5 (2.4%)	6
Custody	0 (0%)	3 (1.4%)	3

*This does not include young people who did not commit a re-offence.

5.2.3.7 Contact with YOT

For the first recorded offence, there was a significant association between the type of contact received and offending groups, X^2 (1, *N*=238) =8.42, *p*=.004, v= .188. Young people in the prolific offending group were significantly more likely to receive a YOT based outcome (*N*=34, 94.4%) than the non-prolific group (*N*=145, 71.8%). The prolific offender group also received fewer outcomes with no YOT contact (*N*=2, 5.6%), than the non-prolific offender group (*N*= 57, 28.2%). There was a non-significant difference for the type of contact received for the first re-offence,

52.3.8 Reoffending

There was a significant association between the offending groups and whether a re-offence had been committed, (p<.011, FET). All prolific offenders committed a re-offence in comparison to 86.1% of those in the non-prolific offence group. 13.9% of the non-prolific offending group did not commit a re-offence.

The offending groups were created by exploring the number of offences committed prior to the index year (2015), those who had committed over 25 offences were defined as prolific offenders and those who had committed less were characterised as non-prolific offenders. The prolific offending group committed on average 40 offences each (SD= 14.47), in comparison to the non-prolific offending group (M=5.06, SD= 5.78).

When exploring the index year, there was a significant difference between the offending groups and the total offences committed, U= 2705.50, Z=- 2.92, p=.004, d=0.46. The prolific offender group committed on average 6.57 offences each (SD= 6.62), compared to the non-prolific offender group (M= 3.73, SD= 5.61).

Overall, the prolific offender group (N=37, 15.1%) were responsible for an average of 49.19, (SD= 18.43) offences each, compared to the non-prolific offender group (M= 10.71, SD= 10.26), this was a significant difference between the groups, U= 172, Z=- 9.27, p<.001, d=2.57. Young people in the prolific offender group were responsible for 44.96% of the total offences committed by this cohort. In terms of outcomes, overall, the prolific offending group received significantly more outcomes overall, U= 258, Z=- 9.05, p<.001, d= 2.56. The prolific group received 40.24 (SD= 12.65), outcomes in total, in comparison to the non-prolific offender group (M= 11.16, SD= 9.86).

5.2.3.9 Diversity

There was a significant difference between the prolific offending group and the non-prolific group in the amount of offence categories they offended in, U= 412, Z=- 8.69, p<.001, d= 2.44. Young people in the prolific group offended in an

average of 9.86 categories (*SD*= 1.89) in comparison to the non-prolific group (*M*= 4.38, *SD*= 2.55).

5.2.3.10 Duration

There was a significant difference between the prolific offending group and the non-prolific offending group in the length of time they offended for, *U*= 1379, *Z*= 6.27, *p*<.001, *d*=1.22. The prolific offender group offended for an average of 5.73 (*SD*= 1.45) years in comparison to the non-prolific offender group (*M*= 3.40, *SD*= 2.29).

5.2.3.11 Gravity

There were non-significant differences between the offender groups in terms of the seriousness of their first offence and first re-offence (p> .05). For the first offence, the prolific group had a mean seriousness score of 2.97 (*SD*= 1.04) compared to the non-prolific group who had a mean of 2.96 (*SD*= 1.14). For the first re-offence, a mean gravity of 3.28 (*SD*= 1.30) for the prolific offending group compared to the non-prolific offending group who had an average score of 3.22 (*SD*= 1.34).

5.2.3.12 Severity

There was a significant difference between the offender groups, *U*=154, *Z*= -9.30, *p*<.001, *d*= 2.61. The prolific offender group had a significantly higher severity score (*M*= 163.95, *SD*= 62.90) than the non-prolific offenders (*M*=32.95, *SD*= 33.15).

5.2.3.13 Summary

This section of the results has explored the characteristics associated with prolific offending, and the offending patterns associated with reoffending. The key findings are listed below:

- Young people in the prolific offending group were significantly more likely to start their offending earlier than the non-prolific offending group.

- Young people who went on to become prolific offenders received significantly more YOT contact outcomes for their first offence and first re-offence.
- Young people in the prolific offending group did not receive diversionary/triage outcomes, yet there were non-significant differences in the types of offences committed and the seriousness of those offences.
- Young people in the prolific offending group were significantly more likely to reoffend than the non-prolific offender group and were responsible for 44.96% of all offences committed, from a group sample of 37 (15.1% of the overall sample).
- Young people in the prolific group also received more outcomes than the non-prolific group.
- The prolific group offended in significantly more offence categories than the non-prolific group indicating that they are more diverse in their offending.
- Young people in the prolific group also offended over a longer duration than the non-prolific group.
- The prolific group committed significantly more serious offences overall than the non-prolific group.

5.3 PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

The aim of the practitioner interviews was to understand why they thought young people reoffended. Using a semi-structured format, 17 practitioners were interviewed, in an attempt to answer the following research question:

> *What factors do YOT practitioners consider to be associated with reoffending?*

Using thematic analysis, five main themes were identified from the interviews and are presented in *Figure 6*. Practitioners were asked about what they thought was related to reoffending, and within those conversations, how reoffending could be reduced. This process followed the thematic analysis steps outlined in the method chapter (*Section 4.2.3)* collated *by* Braun and Clarke (2006). This started with the familiarisation of the interview transcripts,

where some initial similarities and differences between the interviews were identified. These were amalgamated into themes, with each interview transcript being checked to ensure that all the relevant data had been picked out. Lastly, the researcher defined and identified the themes considering the main aim of the interviews. A full theme table is presented in *Appendix 19*. Each theme will now be described along with evidence from the interviews.

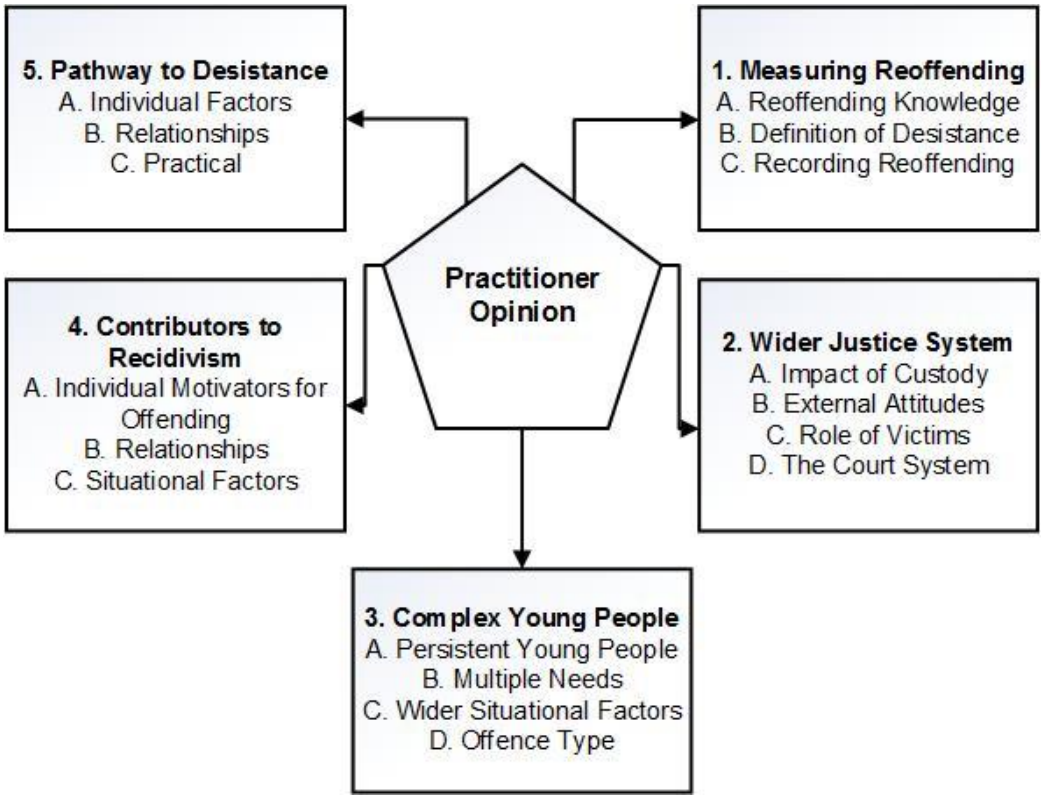

Figure 6. Themes Identified from Practitioners.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Measuring Reoffending

In this initial theme, practitioners talked about the challenges in measuring reoffending reliably in an ever-changing political landscape. This included their knowledge of reoffending rates, along with their views about the most appropriate way to define desistance, and the general barriers in recording reoffending accurately.

5.3.1.1 Reoffending Knowledge

Practitioners described being unaware of the reoffending rates for young people both nationally and county-wide. This was surprising given that one of the main aims of YOTs is to reduce reoffending. Although the two managers interviewed

were able to talk about the importance of the rates, the frontline practitioners had a limited knowledge about reoffending rates. This demonstrated that although reducing reoffending is a key aim of YOTs, their successes are not regularly being passed down the team structure.

"I don't have a lot of knowledge on reoffending mainly" (P108)

"No, I mean generally I couldn't say about recidivism rates really" (P110)

"I guess I don't know the rates of reoffending off the top of my head" (P111)

5.3.1.2 Defining Desistance

During the interviews, practitioners talked about the most meaningful way of defining desistance from crime. However, there was no consensus about what method would be considered the most suitable. Some practitioners considered desistance to be the absolute cessation of any offending behaviour. They felt that there should not be any grey area around desistance, in terms of any further offending;

"I would say that in the ultimate sense of the word, it means not offending at all" (P101)

"Desistance for me would be that they don't reoffend, don't come into contact with the police again" (P107)

This is in contrast to other practitioners who believed that desistance could be counted by a reduction in offending. These practitioners spoke about how a probability score which indicated a young persons' likelihood of reoffending could be a way to measure desistance. When a young person reduces the frequency of their offending, some practitioners saw this as transition towards desistance and believed it should be counted as such.

"It's how they reduce their offending" (P108)

"I guess the likelihood of a person reducing or refraining from further offending" (P111)

Desistance was viewed by all practitioners as a positive transition away from offending. They understood desistance as a change in lifestyle and it was often about the young person moving away from the decisions they made in the past. They argued that desistance should be viewed as a positive experience and should be encouraged in all contact with YOT practitioners.

> *"It's how they are desisting, not just from offending but from previous lifestyle choices" (P105)*

> *"But it's a path" (P115)*

In addition to viewing desistance as a positive process, practitioners also thought that young people needed to be perceived in a positive light. Practitioners said that to desist from crime, young people should to be seen separately from their offending, and practitioners believed the definition of desistance should reflect this. It was felt that young people needed to be viewed positively in order to desist from crime. The current definition of desistance was considered to neglect the positive side of desistance.

> *"Revalue young people, revaluate them positively, and in positive terms and I think it starts there really" (P114)*

5.3.1.3 Recording Reoffending

Practitioners described issues with how reoffending is officially recorded and measured. They talked about how the current national reoffending measure only counted detected crime and there was no way of accurately knowing if a young person was still offending. Young people who offend can also be diverted from the court system and would not require contact with YOT.

> *"It's very difficult because you could talk about reoffending but is that detected crime, how it is recorded, it's all of the other bits and pieces" (P102)*

> *"that they don't come back to YOT but I suppose it's difficult really because even though they don't come back to us doesn't actually mean that they are not reoffending and they are not doing something in the community" (P105)*

Practitioners had limited knowledge of their impact with young people, as a young person could reoffend and not require YOT intervention. This would be counted as a re-offence but YOT would have no way of knowing this from the information supplied to them.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Wider Justice System

This theme encompasses the comments made by practitioners about the youth justice system. Practitioners spoke widely about the impact of custody on young people, the contribution of situational attitudes towards young people, the role of victims and the court process. There were mixed opinions about the impact of custody with young people, and that the negative media surrounding young people who offend would be damaging to their self-esteem. Many practitioners believed that victims had a vital role to play in reducing reoffending and helping young people to understand the consequences of their actions. The court process was viewed as helping to divert young people, but many practitioners spoke about the impact this had on the young people who required YOT intervention.

5.3.2.1 Impact of custody

Many practitioners discussed the appropriateness of using custody with young people. Custody was seen as an ineffective deterrent to future offending by most practitioners. They discussed that placing young people in custody may only work in a few cases, but for most, it did not provide the most suitable environment for rehabilitation.

"So, I think in a few cases that does work." (P109)

"Not on the whole no, I mean the odd case, it will do" (P111)

One practitioner felt that custody could be the right option when used to mark the severity of an offence, but they also thought that its use was dependent on the circumstances of the offence.

"I think that custody is only right erm, if it used either for the protection of the public, erm, or for the, to mark the seriousness of offence you know. I don't think it's always wrong, I think it very much depends on the circumstances" (P113)

The practitioners acknowledged custody is appropriate when it is used to protect the public or sanction serious offences. They also acknowledged that it depends on: the circumstances of the offence committed; the type of offence; if there were other people involved; and previous criminal offences etc. Other practitioners spoke about how the impact of a custodial sentence was dependent on the type of young person. Young people would find custodial sentences helpful if they were given the chance to reflect on what had happened, although custody would be inappropriate for many young people.

"It can work sometimes, if you remove that person and I mean on the whole if you remove that person from the environment, give them that time to reflect" (P111)

Practitioners overwhelmingly did not think custody worked to rehabilitate young people because of a lack of resources and opportunities while inside. They recognised that this environment does not lay the foundations for long-term positive change towards desistance from crime.

"Because I've only had three who have been to custody, it doesn't really work because the frustrating thing is the lack of resources…That's a class example, lack of resources, and lack of staff or whatever" (P111)

"they are supposed to be doing education and they're supposed to be doing some kind of training and they're not actually forced into doing it" (P115)

They acknowledged that the lack of trained staff and opportunities in custody did not provide young people with the time they needed to reflect on their offences and to work around changing their behaviour. Another factor that contributed to why practitioners did not think custody was appropriate, was because they believed many young people viewed prison as a status badge giving them a higher status among peers.

"Realise that it's not big and hard to have the custody badge, I've been to jail" (P111)

"They just think I'll go there and all my problems disappear for a bit" (P115)

5.3.2.2 External Attitudes

Practitioners felt that the attitudes of both the media and other professionals had an impact on why young people reoffended. The media often report young people who offend negatively, and this can contribute to why young people reoffend. The publicity impacts the young person into thinking there is little point to try and desist from crime because they believe that they are viewed negatively by the public. Young people who offend were reported as being "*demons*" (*P105*) in the media and this can have a lasting effect on them.

"Young people who do commit offences get a really bad press don't they" (P105)

"There is a lot more negative erm sort of media response to young people" (P113)

Another concern that practitioners raised was that the media did not often report the full picture of young people involved in offending. Practitioners felt that there should be a wider consideration of the events that might have led to the offence. The media often report on one side of the story without considering the other factors;

"They are not getting the full picture, and it's not about us defending them, youth offending, because I would never defend a young person if they've committed an offence, they've committed an offence and they need to be challenged on that and the work needs to be done. But we also need to take into consideration what might have led to that" (P105)

The interviewees also stressed the idea that young people who offend are not given a chance; this was particularly mentioned during one interview.

"They don't give them a chance. We all have stereotypical notions about people, kids, races whatever and it is part of our humanity that we actually put aside those differences, when we get to know them" (P101)

The attitudes of other professionals who come into contact with this group of young people also contributed to this negative portrayal. Practitioners believed that other professionals also viewed those who offend negatively and were not able to separate out the person from their offending behaviour. This was seen as damaging to the young person if they were trying to make a change in their lifestyle and move away from offending.

> *"Quite often what I find in my role is that education agencies can be quite culturally quite judgmental and you'll probably remember this from being at school yourself, if a kid does a bad thing, they are a bad kid, whereas we separate out what people do from who they are completely"(P114)*

In general, practitioners believed that young people who offend are a separate group of society and felt there were many double standards when working with young people. Practitioners felt that this should be taken into account when dealing with young people who offend, as negative attitudes have a lasting effect.

> *"But it is a difficult one I think, there are double standards and I think people that we deal with most of the time are a real underclass" (P101)*

5.3.2.3 Role of Victims

Practitioners discussed the role that victims can have in helping to reduce reoffending with young people. Many believed that victims had a big role to play in helping young people to move away from crime.

> *"Because victims do and would play a big part potentially in reoffending" (P102)*

One victim approach is through the use of restorative justice methods. The success of this approach was dependent on the type of young person, as victim awareness work does not have an impact on all young people, but for some, it can be a life changing experience.

> *"Do I think that stops them from going out and stopping doing things again? Probably with him no. But maybe with someone else…for some I think it could be quite powerful" (P102)*

The types of work that practitioners do with young people were also discussed. They talked about how victim awareness work helped challenge young people into thinking about the consequences of their actions and this can lead to a realisation of the impact. Some practitioners spoke about building empathy between the young person and their victim and thought that the key to reducing reoffending was to engage with the victim's thoughts. When a young person understands the true consequences of their actions, they are more likely to want to change.

> *"I would hope to think that challenge gave him some further insight into what he was doing because he was actually kind of blown away by that" (P102)*

> *"I think that after that they are tapping into their moral compass and they actually have some kind of realisation that, hang on a minute..." (P109)*

> *"the work we do with victims and sort of restorative work around young people reaching a level of, erm, being able to have empathy and the effect of what they do on other people, I think that can help" (P113)*

5.3.2.4 The Court System

The wider court system was spoken about by practitioners who viewed the recent changes as a challenge to their work. They felt that due to diversionary methods, young people who required YOT intervention had a higher frequency of offences in their background.

> *"Now if that had been 7 years ago, he'd have been in court and been convicted, so that's the way the landscapes changed" (P104)*

> *"So that same, that person now comes on a referral order they might have pinched a bottle of pop, beat up a teacher, criminal damage, possession of cannabis and now he's on a referral order for assault" (P109)*

Practitioners thought that young people are coming to YOT later in their criminal career, which means that even those classed as first-time entrants have committed previous offences. Practitioners felt this made their job harder

because the offending behaviours are more deep-rooted and ingrained in the young people, therefore taking longer to encourage desistance from offending.

> *"We are definitely seeing our first time entrants have committed, that's not their first offence that they've committed" (P107)*

> *"Because the issues are much more ingrained" (P108)*

Practitioners also made comparisons to the adult system and how once a young person turns 18, they are dealt with by the adult probation system which, is in some respects, a lot harsher than the youth justice system.

> *"It's one hell of a shock…explain to the young person what's going on so it doesn't come as such as a shock, they're used to being able to miss appointments and it will kind of be alright…when you become a late teen, adult offender, all of that sympathy kind of vanishes really and people tend to expect you to stop overnight. Even though you're the same person with the same experiences" (P110)*

5.3.3 Theme 3: Complex Young People

One of the key concepts discussed by practitioners surrounded the complexities of the young people they work with. Practitioners recognised many young people as persistent offenders who are continually referred to YOT teams. They also considered these young people to have a diverse range of needs, which were confounded by the lack of change in their wider situational factors. Lastly, practitioners believed these young people were committing different types of crime to previous offence types.

5.3.3.1 Persistent Young People

Practitioners talked about working with some young people for an extended time period. They felt that there was a core group of young people who continually reoffend and who keep coming back to YOT.

> *"Somebody I started working with when I first started here and still working with now" (P103)*

> *"There are a number of them that will continue to come back and back and back" (P104)*

Practitioners made the distinction between a young person who offends a couple of times committing low level offences (shoplifting and criminal damage) and those young people who commit more serious offences and who are required to work with YOT over a number of months.

"There's always been the same ones" (P108)

"You've either got someone who constantly reoffends or someone who does a silly little crime and then off they go" (P112)

Practitioners felt that young people who were involved in the justice system were the same individuals and that there were some people who would be involved with the system for a number of years.

"But again some young people will continue to be criminals all their lives and we know who they are" (P108)

"We get a core group of young people who consistently reoffend" (P111)

5.3.3.2 Multiple Needs

There was a consensus among the practitioners that the young people they work with are facing a variety of multiple needs. Practitioners described young people as being more complex than they had faced before.

"*I'd say we we're getting far more complex young people coming through with a lot more issues." (P107)*

"Kids are getting far more complex" (P116)

Practitioners viewed young people coming to YOT as having a long list of concerns which needed their input and it was often not just about their offending behaviour.

"Instead of them coming here for their offence focus group, actually they are coming here for flipping everything" (P104)

An example of these multiple needs was the welfare of the young person. Practitioners felt that young people were facing issues around their family life and that levels of neglect and abuse were high. Whilst the practitioners acknowledged that the young person who comes into contact with YOT had always had a range of welfare concerns, the severity of needs were now greater and therefore more worrying. Practitioners felt that their job was made harder by the extent of these concerns as it often required a multi-agency approach which often brought many challenges with competing priorities.

> *"A lot of the kids who come here have got social problems as opposed to offending problems." (P104)*

> *''I think the severity of the welfare concerns has increased. (P114)*

A second example of these concerns was the overlap between the criminal justice system and the care system and how many of these young people were involved in both systems. Some practitioners felt that young people in the care system had little hope for the future and that the amount of offending in care homes was increasing;

> *"If you are in the care system, you are absolutely screwed" (P106)*

Other practitioners spoke about the double standards between those young people living at home and those living in a care home. They considered that young people who were in care were over-criminalised because they were getting into trouble for committing offences that in a normal home setting would not be considered an offence;

> *"A young person in care, in a care home, they've done exactly the same thing, police are called, they've then got it on their record as criminal damage, so two young people, two same behaviours dealt with differently because of their status" (P109)*

> *"Poorly paid, erm the care staff don't have the knowledge, don't have the experience, don't have the training, don't have the qualifications…and they're dealing with really really complex young people" (P112)*

A further concern with this group of young people was the impact of learning difficulties. Practitioners felt there were undiagnosed conditions where young people did not have access to the right support. This made engagement in education more difficult, consequently leading to reoffending.

> *"Often kids that are undiagnosed with ADHD and AHD, quite complex needs and aren't recognised" (P116)*

5.3.3.3 Wider Situational Factors

One of the key reasons for reoffending was perceived to be the lack of change in young peoples' lives. Practitioners felt their impact was limited because they could not change everything for the young person. They felt that there were a multitude of factors which led to reoffending, from a negative family environment to anti-social peers, to being disengaged in education and living in chaotic neighbourhoods. The reasons for reoffending amongst young people were diverse and varied according to the individual circumstances;

> *"How can you come up with something and how are we doing to get children to stop reoffending? It's huge. The factors that cause them to reoffend, you know, with one person you could write down two reasons, with another person, you write down twenty-two reasons and that's how difficult it is." (P104)*

Practitioners spoke in depth about the lack of control they had over a young person's situation and how this often made it hard to encourage desistance from crime. They felt they could target specific issues around offending but if the young person was returning to the same environment, then nothing would change for them.

> *"And the only thing we can't control is where they live and how they live and who they live with. All the rest of it, it can be controlled" (P104)*

> *"When they leave here, you've no control over the situational factors so they could go they'd be going back to the same family, same street same peers" (P109)*

When practitioners focused on offending behaviour, other factors in their life did not change and this made it difficult for the young person to want to change their behaviour. One practitioner summed up the lack of change in young

people's lives, saying there was no motivation for the young people to change if everything in their lives stayed the same.

> *"If you work with a young person and nothing else in their life has changed, they still haven't got education, they haven't got an income, haven't got a family who care about them, they haven't got any prospects of any hopes, then there is no real reason why they would change their behaviour" (P113)*

5.3.3.4 Offence Types

Practitioners talked about the changes to young people in terms of the offences that they commit. Many believed that they were seeing a different type of crime and that offending had changed in recent years;

> *"I think you are seeing different crimes now than you used to."(P106)*

> *"I think that the types of offending that we see them for may have changed." (P113)*

There was a concern among practitioners that there was a readiness amongst young people to carry weapons compared to past years. Practitioners believed that this readiness was leading to an increase in violent crimes committed by young people. Practitioners believed that the number of weapon related offences is on the rise.

> *"A lot of the kids are now carrying weapons, which I don't think they used to, so knives, hammers, things like that." (P101)*

> *"And there's obviously an increase over here in the really violent stuff and the carrying knives and stuff" (P115)*

Lastly, practitioners also talked about a rise in social media offences. This was seen as a change in the number of smart phones available to young people and how ingrained social media had become in their lives. Practitioners believed that the landscape of offending behaviour had changed as offences are now more likely to be recorded on social media. Practitioners felt that social media has become a prime influence in the lives of young people changing the way in which peers communicate and also offend.

"In my career, the offences have changed massively with the internet, social media, legal highs, types of drugs that are being taken, not as much down the pub or nightclub activity" (P110)

5.3. 4 Theme 4: Contributors to Recidivism

Practitioners talked about a variety of factors which they felt contributed to why young people reoffended. These can be broadly grouped into individual motivators for offending, relationships and situational factors for offending. They talked about how reasons for offending were often associated with the individual as well as the purpose for offending. Relationships with both family and peers played an important role in why some people reoffend as well as the influence of drugs and alcohol. Disengaging from education was also considered a key factor, leaving young people no other way of achieving their goals than by offending. Each of these will be discussed in turn with evidence provided from the interviews.

5.3.4.1 Individual Motivation

Practitioners felt that the individual motivators for offending were crucial to understanding why young people reoffend. They talked about impulsivity, the thrill of offending and how offending provided a sense of belonging. Practitioners were aware that they had to understand all these difficult reasons to help.

Practitioners spoke about how the young people they deal with are often impulsive and this could help to explain their continued offending. They believed that young people who offend lack maturity and therefore consequential thinking. This coupled with an impulsive nature created an environment for offending.

"Kids are a lot more impulsive" (P110)

"Immaturity and impulsiveness and they may reoffend" (P111)

Secondly, practitioners talked about how offending provided a thrill for young people which they do not receive from any other activity. They spoke about the buzz that young people feel and how this was a main reason for offending. Young people enjoyed the feelings that offending gave them.

"They get a thrill out of it and I'm not sure they get a thrill from anything else. Everything else is really quite boring." (P101)

Thirdly, practitioners considered that because these young people have nothing to lose this is the most important reason why they reoffend. They spoke about how this group felt they did not have much in their lives and offending gave them a sense of belonging. Encouraging people to desist from crime is confounded when young people have nothing to lose by offending.

"That kind of sense of belonging, sense of identity, financial gain, just a distraction from, not being able to follow the normal path of life" (P111)

"It's back to that- nothing to lose, because there isn't anything to lose. What can you take away from someone who has nothing?" (P114)

Lastly, practitioners discussed the impact of a lack of hopes and dreams that young people had. They felt that this also contributed to offending; if young people had no aspirations, they were likely to continue to offend because they did not pursue a goal.

"If you don't have the goals or the aspirations or the opportunities to do well…you are not going to go down the prosocial steps" (P106)

"They haven't got any prospects or any hopes" (P113)

5.3.4.2 Relationships

Practitioners considered the impact of relationships with both family and peers to be important for young people. They spoke about the difficulties young people often face when building relationships because of a challenging upbringing. They also spoke about how young people often offended in groups and this explained why some young people continued to reoffend.

Practitioners thought it was common that the young people they work with have attachment issues and these stemmed from their family life at home. They felt that many young people did not securely attach to their parents due to chaotic living situations. This then made it hard for the young people to form stable,

positive relationships with other people in their lives. An absence of a secure and healthy attachment was seen as key by practitioners as to why young people reoffend;

> *"If you've never had any relationships or never had any sort of attachment to anybody, never sort of had anybody to look after you or show any warmth or love, I suppose then as you get older, you just think well if nobody cares about me why should I care? And that can start off potentially offending" (P105)*

> *"the young people that have crossed my desk, just this very day, I know are all young people who have been faced with awful upbringings, awful situations within their families" (P114)*

Secondly, practitioners talked about the lack of, or inconsistent, boundaries that young people had. This had an impact on their wider life; without clear boundaries, young people do not know what is considered right and wrong and this can lead them to offend.

> *"And everything can be, a lot of things can be down to parenting. Laying boundaries, children being happy and contained" (P100)*

Practitioners were aware that a lot of offending occurred in groups where young people are under the influence of their peers. They felt that if a young person associated with negative peers this increased the likelihood of offending. Groups often encourage anti-social behaviour, and practitioners believed that these offences would not occur if the young person was alone.

> *"And we say peers and we say friendships, and their influence but there's actually a gang mentality" (P103)*

> *"I think peer pressure comes into it a lot" (P115)*

The impact of peer groups was taken into consideration when practitioners assessed young people for their likelihood of reoffending. When a young person was involved in a negative peer group, practitioners considered this a risk factor for further offending.

> *"Peer pressure is a massive one and obviously, we do an assessment and kind of people the young people hang around can be some indicator of whether they are likely to get off that pattern of reoffending" (P111)*

5.3.4.3 Contextual Factors

In addition to the individual factors and relationships, practitioners also spoke about a range of situational factors which influence reoffending with young people. They primarily spoke about the role of drugs and alcohol in offending behaviour, being disengaged in education and the communities' young people lived in.

Drugs and alcohol were considered to be a crucial element in why young people continued to offend. Practitioners discussed how reoffending would occur because young people needed to fund a drug habit. In addition, young people were often under the influence when the offending occurred.

> *"Erm again, drugs, cannabis, if you've got a very little income or next to nothing but you've got a daily cannabis habit of £20 you don't need to be a great mathematician to work out that the money is gonna have to come from somewhere" (P110)*

> *"I think drugs are a massive factor and I think a lot of the time, they are either under the influence or they are actually offending to fund their habit really" (P112)*

One practitioner summed up the main reasons for continued reoffending, with three words. They felt that young people being bored, the influence of their friends, and their cannabis habit played the biggest role in explaining reoffending;

> "*Bored, mates, cannabis" (P109)*

Secondly, young people who were disengaged from education were considered at risk of offending, because of their lack of community ties. Practitioners noted that many young people they worked with had been out of education for several months, and this was a focus of their work with them. They believed that engaging young people in education was vital in reducing reoffending.

> *"say for example, education, you know, some of the young people that we get haven't been in education for 12 months and its only when they come to us that we pick that up and say well what's going on and we try and get them back in" (P105)*

Lastly, practitioners spoke at length about the type of communities' young people lived in. They considered that offending was the norm in these environments and young people found it hard to break that pattern. Many young people lived in housing estates where anti-social behaviour was rife, and this had a damaging effect on the young people who grew up in that environment.

> *"The environment that they live in, their neighbourhood" (P103)*

> *"The estates that they live on and it's in some ways the norm" (P104)*

Building on the situational attitudes of young people who offend where they are considered an underclass, one practitioner spoke about how these young children were from a different class and it was difficult to understand without being from that environment.

> *"The vast majority of young people who come here are from a different class all together" (P101)*

5.3.5 Theme 5: Pathway to Desistance

Practitioners described the crucial elements needed to encourage young people to desist from crime. These were grouped into individual factors, relationships and practical methods. They were aware that for desistance to occur a young person needed to be ready for that change, they needed a supportive team around them and they needed something to fill their time with.

5.3.5.1 Individual

Individual factors which contributed to desistance were considered the most important by practitioners. They talked about how important it was for a young person to want to change their behaviour. Some practitioners talked about desistance as a concept that could only occur when all factors came together at the right time.

> *"I think it's also almost like a time and place, if you can catch at the right time in the right place" (P101)*

In addition to the right time and place, practitioners talked about how a young person needed to be ready for change. Without a readiness to change their lifestyle and behaviour, desistance from crime could not be achieved.

Practitioners talked about how they could work with a young person and carry out interventions, but if they did not have the drive to change, they would have little or no impact;

> *"For some young people they need to want to make those changes, they need to be ready to make those changes" (P102)*

> *"They have to want to stop, if they don't want to, they're not going to" (P110)*

One of the reasons young people reoffend is because of the purpose it served. Practitioners acknowledged that for desistance to occur, young people needed to find something that replaced the need that offending filled. Practitioners talked about young people finding a different direction in life, and this helped them to move away from offending.

> *"People are generally meeting some needs by offending, so by replacing that need and getting them involved in a positive activity, give them some hopes and goals for the future, something to aim for, some hope that they can have a life, again, increasing their self-esteem of that person" (P111)*

5.3.5.2 Relationships

Young people need stable, positive and pro-social relationships with those around them to move away from offending. Taking into account that a negative peer group can encourage reoffending, practitioners talked about how moving away from that group can encourage desistance from crime.

> *"Not associating with the peers that they used to associate with" (P103)*

As well as the impact of peer relationships, practitioners also spoke about how young people stopped offending when they were romantically involved with someone who did not approve of their offending. As young people mature, they are more likely to become interested in other things aside from offending. Practitioners discussed that they felt young people were more likely to give up offending if for example, their partner did not approve.

> *"I'll go to relationship, strong relationships; personal relationships are a really important factor in desistance" (P108)*

"Whenever lads have got a girlfriend who disapprove of them committing offences, that tends to curb their offending" (P109)

In addition, practitioners spoke in detail about how important wider relationships were for young people. They talked about having positive relationships being key to helping young people to desist from crime. This included their own relationship with the young person, they needed to build a strong relationship with them to help foster desistance from crime. Practitioners often felt that they filled many roles for a young person from taking them to meetings to reparation work and offence focused interventions.

"You know you're interested, and want to help them. That makes a massive difference. I think that's doing that but often you feel like between a cross between a taxi driver and a mum, a lot of the time" (P112)

"I think the relationship is absolutely crucial" (P113)

5.3.5.3 Practical

Lastly, practitioners talked about the impact of practical support on encouraging desistance from crime. They spoke about the importance of education or employment in helping young people move away from offending. Whereas practitioners considered that being disengaged from education contributed to reoffending, practitioners thought that being engaged in education helped young people to move away from reoffending. Practitioners talked about how they would try and get the young person back into education and encourage them to attend.

"And if they are engaged in education, is an obvious one isn't it?" (P111)

"I think you try and get their education sorted" (P112)

Practitioners considered the practical advice about education and training as being crucial as it provided a pro-social activity for young people to engage in. Practitioners believed it was crucial in finding something that the young person was good at which gave them a purpose away from offending behaviour;

"Getting in some form of employment, education or training" (P109)

"I think a lot of the practical stuff can help, like young people getting some training or some education or some employment or something that will give them a structure and a purpose and a sense of reward" (P113)

5.3.6 Summary of Findings

The interviews with YOT practitioners offered a unique insight into their own views and perspectives as well as the young people they work with and the factors which impact on their decision to reoffend. The practitioners were clearly advocates for the young people they dealt with. They understood the challenges they faced and were motivated by care rather than a punitive control paradigm. Practitioners considered the official measures of reoffending a challenge which did not consider the accurate number of crimes committed. Furthermore, there was no consensus amongst practitioners over the best way to define desistance from crime, although the explanations viewed desistance as a positive event.

Practitioners voiced many opinions about the wider justice system and considered custodial sentences to have little impact on young peoples' reoffending. This was largely due to the lack of resources and the lack of a supportive environment to encourage positive change. Attitudes associated with the media and other professionals demonstrate that young people who offend often face a negative portrayal with no separation between the person and their behaviour. Practitioners believed that victims had a role to play in reducing reoffending by encouraging young people to understand the consequences and impact of their actions.

The recent changes in the numbers of young people diverted away from the youth justice system has led to young people who require intervention with YOT to be more complex, have a wealth of needs and to be committing different types of crimes than young people in the past. There are many reasons for why young people continue to reoffend; young people are often motivated to offend because of the purpose it serves. Poor relationships with family and negative peer groups also contribute. Practitioners considered the role of drugs and alcohol key in why some young people reoffend although they acknowledged that there were numerous reasons for young people to engage in recreational

drugs. They believed it was difficult to change a young person's drug habit if they were not motivated to change. Being disengaged with education also played a role, as young people did not feel part of their community. Lastly, the path to desistance is characterised by a need for a desire for change, having something to lose, positive relationships and practical support to keep young people out of offending.

5.4 YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWS

The final phase of the research involved semi-structured interviews with young people who have had contact with YOT. The interviews were based on the earlier findings from the LYOT data and interviews with practitioners. During those phases, key themes were explored; the impact of YOT contact on young people's reoffending trajectory, as well as the factors associated with reoffending. Therefore, the aim of this phase was to explore young people's perceptions of reoffending and answer the research question:
"*What factors do young people involved in LYOT perceive to be associated with their reoffending?*

Thirteen interviews were conducted with young people who were involved with LYOT. The offences committed by this group ranged from low-level criminal damage, to assault and possession of a bladed article. Some offences committed by young people included drug and sexual offences. The interviews were semi-structured, which allowed young people to talk about the factors important to them. The themes identified in the analysis are displayed in *Figure 7*, each of these will be discussed in turn along with evidence from the interviews. In order to identify the themes, a process of familiarisation with the data was undertaken, where the similarities and differences in the interviews were explored. A full theme table is presented in *Appendix 20.* A summary of the findings is then presented.

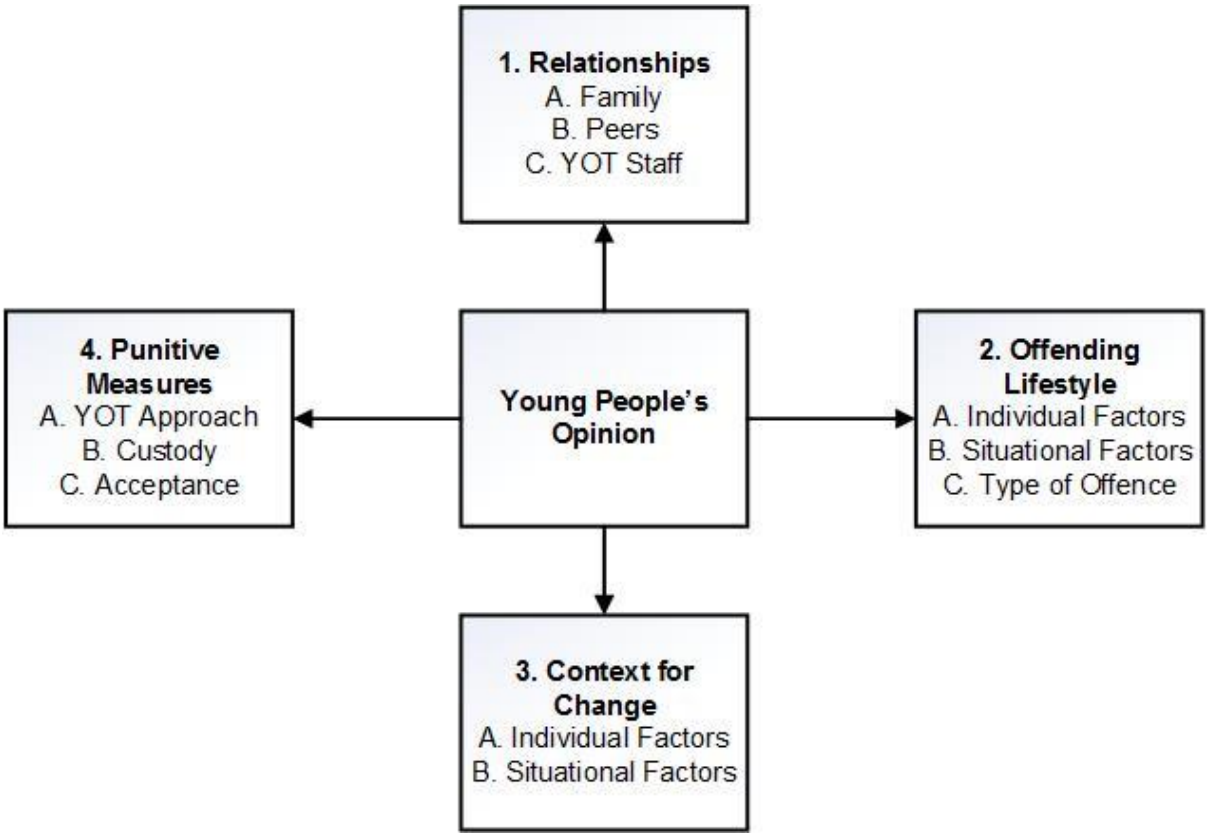

Figure 7. Themes from Young People.

5.4.1 Theme 1: Relationships

Young people spoke in detail about the key relationships in their life and how important their families were, as well as their relationships with their peers. They also spoke about the importance of their relationship with their YOT worker and how this was instrumental in making any changes in their life. This was similar to the interviews with practitioners who also highlighted positive relationships being important for young people to feel supported and respected.

5.4.1.1 Families

Young people talked about how their family had reacted when they offended and how this affected them and future relationships. Not all young people spoke about the impact of their offending on their family, but those who did described the upset this caused for example, young people recognised the impact of their behaviour on their family and how this motivated them to change the behaviour.

"[how did your family feel] wounded" (P208)

"They were devastated, they just wanted me to stop being a little shit" (P206)

"I put my mum through a lot" (P213)

While considering the impact of their behaviour, most young people spoke about the close relationships they had with their family. Young people who spoke about their families, felt lucky to have these relationships and believed the family support made a difference in their lives. Young people talked about how their families stood by them during their work with YOT and were incredibly important;

"I was lucky enough to have good parents and parents who stood by me and not just go." (P205)

"Like my family are the most important people in my life" (P210)

Young people mentioned their family when asked to think about positive people in their life. Many talked about their mother as being an important influence in their life with other extended family members also mentioned as key influencers, for example, grandmothers. This highlights the need for strong and positive role models. Young people were also able to identify those who were a positive influence, as well as those who had a more negative influence, thereby demonstrating the insight they have into their lives and behaviour.

"My dad massively, my mum, erm it's a bit weird but my little baby sister" (P205)

"My mum, my nan and it would have been my grandma" (P206)

Two young people did not feel comfortable talking about their family and therefore it was difficult to ascertain the kinds of relationships they had. A further young person was in care and did not discuss their family.

5.4.1.2 Peers

Friendships with peers were discussed in detail during the interviews. Young people spoke about both the negative and positive influence their peers had on their offending behaviour. The negative element has been grouped within the offending lifestyle theme whereas the positive side is covered within the

relationships theme. Young people spoke about the positive support their friends offered and how it was important to surround themselves with positive and stable relationships. This highlights that peer influence is seen both negatively and positively. Young people were able to recognise that some young people were negative in their life, whereas having a small group of friends reduced the opportunities for offending behaviour. Young people spoke about how, after offending, they had reduced their peer group, spending more of their time with a smaller group of positive peers;

> *"I just I'd rather stay in a group of one or two" (P206)*

> *"I used to hang around with like loads of people and we just used to cause trouble. But now, like I hang around with about 5" (P207)*

Young people were able to recognise that negative peer groups were not conducive to desisting from crime and as such, they surrounded themselves with groups of only positive people. The participants were able to recognise how their previous offending was related to being part of a group, and this was why many of them made the decision to shrink their friendship groups. It was important for young people to have pro-social role models in their life in order to move away from offending.

> *"I purposely not surrounded myself with bad influence people" (P205)*

> *"I just wiped all of my mates, anyone that's not good for me has gone" (P210)*

5.4.1.3 YOT Workers

Lastly under this theme, young people talked at length about their relationship with their YOT workers and the impact they had on their life. They spoke empathically about their YOT workers and described them using positive language. This demonstrates the impact YOT workers have on the young people they work with and how crucial it is to build a positive relationship with them. When asked to describe their YOT worker in three words, the answers were overwhelmingly positive demonstrating the importance of this relationship in the young person's life;

> *"He's a sick guy" (P209)*

"The best ever" (P210)

As well as the description of their YOT worker, young people talked about the characteristics that many YOT workers possessed. They spoke about how their YOT workers were both understanding and non-judgemental. This allowed young people to talk to their YOT worker about a range of issues including any addiction problems. Young people valued having someone who was there to support them and advise them on a range of issues;

> *"I feel like she cares about me and that she wants me to do well. I feel like she's probably proud of how I've changed" (P208)*

> *"Just someone there who's advising you not to go and do certain things, it's always there someone helping you know?" (P209)*

Young people were mindful that although their YOT worker was there to help, they had to be willing to cooperate with them. The young people acknowledged the importance of being motivated to work with their YOT worker and change their behaviour.

> *"If you can't speak to them, there is no point in coming to YOT, is there really?" (P209)*

> *"Like your YOT worker will be there…..you need but you've got to be willing to work back" (P210)*

5.4.2 Theme 2: Offending Lifestyle

Throughout the interviews, young people spoke about the many different factors which contributed to their offending behaviour. These have been termed part of the 'offending lifestyle' and this theme is split into sub-themes: individual and situational factors. The individual factors cover any individual aspects which contributed to offending, whereas the situational sub-theme examines any factors which influenced offending but came from an environmental source. Young people felt that most factors which influenced their offending came from both individual factors and situational sources.

5.4.2.1 Individual

Young people talked about the variety of individual influences which contributed to their offending. These centred on their motives for offending, immaturity, emotions and having a sense of inevitability over their offending.

Young people talked about their motives for offending and recognised that offending served a purpose for them, they spoke about how the end goal was to make money or to have fun with their friends. Learning that there were other methods to achieving those goals could help them move away from crime.

> *"Depends on how you see it, if you see it as easy money, you'll do it, but if you don't, you'll get a job" (P203)*

> *"Some people just realise half way through that what am I doing? Why am I robbing this shop? Like they could get a job, get their own money, buy the stuff I am robbing, realising that I am doing it wrong, but other kids just think nah, it's just free, whatever" (P206)*

Immaturity, being young and childish, was felt to contribute to offending behaviour. Young people described a reason for their offending as being young and "*a bit of an idiot*" (*P205*). They recognised and attributed some of their offending to adolescent-limited behaviour and that young people explored boundaries of what was acceptable behaviour;

> *"Young and childish, innit, just laughing and messing about" (P209)*

> *"I think I was just a bit young, and immature" (P210)*

Young people talked about how their emotions were related to why they offended. They considered how they often acted on impulse and made offending decisions on the spur of the moment. This highlights that young people often acted on impulse and did not always think about the consequences of their actions. One young person described themselves as an "*opportunist*" (*P204*) and how they only offended if they reacted to a situation they were in;

> *"Cause if I'm gonna hit someone, I'm gonna hit someone innit" (P204)*

> *"It's like a buzz. You get the police chase or just causing trouble" (P203)*

Young people also spoke about how anger played a role in offending and how it impacted on when, and in what situation, they responded. They spoke about acting on the spur of the moment, and how they would potentially lash out through anger rather than considering the consequences. Offending was an outlet for anger for many young people.

"Just get in trouble because they just need to get anger out" (P202)

"And they've got so much anger in them" (P210)

There was a consensus among young people that their initial offending was inevitable and there was little that could have been done to stop them offending. Young people believed that their offending was always going to happen and that several factors played a significant role. Young people offered an insight into their initial reasons for offending and explained how a turn of events led them into offending.

"[would anything have changed what happened] probably not" (P203)

"I don't know, I'm not too sure, I think it was always gonna happen anyway" (P208)

5.4.2.2 Contextual Factors

A range of contextual factors were discussed by young people as impacting on their offending behaviour. All young people spoke about the role that negative peers had on their offending behaviour and how crucial this was in explaining why they offended and reoffended. There was also a concept of 'status' talked about amongst the young people, and how they believed some young people offended to achieve status in a friendship group. In addition, all young people talked about the role that drugs and alcohol played in their offending with many talking about how they were either under the influence of drugs while offending or offended to fund their drug habit.

Firstly, young people were able to recognise that most of their offending behaviour was due to being in the wrong crowd and the negative influence that this had on their behaviour.

"Wrong crowd, hanging around with them lot, I offended" (P203)

"See, I were in the wrong crowd" (P210)

The quotes relating to this sub-theme show that young people often offended in groups and because they were in a group. They spoke about the negative influences being in a group had on them. One young person talked about the influence of their friends; it would just take one member of the group to want to offend, which then encouraged others to offend. The instigator could change from night to night.

> *"But we all, you do, we all have a negative on each other, so one time I wanted to do something….if I said to my mate, oh lets go and do a burglary, yeah, I might seem bad that night. But another night, he could say to me, oh yes, lets I'm going to do a burglary, you know that I mean? It's just whatever, whoever says it. Just in the mood aren't I? (P207)*

They spoke about how they would not have offended had they been alone, which demonstrated that peer influence is a key factor in offending behaviour;

> *"Group encouraged the behaviour. Wouldn't have done it if had been alone" (P201)*

Secondly, offending behaviour helped young people achieve a level of status amongst their group. This highlights that young people felt a certain amount of pressure to fit in and that offending provided a sense of belonging. As can be seen, young people talked about how others wanted to show off and create a name for themselves.

> *"To fit in, to think they're cool" (P202)*

> *"They'll go do it again, try to show them off, just try to be the big one aren't they?" (P206)*

> *"You do things to impress other people" (P213)*

The interviews with young people also suggested that there was a hierarchy among groups and how being head of that group provided a level of protection. Young people who were part of a group felt that others would not threaten them if they knew that there would be repercussions. This highlights the volatile nature of groups of young people and shows a need for protection by becoming the main person. This could potentially escalate into more serious offending.

"It makes people know where they are, if you get what mean, on the pecking order…but if they know that, they won't step to you and do anything like that" (P204)

Lastly, the impact of drugs and alcohol on offending behaviour was talked about by all young people. Many young people spoke about how both drugs and alcohol played a role in why they offended; they were either under the influence or offended to fund their habit. The practitioner interviews also highlighted the importance of drugs and alcohol and how these were often related to why some young continued to reoffend.

"I was stoned" (P206)

"[drugs or alcohol play a part] yeah, pretty much all of my offences" (P208)

"I was on drugs a lot, I used to drink quite a bit as well, I think I was drinking when I did the serious assault charge" (P210)

There was also an idea that the drug scene amongst young people played a large role in influencing why they offended. One young person in particular talked about how drugs changed the way the body responds in situations and felt this was more likely to lead to offending.

"If they take drugs they might, obviously, that changes how your body works" (P202)

"Drugs are massive" (P205)

5.4.2.3 Type of Offence

Young people who had committed multiple offences talked about the type of offences they had committed. They offered insight into their offending and why some crimes are committed, distinguishing between drug and violent crimes for example. One young person talked about how their drug offence was a result of them wanting to make money rather than about the act of selling drugs.

"I had an actual motive to make money, not for fun" (P212)

This contrasts with the reasons for violent offences, one young person described those who commit assault as angry, whereas those who sell drugs were motivated by money. This demonstrates that young people have a range

of motives for committing offences and it is important to recognise these vary from individual to individual;

> *"If fighting or minor, people who get into trouble for that, angry. People involved in drugs often want to make money for family" (P213)*

Young people who had committed multiple offences talked about the type of offences they would never commit, or offences which they regretted. One young person spoke about how they thought that they would never commit a serious offence and would stick to low-level minor crime.

> *"I wouldn't do armed robbery" (P204)*

Another youngster spoke about how looking back, there were specific offences that they regretted committing, because of the consequences of their actions, or the potential to cause harm.

> *"One I won't again is probably affray. I won't do that again. Definitely not…..Stupid of me, If I did do it and I actually hurt him, I could have killed him. I could have killed someone. If I did, then your life gone. You have to live with the regret of knowing that you've killed someone or hurt him." (P203)*

This shows that young people are aware of the severity of the situation and understand that there are harsher and life-long consequences.

Out of the repeat offenders, young people spoke at length about how they felt that their offending had changed over time. They thought that the offences they had committed when they were younger were minor low-level crimes and they identified a period of escalation in their offending after that.

> *"Obviously with my first offence, it was just fighting, and assaults and stuff like that. And then it turned into robbing cars and then stealing from cars and stuff like that…I have a serious assault which was the worst charge that I had" (P210*)

Young people were aware of the type of offences which were deemed more serious and this was reflected in the outcomes they were given. Another young person spoke in detail about the progression of offending;

> *"When I was younger innit, throwing stones at cars, climbing on roofs, taking things but not like robbing intentionally….getting chased by the*

police. All sorts of things, just what my group of mates did. And then we just carried on just doing kid things and then as we got older, things started getting different, we started robbing and that. And we started doing burglaries" (P209)

This young person was able to clearly identify a progression of offences from when they were younger and up until the point of interview. Young people were aware that their offences changed and increased with seriousness the older they got.

5.4.3 Theme 3: Context for Change

Young people talked at length about the circumstances which were needed in order to make a change and move away from their offending lifestyle. These were grouped into sub-themes; individual and situational factors. Individual factors focused on self-motivation for change, maturity and having something to lose. In contrast, situational factors were the support of other people, having something else to do and the future impact of offending. These factors are similar to those described by YOT practitioners in the interviews, as they spoke about the importance of support, self-motivation and pro-social relationships.

5.4.3.1 Individual

Young people considered individual motives as the most crucial in making changes in their behaviour. Being determined to change and making those changes for themselves was central. In addition, many thought they had moved away from offending because they had matured and considered offending to be childish. Young people spoke about how having something to lose was one of the key reasons for their desistance from crime. In this, self-motivation was critical, and they talked about how changing behaviour was for personal benefit rather than for other people;

"you do it for yourself, it's not really to please anyone, it's to sort yourself, it's for yourself" (P205)

Young people who were currently not offending were keen to avoid any future offending. However, while they were aware that they could not control all

situations which could increase the likelihood of reoffending, they did demonstrate a desire to stop offending.

> *"You never know. I might be back. Hopefully not though" (P204)*

> *"I feel like I want to stay out of trouble innit. I don't want to do this stuff anymore, But I can't predict the future so I don't know" (P208)*

> *"We all say were not gonna do it anymore…but anything can happen" (P209)*

> *"Erm yeah. Why would I ever get back into crime? (P211)*

Offending was associated with childish and immature behaviour and young people talked about having grown out of crime. They spoke about having to settle down and how they had realised that offending no longer provided a purpose; they were interested in other things. Some of them now thought offending was immature and no longer wanted to be part of that life;

> *"Starting to settle down and stuff" (P207)*

> *"I'm older now, I've got no choice…need to settle down, get my life together" (P211)*

> *"Realise its am immature thing" (P213)*

By far the most important reason for young people moving away from offending, was the idea of "*having something to lose*". This encouraged young people to stop committing offences because by continuing to offend they would be sacrificing something important to them. They acknowledged that this idea of having something to lose could be the difference between young people who desisted from crime and those who continued to offend. Mostly, they talked about how having a family, or having a child, provided a reason to stop offending, with a fear that they would lose this important part of that life if they continued. Others spoke more generally about how a young person needed to care about something in order to change.

> *"You get some kids who don't have anything, and they aren't bothered are they? But I have something don't I? I have a family, I have something to look forward to. To go home to." (P206)*

"Some aren't entirely bothered. Like I'm not bothered but if you've got something to lose and you are bothered" (P211)

5.4.3.2 Contextual Factors

Young people understood that along with individual reasons for changing their behaviour, contextual factors also had an impact on desistance from crime. They spoke about the impact of family support and how having something to do helped them move away from crime.

Young people saw their family, and the support they offered, as crucially important to desisting from crime. They spoke about the impact their offending had on their families and how they understood the consequences of their actions through how their family reacted to their continued offending. One young person spoke about how when he began working with YOT he understood that his "spur of the moment" offence had the potential to cause a lot of hurt to his family and to other people's families. Families offered a strong motivation to influence personal change.

"Oh thinking why would I want to put my family through that? Sitting there crying because they've lost their son, through something stupid" (P206)

"My family and wanted me to change, I wanted to change for them" (P208)

Young people spoke about the impact that their offending would have on their future life. Thinking about how hard it was to find employment and housing with a criminal record helped young people to understand the long-term impact of their offending.

"They should just sit down and have a big think about how its gonna impact on their life" (P210)

Lastly, young people talked about how feeling occupied and being busy helped them move away from offending. They recognised the difficulties of desisting from crime without having money, and that they just wanted somewhere to hang out with their friends. Improving their education and finding a job were important to changing their behaviour.

"It was just getting bored of doing the same things every day, there is nothing to do. There's nothing, kids my age just want somewhere to sit,

somewhere warm instead of sitting with their mum watching Corrie. Just want something to do" (P206)

"I wanna be active, I don't wanna be sat about chilling every single day. Doing nothing" (P209)

5.4.4 Theme 4: Punitive Measures

Throughout the interviews, young people spoke about a range of punitive measures that were used with them after they offended. They can be broadly split into the subthemes of the YOT approach, custody and acceptance of punishment. Young people acknowledged that YOT teams had a difficult job because a lot of their potential impact was related to other factors (motivation of young person, family life etc.). Custody was a deterrent to committing further offences and a reason why many young people complied with their current orders. Young people who had committed multiple offences talked about how the punitive measures were morally justified and highlighted that it was the law.

5.4.4.1 YOT Approach

As mentioned above, young people spoke about a range of methods that YOT employed as part of current orders. Young people spoke about the impact that YOT had on their lives and if there was a limit to that impact. Secondly, restorative justice measures were discussed, as was community payback and victim awareness. Lastly, the influence that other professionals had on young people was also explored, where young people spoke about their work with mental health and addiction workers.

Young people talked about the impact that YOT had on their offending and on their lives more generally. They spoke positively about the YOT approach and were aware that YOT teams have a difficult job. Young people were able to identify that YOT workers had a complicated job and that the success of their work was often dependent on the young people they worked with and the lifestyle choices they made.

"They are doing the best they can aren't they? I just, they're kids innit. They got to see what there trying to do, to understand it haven't they?" (P206)

"The only thing they can do is inform you about what's happening but obviously it's up to you what you do from it, from there innit" (P208)

"If you can't speak to them, there is no point in coming to YOT is there really? Just you're not gonna listen, you're not gonna do what they want you to do" (P209)

Young people talked about how they thought YOT were doing well and there wasn't much they would change about the process. Some young people suggested YOT showed them there was another way to achieve their goals;

"I don't think, just do what they do now" (P208)

"I don't know to be honest. Just advise them innit and then just try and show then, things in life they are better ways" (P209)

Participants reflected how they thought there would always be young people who continually reoffended and would keep coming back to YOT. They believed that there was not much that could be done about this group of people, until the young person wanted to make a change.

"There will always be lads like that. There's nothing you ever be able to do about them" (P211)

Young people spoke about the different types of work they did with their YOT workers. Community payback and reparation work were seen as a way of getting away from offence focused work and helped improve relations between the young person and their YOT worker;

"Get to know each other a bit better, have a chat. Get down to have a laugh not the theory stuff" (P203)

They discussed how sometimes when they met their YOT worker it was just for a chat about their offending behaviour and this was not always seen as useful for the young person.

"All we did was chat to me innit. It was a waste of my time" (P204)

However, when the conversations were targeted around offending behaviour, this was spoken about more positively. Young people understood how techniques to regulate their emotions were helpful to their daily life and how it could reduce offending.

"Techniques on how to calm down and stuff like that and breathing techniques" (P203)

"Managing my aggression and stuff" (P207)

Most of the work young people did with YOT focused on restorative justice techniques and centred on victim awareness. Young people spoke positively about this awareness and how speaking to YOT made them mindful of how their behaviour had impacted on their victim. In addition, young people spoke about how working with YOT encouraged them to think about the consequences of their actions.

"Open up a range of thought, about what could have happened" (P206)

"At first I didn't care about it, the guy, innit, and that, but then obviously, I started getting into it when I started doing my YOT, obviously it made me think about it innit" (P208)

"At first, I'm not gonna lie, I didn't have any guilt but now I feel guilty about everything. Everything I've ever done. I feel so guilty now. So I'm glad I wrote them. I hope it's alright for them. I wish it never happened" (P210)

However, some young people did not see the benefit of victim awareness and were not enthusiastic about the process, describing it as adding nothing of value to their order. Young people felt that their YOT workers were persistent when talking about victim awareness and using restorative justice techniques when appropriate.

"I wasn't doing no victim awareness" (P204)

"Why the fuck would I want to tell somebody why I burgled their house? (P211)

Young people felt that YOT were covering all angles of offending behaviour by providing a range of professionals from different areas. Many young people had been engaged with mental health or drug addiction workers and had found them useful. Having a range of professionals in one place was seen as helpful by young people but there was some confusion as to why this support was only offered after a young person had got into trouble;

"Why do you have to get into trouble, to get you people? (P202)

Young people thought YOT were dealing with a range of problems that a young person might face. The majority of the focus was on the impact of mental health problems and drug awareness and how this might influence offending behaviour.

"Everything they possibly can, for people with different problems" (P202)

"I had a lot of anger problems and mental health problems" (P210)

The impact that these professionals in the team (mental health workers and addiction workers for example) had was seen as generally positive, with young people appreciating the extra support that was offered. Young people acknowledged the role that mental health or drugs played in their offending and how targeting these issues could help reduce offending.

"Mental health workers, [have they had an impact], yeah definitely" (P208)

"Yeah, I've had addiction, I had….I'm off drugs, that's good!" (P210)

However, there were some young people who although they felt that it was positive to have a range of professionals, sometimes found it difficult when everyone was involved. Young people spoke about how this became repetitive and they found themselves repeating the same story many times. One young person spoke about how their drug habit served a function for them and made them feel better, and with this in mind, no drug awareness course would make an impact.

"Yeah it is and it isn't, obviously it is for the obvious reasons but then it is they are all coming to you and like if something happens everyone wants to come and speak to you and it just pissed you off doesn't it?" (P208)

"People just tell me the same things over and over again, I just like, I've heard it all before, you know what I mean?" (P209)

5.4.4.2 Impact of Custody

Young people spoke about the threat of a custodial sentence and the impact that this had on their motivation to comply with their current sentence. There was a discussion around the routine in prison and the stability that it provided

for young people. It was difficult for young people who were leaving a custodial setting because of the change in lifestyle and the lack of routine.

> *"Cause when they come here, they've got like no schedule. Nothing like that. So, they just go back to what they know. I mean like criminal offences" (P204)*

> *"I feel like it's a good thing that I had YOT set up and some routine for when I got out. Because its routine, 24 hours when you are in there if you come out with no routine, I wouldn't have known what to do with myself" (P208)*

Many young people talked about how the threat of custody ensured that they complied with their order. This was more prominent for those who had spent time in a police cell or in jail. It was interesting that young people recognised the importance of having custody as an option for young people and the influence it played in compliance of orders.

> *"I think it's the thought of mostly going to prison" (P202)*

> *"But other than that, I come here so I don't get locked up" (P208)*

> *"I might go to prison, it scared me" (P213)*

Young people who were on more serious orders (YRO-ISS for example) were aware that if they reoffended, they would breach their order and be sent to prison. There was also an idea that the older a young person was, the more likely it was that they would get sent to prison for serious offences, whereas courts tended to be more lenient with younger children.

> *"The older you get, the more likely you are to get sent down" (P203)*

> *"If I offend now, I'm going to jail, custody" (P209)*

5.4.4.3 Acceptance

Among the eight repeat offenders who took part in the interviews, there was a consensus of understanding about the punitive measures imposed by the courts and YOT teams. Young people considered that if a person offends then they must take the consequences of those actions.

"I knew right from wrong like, but it's a choice. It's your choice what you do" (P203)

"I that people that have done something bad, puts them in there, they deserve to be there and think about it" (P210)

There was also the idea that if the severity of offending increased, then the punishment was also harsher to be in line with the offence. Young people understood that this was the way the law works and this was acknowledged.

"But if you offend, it has to be done" (P203)

"Obviously more things have to happen" (P208)

5.4.5 Summary of Findings

The themes identified in the interviews demonstrate that there are a range of factors related to reoffending. Young people primarily spoke about the influence of peers and the role of drugs and alcohol in why they offended. They offered a unique insight into their offending behaviour and provided further understanding about how they had tried to move away from their offending lifestyle. They spoke about the challenges in attempting to desist from crime and how it was important to have something to lose as a motivating factor. Family support and a determination to change were also crucial. The combination of positive relationships with family, peers and YOT workers all helped to contribute towards desistance from crime.

YOT teams were able to use a range of methods with young people and encouraged them to think about the consequences of their behaviour and taking part in measures like restorative justice. YOT teams deal with individual needs as well as looking at offending behaviour. While not all young people were able to see the benefit of victim awareness, most young people spoke positively about engaging with any victims as it allowed them to think about the impact of their behaviour and feel remorse.

Young people saw custody as a deterrent and for those who had been in a custodial setting, they expressed no desire to return and complied with their

orders because of this threat. This may be due to the small numbers in this sample who had been sentenced on a custodial order.

Overall, young people had an acceptance that the youth orders they were on were as a result of their own behaviour and understood that if they wanted to change, it was down to them. With positive support from their family, peers and YOT workers, along with a desire to change and feeling like they had something to lose by continuing to offend, young people were able to move away from an offending lifestyle and start their path to desistance from crime.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the overarching themes identified across the three research phases. This thesis aimed to explore what factors were associated with young people who reoffend and the implications for LYOT practice. Using a mixed methods approach, a broader picture of reoffending has been presented. The case-file analysis explored reoffending by young people in Lancashire in terms of contact with the justice system and prolific offending. The further two phases of research, interviews with practitioners and young people provided a deeper perspective of reoffending and offered an opportunity for both groups to explore what the case file data found as well as what they considered to be related to reoffending.

This chapter focuses on five key findings from the research; prolific offenders with complex needs, variability of cases, moving from a risk-based approach to a strengths-based model, the influence of relationships and the system context. These findings will be discussed along with how these results compare to previous research. The literature review (*Section 3.8*) demonstrated that due to the change in the YJS in recent years, there is less known about the current group of young people in the justice system, who have a high reoffending rate. Therefore, the research aimed to address this gap and understand who the young people are who remain in the system, and what contributes towards their reoffending.

6.2 PROLIFIC OFFENDING WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

The main finding from this research was the presence of a group of young people who were responsible for a high number of re-offences and who displayed a range of complex needs. The evidence for this spans all three research phases and demonstrates that further work is needed to fully understand this group of young people.

The case-file analysis used a previous measurement of prolific young offenders to define the group as those who committed over 25 offences in one year and

who went on to reoffend the following year. When using this definition on a LYOT cohort, 37 young people were identified as prolific offenders. This analysis showed that the majority of these young people had begun their offending before the age of 14, received significantly more contact with LYOT for their offences, committed an average of 40 offences each, were general offenders and overall committed more serious offences. This group were responsible for 44.96% of all offences committed, in comparison to the 208 young people who were not identified as prolific offenders. These results concur with earlier findings, which have demonstrated that there is a small group of young people who are disproportionately responsible for a number of offences (Baglivio et al., 2014; Kennedy et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2018; Piquero et al., 2007; YJB Cymru, 2012; YJB, 2015). The previous research found that this group tend to begin offending early, with specialisation in the types of offences increasing as the number of offences increases (Piquero et al., 2007). In line with Moffit's (1993) developmental taxonomy of antisocial behaviour, young people who begin offending earlier are more likely to become life-course persistent offenders and reoffend across their life. These results are also in line with the current changes in the YJS, which has seen a reduction in the numbers of young people offending, revealing a smaller group within the system who are responsible for a greater proportion of re-offences each, and who are reoffending from an earlier age (Kennedy et al., 2018)

These findings are consistent with previous work and the results add to the growing literature about the reoffending patterns of a group of serious, violent and chronic offenders (Baglivio et al., 2014). In addition to this research, Johns et al., (2018) when identifying this group, found that prolific offenders were different from other young people who offend in the reasons they offend. When this group was explored with practitioners, they were able to identify a similar group, which they described as being chronic offenders who displayed multiple complex needs. Practitioners focused on the frequency and volume of offending by this group and spoke about the number of offences they committed and their continued contact with LYOT. They thought that they worked with more repeat offenders than first time entrants and this contributed towards their understanding of a prolific group of young people with complex needs.

This finding was also identified in the case-file analysis that assessed the association of contact with YOT with reoffending patterns. The analysis showed that the group who received LYOT contact for their first offences were more likely to begin their offending before the age of 14, were significantly more likely to reoffend, receive contact with LYOT for their re-offence, were more diverse offenders and offended over a longer time period. Young people who received contact from LYOT had a more serious first offence and continued to commit more serious crimes. The prolific offender group were significantly more likely to receive LYOT contact for their first offence. This supports the practitioners' assertion that they come into contact with a prolific offender group, who continued to receive LYOT contact.

This finding raises concerns over the type of contact that YOTs have with young people as it is associated with reoffending. These results are in line with previous research, which has found that contact with the justice system leads not only to reoffending but to an increase in the risk of reoffending (McAra and McVie (2009). This further mirrors research in the area, which has found that criminal justice sanctions often have a negative impact on reoffending (Huizinga et al., 2003; Petrosino et al., 2010). The findings indicate that where contact with the justice system and with YOTs occurs, this contact must be made relevant for young people to achieve behavioural change.

The findings suggest that the justice system, instead of working with young people to move away from offending, is instead associated with reoffending. Whilst practitioners did not use terms such as chronic and prolific to describe this group, they were referring to young people who commit a high number of offences. The terms, chronic and prolific, have been found to mask key aspects of offending by young people: the volume of offending; the frequency of offending; persistence; and the seriousness of offending (Johns et al., 2018).

Along with persistent offending, practitioners thought that this current client group had multiple needs. These individuals were more complex, in terms of the life challenges they faced. Practitioners highlighted that the level of welfare concerns about this group were more severe than in the past. Previous research has indicated that young people who are serious, violent and chronic

offenders can be predicted on the ACEs that they have experienced as a child, demonstrating that this group of persistent young people do experience multiple traumatic events and have many complex needs (Fox et al., 2015). This concern is supported by recent Welsh research, which found that young people who are involved in high-volume, high frequency and persistent offending are a fundamentally different group of young people who exhibit a range of different needs (Johns et al., 2018). For example, practitioners in this study talked about how prolific young people were characterised by backgrounds affected by drug, alcohol, family and attachment needs, domestic abuse, peer influence and poor mental health. This supports the work of Kennedy et al. (2018) who found that chronic offending is linked to substance misuse, low academic achievement, peer influence, family and community factors demonstrating that these young people experience multiple and severe disadvantages across domains.

The practitioners considered that this group exhibited complex needs which spanned across their home and family life. Similarly, this assertion is supported by previous research which found that this group of young people have little experience of care, support and opportunities to succeed and be valued (Johns et al., 2018; Kennedy et al., 2018). The practitioner opinions on these multiple needs is reflected by the recent review into the YJS where Charlie Taylor (2016) discussed the idea that offending services should be integrated with other children's services working to target the multiple needs (dysfunctional and chaotic families, drug and alcohol misuse and physical and emotional abuse) that young people who offend have. The range of needs exhibited by young people who persistently offend require specialised support by trained staff, which can target the underlying causes of offending; the trauma model (*Section 3.7*) provides such a model by working to support young people who have experienced childhood distress. Young people in the interviews did not refer to themselves as chronic offenders, although some had committed a number of re-offences. They instead focused on the range of factors, which had led them to reoffending, which is in line with the practitioner opinions on family life, relationships, drugs and a disengagement from education.

Practitioners were specifically concerned that there was an overlap between this complex group and the care system. They thought that being in the care

system further disadvantaged young people and led to offending in care homes which otherwise would not have been reported. While the case-file analysis did not record if a young person was involved with the care system, a minority of young people in the interviews did talk about being in care and living in care homes and how this contributed towards reoffending. The literature review established that there is a crossover between the young people in the justice system and the care system with increased offending by those who were part of both systems (Lee & Villagrana, 2015). Previous research has also demonstrated that young people in care are being over-criminalised; those aged between 13 and 15 in the care system are over 20 times more likely to be part of the justice system than those who are not in the care system (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2016). The previous research, along with practitioners' concerns in this current research, highlight that there is a crossover between the systems, which further criminalises young people. This indicates that young people in the care system need specialised care, with trained staff.

Previous research has found that young chronic offenders have received limited research interest, yet evidence has suggested this group are different in their type of backgrounds and offending behaviour, demonstrating that further work is needed to explore this group of persistent offenders (Johns et al., 2018; Kennedy et al., 2018). The current research is consistent with the previous literature and concludes there is a small group of young people within the YJS responsible for a disproportionate number of re-offences and who present with complex needs. To address this range of complex needs, the YJS needs specialised staff who are able to identify and respond to these young people. Currently, YOTs are made up of several different seconded professionals who each bring their own expertise and methods of working. However, consistency in approach and cohesion within the workforce will better support this vulnerable group.

There are a number of ways in which a specialised service could be created. These vary between making changes within the existing system and approaches that would require a significant change in the YJS. While this would require considerable discussion and consultation, the evidence

presented in this thesis provides support for numerous methods. Within the existing model of youth justice, those who work in YOTs should be recruited directly to work with this cohort. This would ensure a consistent approach whereby all staff are working towards the same goals. Staff would either have a background in youth studies, youth justice, criminology or a related subject area. Further training would ensure that all staff members are working towards a model which focuses on strengths and moves away from the current risk focus approach. Staff members need to understand what works to reduce reoffending and to tailor their interventions to the specific needs of the child. At present, YOT workers are seconded to work in the teams and come from a range of approaches, some holding case files and others working across cases. This is not a conducive working environment as staff are often working with young people using a variety of models. This new model would not require the experience that aligns to any one of the current agencies. Instead they would require the flexibility and skills that are required to access and work across the all agencies. As well as liaison with the police, social services (adult and child), these practitioners may be required to work with housing departments, the Department of Work and Pensions, as well as Further/Higher Education establishments. Their core skills may involve counselling and project management. This would require a new type of practitioner, who can work seamlessly across agencies to solve underlying reasons behind offending behaviour. In addition, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of relationships between YOT workers and young people has in helping to reduce reoffending, therefore a specialised workforce should prioritise building relationships thereby responding to young people's needs.

A more fundamental change to the staffing structure of YOTs would be the inclusion of a psychologist led team. At present, young people can access support from the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service if they meet certain criteria but this does not often take account of offending behaviour. A new model would incorporate teams of psychologists to work with children and young people who offend and offer expertise in helping young people both understand their offending behaviour and move towards desistance from crime. This would include forensic psychologists, as well as educational and clinical psychologists. This model would ensure that underlying causes of offending

and reoffending are addressed. While forensic psychologists are currently working in youth custodial establishments, they are not based in the community, and could help young people break the cycle of reoffending. There has been support for this model based on the work of Enhanced Case Management which uses a structured assessment tool to work with young people and is led by a psychologist.

In addition, the YJS was originally designed to work with a larger cohort of young people who, while exhibiting a range of needs, did not display this level of complexity. As this less complex group has been diverted out of the system, the young people remaining are by nature, more complex and are responsible for the high reoffending rate. As the evidence has shown that the majority of factors, which contribute towards reoffending lie outside of the justice system, an integrated youth support service which can address these multiple needs may be best placed to work with these young people. This idea has been proposed by Haines and Case (2018) as a way of providing an alternative form of justice and in line with positive youth justice.

6.3 VARIETY OF CASES

The results presented in this thesis demonstrate that the young people who YOT practitioners are working with are a unique group. Although they share many characteristics, the factors that contribute towards their reoffending varies between young people.

The case file analysis highlighted the wide variety in the type of re-offences committed as well as the range of outcomes given to young people. There were 16 categories of offences for the re-offences committed demonstrating that when young people re-offend, they display different offending behaviour and therefore need an individual approach from their YOT workers. The diversity index provided in the results section (*section 5.2.2.8*), demonstrated that under the contact with YOT group, young people are diverse in the types of offences committed, along with the prolific offender group who also committed a variety of offences. This suggests that young people who reoffend are a heterogeneous group in the types of offences committed. This finding is in line

with previous research, which found that prolific offenders are more diverse in their offending, with specialisation increasing with age (van Domburgh et al., 2009, Piquero et al., 2007). Previous research has also found that the motivation for offending varies by type of offence (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2007), demonstrating the need for YOTs to take account of the multiple reasons for offending. For example, young people often commit offences for financial gain, whereas other offences are motivated by anger (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2007; Haigh, 2009; Sigfusdottir, Farkas and Silver, 2004).

The case-file analysis demonstrated that patterns in reoffending could be identified for young people who offend in Lancashire. The frequency of re-offences committed, the type of offence, the type of outcome given and the seriousness of offending all provide insight into how reoffending within the YJS occurs. While 88.2% of the cohort re-offended after their first offence, the total number of re-offences ranged between 2 and 106, indicating that young people who reoffend are a diverse group. While offender typologies have not been fully explored with young people, evidence from adult offenders suggests that typologies based on frequency can be identified; one-time offenders, occasional, repeat, chronic and career offenders, with similarities within groups (Svensson, 2002; Gitens, 2011). Whilst these groups have not been applied to a cohort of young people, the results from the case-file analysis demonstrate that there is a diverse nature in the number of re-offences committed, and typologies could be helpful for YOTs to work effectively. Since this group of young people are so diverse in the nature of reoffending, YOTs need to be flexible and adaptable in their approach.

In addition to the results from the case-file analysis, the interviews also provide evidence for a flexible approach as those who reoffend are not a homogeneous group. Practitioners spoke at length about how difficult it was to address reoffending, as the factors, which were important for one young person, were not the same for another young person; the current approach is narrow and does not allow for flexibility (Taylor, 2016). There were a range of reasons but both practitioners and young people discussed immaturity as an explanation for reoffending. These findings are not novel and have been found in previous research on reoffending; young people's immaturity and high levels of

impulsivity have been found to maintain a cycle of offending (Higgins et al., 2013; Rocque, 20150). Moffitt (1993) and Worrall (2012) found similar results with a lack of maturity linked to reoffending. Furthermore, practitioners and young people considered reoffending to be a result of the sense of thrill that offending provided. These findings further evidence that offending creates an emotional response, which young people are looking to repeat. This has been a consistent finding in interviews with young people (Worrall, 2012), who spoke about the 'thrill of the chase' and the 'buzz' that offending gives them.

The above paragraph has explored the factors that both practitioners and young people linked to reoffending. However, the groups disagreed on the level of importance that the role of drugs and education were given. In the practitioners' interviews, they discussed at length how they thought the use of substances was one of the most common reasons for reoffending, with young people either under the influence of substances or offending to fund a habit. However, in contrast, while young people did talk about having addictions and their use of substances, they did not see it as contributing towards their reoffending. They identified that their YOT workers were keen to address their substance misuse but felt that this was unnecessary and would only succeed if they were willing to engage in the intervention. Substances have been consistently linked to both offending and reoffending in previous literature, although there have been inconclusive findings over substance use and substance misuse (April & Weinstock, 2018; Barnes et al., 2011; Cottle et al., 2001; Mulder et al., 2011). The current study does not offer conclusive findings but adds to the debate on how much influence substances have on reoffending by young people. Young people during the interviews did consider that for drug programmes to work, they had to be engaged and want to change this behaviour; a finding consistent with previous research (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014).

A second factor where there was disagreement between the interview groups was on the role that education played. Practitioners discussed how they felt that being disengaged from education or being excluded from school contributed towards reoffending by young people. They thought that when young people were not in education, they were more likely to reoffend. Therefore, the work they did with young people was focused on getting them back into education

and finding them training opportunities. Whilst the link between education and offending behaviour has been consistently found (Farrington, et al., 2009; YJS, 2005), there is limited evidence on the links between education and reoffending; these results add to the literature and indicate an association. Taylor (2016) highlighted the link between education and desistance from crime and his review concluded that education should be at the heart of the YJS. By contrast, the young people interviewed here did not recognise education as being significant in their reoffending. They instead spoke about how, in order to move away from reoffending, it was important to keep occupied and learn a new skill, but did not talk about education specifically. This is contrary to previous research, which found that young people involved with YOTs were able to identify that education and training opportunities were effective methods for reducing reoffending (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). The results in the current study, could be explained by young people being disengaged from the education system and instead choosing to focus on training and employment opportunities. YOTs need to take account of this discrepancy in opinions.

What is notable about these results is that while participants largely discussed the same factors, the importance they gave to them varied considerably. This further supports the idea that young people need an individualised approach to address reoffending, in addition to a work force which is specialised in working with complex and multiple disadvantages. When viewed together, the results from this study show that in terms of reoffending and the views of young people and practitioners, those who reoffend are complex individuals who often have chaotic lifestyles with a lack of change in the wider situational factors. The study has demonstrated that offending is rarely about the offence and instead a combination of factors which span the remit of multiple agencies thus providing support for the multi-agency model. As many of the factors found in this research are outside the control of the justice system, it would follow that the approach to addressing reoffending also lies outside of the justice system; instead an integrated youth support service which can help young people to tackle their concerns would be beneficial. The changes in the justice system have demonstrated that for those remaining, a *'one size fits'* all approach is not suitable and instead young people who reoffend need an individualised flexible pattern of working.

An integrated support service for young people would represent a fundamental change in the YJS and one that is not without its challenges. While this topic deserves much dedicated research about how such a service would work in practice, this research highlights a number of key principles. The aim of the integrated service would be to focus on early intervention to reduce the numbers of young people who offend, combined with a service which supports young people who do offend, to not reoffend. This service would sit alongside other youth support agencies so young people are not further criminalised by the services they engage with. These will work in parallel with substance misuse, youth work and mental health services. By integrating the service within a wider support team, young people can work with a key worker rather than relying on a variety of experts as under the current YOT model. This model would further allow local services to respond to the needs of young people in their area and allow for innovation. This support model will be led by and include a team of psychologists working on strengths and resilience to provide young people with opportunities to build a non-offending identity.

This differs from the current YOT model in terms of approach and style. The model focuses on the prevention of reoffending as well as a reduction in reoffending. The current blanket approach to youth justice fails to take account of the complex journeys that have led to young people offending. The new model would work with individualised support plans to help young people to address their behaviour. A key limitation in the youth justice field is that there is a lack of research on what works to reduce and prevent reoffending, therefore it the new model will be routinely evaluated to ensure the support given achieves its goals. Practice should be grounded in evidence-based research. Psychologists in the service would be directly recruited to work with this cohort thereby providing a consistent approach. The model would continue to support the focus on decriminlisation and decarceration. This research has found that contact with the current YJS is associated with further offending, the new integrated model will put young people at the centre and support this cohort appropriately.

It is unlikely that offending will ever be eliminated but by using the seamless approach suggested here, both young people who offend and reoffend will be supported.

6.4 RISK-FOCUSED APPROACH

The third overarching finding was centred on moving from a risk-focused approach to a strengths-based model. Evidence from both the sets of interviews demonstrates that although the YJS has seen changes, risk remains the dominant discourse in dealing with young people who reoffend.

The interviews with practitioners took place as the ASSET plus assessment framework was being introduced across YOTs. The change moves forward from the risk-based ASSET assessment, and instead focuses on a strengths-based approach and on the factors that encourage desistance and not on the risk of reoffending. It was intended to provide a holistic assessment of young people and to take account of the multiple factors which lead to offending. During the interviews practitioners discussed a range of definitions for desistance from crime. Some discussed how they thought that a reduction in the frequency or seriousness of offending should constitute desistance while other staff members thought only a complete cessation of offending counted. This is reflected in the current literature where there are multiple definitions of desistance; as academics currently measure desistance as a reduction in offending, a reduction of seriousness, a change of crime type, or a complete cessation of offending (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Kazemian, 2007). In addition, practitioners considered desistance to be a process which young people progress through rather than a static entity and this is in line with the most recent literature which proposes desistance is a dynamic concept with multiple pathways out of offending (Bushway, Thornberry & Krohn, 2003; Haigh, 2009). While providing practitioner evidence for the complexities in definition and measurement, it does raise questions about the efficacy of ASSET plus if practitioners are unaware of how it is defined and used.

The practitioners in the research were strong advocates of the young people they work with, favouring care over control. They supported a welfare approach

characterised by support and empathy over a purely punitive model. This supports earlier findings by Morris (2015) who also found that YOT practitioners viewed the welfare concerns of their client groups as their priority. This finding is further supported by recent evidence from the Taylor (2016) review as well the Children First, Offenders Second model which focuses on children's rights and needs (Bryne & Case, 2016). During the interviews, the practitioners spoke about the process that young people go through when they are referred to YOT; this involves assessment by different professionals. Young people noted that they were cared for by a range of staff which was helpful, however, they were unhappy with the lack of continuity between professionals. This further demonstrates that repeat offenders need an individualised approach, where previous personal disclosures and programmes are taken into account.

While the practitioners did favour a welfare approach towards working with young people, the current methods are risk focused. For example, the use of custodial sentences on young people. There was a general consensus amongst practitioners that the use of prison for young people was not a conducive environment for addressing reoffending. There was a concern that while custodial settings can positively impact on young people in some cases, for the majority it was not an appropriate sentence. This is in line with the national statistics on the reoffending rate following custody, which increases as the number of custodial sentences increase (MoJ & YJB, 2018b).

By contrast, young people discussed how they complied with their orders for fear of being sent to prison. However, this is contrary to previous research which found that young people think custody is not conducive to reducing reoffending (Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). A possible explanation for this result may be that, only a minority had spent time in prison and for those who had not, the '*threat of custody'* played a role in their compliance with orders. The current sample of young people could be basing their opinion on information from their friends or from other sources. This is a surprising finding given that programmes such as 'Scared Straight', which temporarily introduces young people to prison have little supporting evidence (College of Policing, 2014). This indicates the differing views on the use of custodial sentences for young people and shows

that the primary aim of custody is to combat the risk posed by young people who reoffend.

Under a risk framework, assessments are used to map programmes for young people to address the reasons for reoffending. However, young people did not see these programmes positively. During the interviews, it was discussed how offence focused work was not always the right approach for young people. This is in contrast to McAra and McVie (2007; 2010) who found that offence focused work was more valuable for young people than education focused work. The findings of the current study do support recent findings from the HM Inspectorate of Probation (2016) report which found that YOT practitioners spent more time on offence focused work instead of on building relationships, as they felt under pressure from management to do so. In addition, young people spoke at length about the techniques they had learned from their LYOT worker, such as how to manage their aggression and breathing techniques for staying calm. This further supports the HM Inspectorate of Probation (2016) report that found young people were more able to desist from crime if they had experienced interventions on problem solving techniques, which they could use in their everyday lives. This demonstrates that while under a risk approach, there is little flexibility to support young people with problem solving techniques and methods for coping, these approaches are more favourable than the current focus on working through their offences.

Restorative Justice (RJ) was another method discussed during the interviews. While this does not sit under the risk approach and was intended to put the victims at the heart of the justice system, there were a range of contrasting views. While practitioners generally supported the restorative justice process in helping to address reoffending, there were reservations. Practitioners felt that the process could help young people to accept responsibility for their actions and empathise with their victims, by using in-direct or direct communication. This is supportive of previous research, which has demonstrated that RJ programmes have helped young people reduce their reoffending (Rodriguez, 2007; Wong et al., 2016). While practitioners acknowledged the RJ process could leave a lasting impression on some young people, it was not a suitable approach for all of their clients. This furthers the debate on the suitability of RJ

with young people, as Cunneen and Goldson (2015) argue that a level of maturity is needed to understand RJ. While RJ continues to be encouraged by the YJB, and the Taylor (2016) review, RJ does not work in addressing reoffending for all young people and therefore measuring the levels of RJ used in each YOT may be counterproductive.

There was a similar narrative in the interviews with young people; where young people had participated in an RJ intervention, they talked about the lasting impact it had on them. However, some young people did not believe that RJ was a valuable process and did not want to take part in direct or in-direct contact with their victim; this was especially true where the offence had been a violent one. This questions the appropriateness of a using a general RJ approach for all cases; for RJ to be effective, young people need to have a level of maturity to take responsibility for their actions. Larkins and Wainwright (2014) have further questioned the suitability of RJ for all crimes, as in their interviews, young people were unwilling to take part if they had committed a violent offence.

The current system utilises a risk framework, and while there have been changes in the system to move towards a strength-based approach, this is hindered by the structural procedures within the YJS which are focused on risk. While the current justice system prioritises a punitive response characterised by risk and incarceration, it is difficult to incorporate the ideas of positive justice. The evidence from this research shows that practitioners are keen to promote the welfare of the child but are operating within a system of risk. The move towards positive youth justice and to treating children first, and as offenders second, should be encouraged with guidance from the YJB providing a clear steer. A strengths-based approach provides a more holistic child centred view.

6.5 IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The fourth key finding from this research was on the role that relationships have on young people who reoffend. While the case-file analysis focused on the reoffending patterns of young people by examining prolific offending and contact with the justice system, the interviews with practitioners and young

people provided an in-depth picture of the impact of relationships on the lives of young people. Both sets of interviews demonstrated that the relationship between the practitioner and young people was crucial to achieving behaviour change, as well as the role that families and friends played.

Practitioners talked about how the strength of their own relationship with a young person was crucial in understanding how reoffending could be addressed. During the interviews, they discussed how important it was that young people felt that they had someone to talk to, and someone who could support them. They found themselves in between being a source of support for young people and trying to work through reoffending. This supports previous research, which has found that a good YOT practitioner-young person relationship was built on trust, support and consistency (Johns et al., 2018). While practitioners felt that the relationships were important, they do not often get the time to build them. This is in line with HM Inspectorate of Probation's (2016) report which found that YOT practitioners spent more time on offence focused work instead of on building relationships, as they felt under pressure from management to do so. With the focus of YOT practice on their key aims, the importance of relationship building is overlooked by policy and in practice, yet this relationship remains central to addressing reoffending.

Similarly, young people highlighted the importance of their relationship between themselves and their YOT worker. All participants described their YOT workers positively and felt that they had a good relationship with them, which ensured that they felt comfortable discussing their concerns. Young people talked about the connection they had with their worker, how they felt that their YOT worker was invested in their lives and cared about their futures, as well as providing consistent support. This was highlighted in research in Wales, with young prolific offenders, where it was found that it was important for these relationships to be built on trust, respect and good listening (Johns et al., 2018). The perception of an individual's well-being is strongly linked to the availability of meaningful relationships; therefore it is crucial that young people have the skills needed to build these positive relationships (Roy & Newbigging, 2011). Young people need to have at least one stable long-term relationship with a worker (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016).

The relationship between the YOT worker and young person has not been a centre of research, although it remains at the centre of the work that YOTs conduct (Drake, Fergusson & Briggs, 2014). This research has provided personal accounts of how much influence this relationship has in the lives of young people who reoffend, but also in how young people feel valued and respected by their workers. Practitioners should use these relationships to encourage young people to change their behaviour or to see a situation from an alternative view. There is a need for policy makers and YOT practice to take account of the importance of building stable and positive relationships between young people and YOT practitioners.

In addition, practitioners and young people discussed the importance of other relationships; namely friends and family. The practitioners and young people interviewed discussed the influence of negative peer groups on explaining reoffending. While practitioners talked about there being a gang mentality, young people reflected on how being in a group of friends had encouraged them to offend. These thoughts are supported by previous research, which has consistently found that being in a negative peer group, contributes towards reoffending (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cottle et al., 2001; Kennedy et al., 2018; van Domburgh et al., 2009; YJB, 2005). When considering how to address reoffending, practitioners were very clear, that young people needed to move away from previous negative influences and find pro-social peers. This was recognised by young people who were interviewed as they also spoke about reducing their peer group to move away from offending. Young people had formed a small group of friends after their offending, who were pro-social and did not take part in offending behaviour. They discussed how important their friendships were to them and their well-being. This is a finding mirrored in earlier work; young people who have friends who offend are themselves more likely to offend (Watts & McNulty, 2015). Moving away from negative influences has been found to link with desistance from crime (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016). Young people were able to acknowledge the influence of their relationships with peers in their reoffending and reflect that in order to reduce their reoffending, a move away from these peer groups was essential.

Practitioners also talked about how they thought the influence of a close intimate relationship, helped young people, particularly males, to address reoffending. This opinion is in line with previous research which has found similar results; having a girlfriend can help young offending males to desist from crime (Bersani et al., 2009; Theobald & Farrington, 2009; 2011). Although this factor is outside the control of the justice system, it is important to highlight; young people need opportunities where they can meet and engage with non-offending peers who can encourage a reduction in reoffending.

When considering the role of family, both practitioners and young people thought they played a significant role in explaining reoffending. Practitioners were concerned that young people who came from chaotic families were more likely to reoffend. The practitioner views are in line with Zara and Farrington's (2016) earlier research which has linked poor attachment and instability in the family to reoffending, along with poor relationships generally linked to reoffending. Conversely, young people recognised that their offending had an impact on their families and this made them want to change their behaviour. YOT workers who help young people maintain strong and stable relationships with their family encourage desistance from crime (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016; Larkins & Wainwright, 2014). This demonstrates that while the practitioners were able to identify that poor familial relationships contribute towards reoffending, young people did not acknowledge this as a factor. They, instead, focused on the strength of their relationships with their family, and how they wanted to address their reoffending because of them. Taking into account, that young people placed a high degree of importance on their relationships, it could be beneficial to include the family in the YOT process. This could help young people to understand the impact of their offending on their families. Using the principles of RJ, families could be included in influencing young people to change their behaviour.

Along with previous literature in the area, chaotic families and negative peer groups were identified as contributing towards reoffending. Although young people focused on the positives of their family relationships, they did recognise the negative influence of their peer groups. A key finding from this research was the impact that the YOT practitioner-young person relationship has on

reoffending. Practitioners need to be given the time and space in order to build healthy, consistent and stable relationships with the young people they work with. However, in the current climate of risk and a general focus on reducing reoffending, practitioners are not often given the time to create these meaningful bonds with young people. This research adds further evidence that young people should not be seen in isolation with their offending, but as young people who exist in a series of networks, with each having a contributory factor on reoffending.

6.6 SYSTEM CONTEXT

The discussion so far has explored the concepts of prolific young offenders, the impact that the variability of the cases has on YOT work, the risk focused approach as well as the influence of relationships in the lives of young people. The fifth overarching theme discusses the system context of youth justice, in that the YJS does not operate in isolation from other justice and political entities. Four key findings fit into this theme; the concerns with the measurement of reoffending, external attitudes, multi-agency working and the political changes in youth justice.

The results from the three phases of this research demonstrate multiple concerns with the current measure of reoffending. The measure does not take account of the frequency, diversity and severity of reoffending. The measure does not provide information on who is offending and if few young people are responsible for many re-offences. The case-file data shows that these patterns are important to understanding this behaviour. The issues with defining and measuring reoffending has major implications for how this is recorded. This concept was highlighted in the interviews with practitioners.

Practitioners discussed the ambiguity of defining and measuring reoffending, a debate mirrored in the literature (Payne, 2007). Practitioners spoke about the issues with reoffending only capturing recorded crime and how young people could be diverted out of the system but could still have re-offended. These views are also subject to much debate on how crime records will always overlook unreported and unrecorded crimes or crimes where there is no specific

victim (Zara & Farrington, 2016). Instead of relying on the reoffending measure to inform them, practitioners in this study gained their experience of reoffending by a young person being re-referred to LYOT. Practitioners showed little knowledge of the reoffending rates both nationally and in Lancashire. Many talked about how they thought reoffending was increasing but had no way of verifying this. A notable finding was the lack of knowledge by practitioners on the data reported by the YJB and the MoJ; data is reported every quarter and with YOTs success based on a reduction in reoffending, it was significant that practitioners were unaware of this.

While data is collected on the offence seriousness from YOT databases (YJB, 2016b) this is not incorporated into the measure of reoffending. The case-file analysis shows that young people who had contact with YOT and who were prolific offenders were significantly more likely to commit more serious offences than those who did not receive contact with YOT or who were not prolific offenders. This finding is consistent with previous longitudinal research which highlighted that those who commit a high number of offences are also violent offenders (Piquero et al., 2007). Furthermore, these results give weight to the argument that the group who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of re-offences are serious, violent and chronic offenders, who are quantitatively different in their reoffending patterns from other offenders (Baglivio et al. 2014).

Both the practitioners and young people were able to identify a pattern of escalation in the seriousness of offending, with case-file analysis data supporting this. The practitioners believed that young people were committing more serious offences and were concerned that young people were more willing to carry weapons than in previous years. This is partially supported by Lancashire offending statistics which show that while the actual number of violent offenders has decreased, they now account for a greater proportion of offences (YJB & MoJ 2018a; 2018b; 2018c). Further, these opinions are supported by national statistics, which show that weapon offences have increased since 2004. From 2017 to 2018, this type of offence committed by young people has increased from 4183 to 4492 (MoJ, 2018d). This supports the idea that young people are committing more serious and violent crimes.

Young people who had reoffended were able to identify patterns of escalation in the types of offending. They thought that their offences were more serious the older they got. Young people discussed how when they started offending, it was for petty crime, such as criminal damage or theft, with this escalating to burglary, robbery and violent offences as they aged. This is consistent with previous research which has highlighted that young people are able to distinguish between *'small'* and '*big'* crime with small crime referring to stealing, taking drugs, shoplifting and breaking into cars whereas big crime refers to robbery and weapon offences (Haigh, 2009). There is also an assumption of escalation with regards to reoffending behaviour with young people given more grave outcomes if they had committed a string of serious offences (Liu et al., 2011). These findings from the young people further corroborate the results from the case-file analysis; young people who were classed as prolific offenders did not begin their offending by committing more serious offences but gradually increased their severity and had higher overall severity scores.

These results from the three phases of research highlight the importance of the severity of offending. Seriousness is linked to reoffending and it would provide useful insight for YOTs when working with young people to understand trigger points where offending turns more serious. Providing information to the public and to academics about the seriousness of re-offences provides a more in-depth picture of reoffending, as frequency alone does not capture if a young person has escalated or de-escalated. Furthermore, sentencing guidelines indicate that the seriousness of offending should be taken into account when sentencing a young person, however, no validated measure of crime severity exists for young people (Sentencing Guidelines, 2017). Therefore, further research is needed on understanding the severity of re-offences committed by young people, and how these patterns can inform YOT practitioners on future reoffending.

While this is not an area that the case-files could investigate, the interviews with practitioners revealed a concern about how external attitudes influence reoffending by young people. Practitioners highlighted the negative coverage that young people who offend receive, and how this could contribute towards further offending. These opinions are consistent with previous research, which

has highlighted that young people who commit crimes receive negative press coverage (Hasley & White, 2008). For example, in 2016, two teenage girls were on trial for the torture and murder of a woman. The press entitled their articles *"Inside the mind of devil kids*" and *"Devils, how two innocent little girls turned into..."* (Sims, Perrie & Fruen, 2016; Wilson, 2016). This demonstrates how language can demonise young people. While practitioners did not discuss the process of how young people may internalise this language, labelling theory (Becker, 1963) provides support for their opinions. Social attitudes on offending by young people can influence the behaviour of this group; external labels that are received through the justice system can lead to stigmatisation (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951; 1972). This can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where the perceptions of a situation evoke behaviour, which makes those original perceptions true (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1948). This helps to demonstrate how negative opinions about young people who offend can reinforce offending behaviour. Young people by contrast, did not bring up the subject of attitudes towards them but focused on the relationships in their lives and how these were instrumental in behaviour change (see *section 3.4*).

YOTs were introduced as multi-disciplinary teams to reduce offending and reoffending. This research provides support for the multi-disciplinary teams, as the factors discussed by both the practitioners and young people are vast, and often need specialised support by trained professionals. Many young people in the interviews talked about the range of professionals from YOTs that they had been involved with. They thought having the relevant professionals together in one team was helpful for them to access the right support. This supports previous research by Alder et al. (2016) and Taylor (2016) who argue that the multi-disciplinary approach is a key strength of YOTs. As the causes of childhood offending are often beyond the justice system, it follows that the solution may also lie outside of the current YJS. Young people need a coordinated approach from a multi-disciplinary, integrated youth support service.

6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the overarching themes from the three empirical phases. The findings from the research have provided a unique insight into reoffending and understanding the factors which are associated with why young people reoffend. The results show that the YJS needs to be individualised, treat young people as children first and offenders second, have a specialised workforce and integrated child services to help address reoffending. The following chapter will discuss these implications in more detail as well as outlining the limitations and original contribution of the work.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CRITICAL THEMES AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of this thesis will examine the critical themes emerging from the research. It will also consider the limitations of the results in terms of their generalisability to other YOT cohorts. This chapter will also present the unique and original contribution to knowledge that the research has made, along with suggestions for future research. Lastly, the chapter will conclude the thesis and provide a steer towards what changes LYOT should implement. As this thesis was commissioned by LYOT, at the end of this chapter, a list of implications is provided so that LYOT can easily digest the key findings from this research.

7.2 CRITICAL THEMES

The YJS has seen substantial changes in recent years and is once again at a point of change (Haines & Case, 2018). The numbers of young people offending has reduced significantly, however, the reoffending rate has remained steady. As the numbers of young people reoffending have also reduced, it is often overlooked that young people who reoffend are responsible for a higher average number of re-offences, have a higher number of previous offences and that for the first time in reoffending statistics, those aged between 10 and 14 have the highest reoffending rate of all ages, including adults. The current system, which is based on a risk framework using a YOT model is not fit for purpose in addressing reoffending, therefore some change is needed to help support these young people.

This thesis aimed to address a gap in research about the current cohort of young people in the YJS, what contributes towards their reoffending and how LYOT can use this research to implement policy and practice. The mixed methods approach gave a deeper insight into reoffending than a mono-methodological study, and was able to overcome the limitations of quantitative and qualitative research by bringing together both approaches. The case-file analysis was able to use LYOT data to provide findings on the patterns of reoffending; this along with the insight of YOT practitioners and young people involved with LYOT have given a wealth of information about reoffending. The

results from the three methods of research have demonstrated some key implications, specifically young people who reoffend need support from a specialised workforce with an integrated approach. This research has also provided commentary on the nature of system contact and on the way in which reoffending is measured.

7.2.1 Specialised Workforce within an Integrated Service

This research has found the presence of a group of young prolific offenders within a LYOT cohort. This demonstrates that there is a small group of young people who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of re-offences, and who, from the qualitative data, display a range of complex needs. The variety and complexity of these needs was evident from the research phases; young people experienced concerns with addictions, negative peer pressure, poor neighbourhoods, disengagement from education and being in care. These young people represent some of the most vulnerable in society who need to be more effectively supported to move away from reoffending. This thesis argues that in order to address reoffending, a specialised workforce is needed. This workforce should be consistent in their approach, working under a trauma-informed model and should be experienced in working with complex young people. At present, YOTs are made up of multi-agency professionals, who all work differently, but the client base has changed to a smaller, more complex group and the workforce should reflect this change. In terms of specialisation, Wales have trialled a new assessment framework Enhanced Case Management (Cordis Bright, 2017) which uses a psychological perspective and provides a framework for supporting complex young people. The evaluation of the trial has shown encouraging results with reducing reoffending. Therefore, it is suggested a specialised workforce should include psychologists who can work with young people who have experienced multiple ACEs and childhood trauma, to help address the underlying causes for reoffending.

While it is evident from the research that practitioners are keen to promote the welfare of the young people they work with, they are restricted in what can be achieved in a risk focused system. The concept of risk remains the dominant discourse in youth justice (Smith & Gray, 2018). The findings from this thesis

are in line with Morris's (2015, pg.193) argument that "*the fluid and dynamic nature of risk combined with the complex and all too chaotic lives that many young people in the YJB have*" do not match with practitioners being able to adapt to issues as they arise. Although ASSET plus was intended to provide a holistic assessment of young people which considers the interactions between the factors in their lives and helps to identify relevant and appropriate interventions for young people, all the interventions focus on risk (Baker, 2014). In addition, concerns were raised on practitioners' understanding of the theory and evidence behind ASSET plus. A lack of understanding of the reasons why ASSET plus was implemented and how it works was identified and further training could help improve this.

The promotion of positive youth justice serves as an alternative model treating those who offend as children first and offenders second (Case, 2018). The model is focused on meeting the needs of children and gives greater status to young people as children. While risk remains the dominant discourse in youth justice, it is difficult to see how practitioners can change their methods of working to help support young people differently. This is hindered in part by the underlying causes of youth crime being outside the control of the justice system. Young people in this research experienced issues with drugs, homelessness, the care system, family conflict, deprived neighbourhoods, negative peer influences and disengagement from education; all these lie outside the justice system. Young people interviewed as part of this research rarely talked about the offence, and instead focused on the contributory factors to their reoffending. This indicates that the more effective method for addressing reoffending also lies outside of the justice system and with other agencies. There is encouraging evidence that the positive youth justice model has been applied within an integrated youth support service and has shown some success at reducing reoffending (Smith & Gray, 2018). It raises questions on whether the current justice system is the most effective model for helping young people who reoffend, given that the factors that contribute towards reoffending are outside of the control of the system. An integrated youth support service where young people are not criminalised, and can receive the support they need from external services, could provide an alternative model of addressing reoffending.

A more detailed discussion of what this service could look in practice is illustrated in *Section 6.3*.

7.2.2 Nature of System Contact

The focus in the YJS to divert young people away from formal sanctions has helped to reduce the numbers of young people offending and reoffending. However, this research has raised questions about the nature of system contact that young people receive. The case file analysis demonstrated that young people who work with YOTs are more likely to receive contact with YOTs in the future. This highlights the potential detrimental effects of the justice system on young people's reoffending. Therefore, the contact that YOTs do have with young people should be meaningful and based on promoting behaviour change, rather than purely offence-focused work. Both the interviews with practitioners and young people demonstrated that the contact received centred around risk and reducing the risk of reoffending. Young people took part in diversionary methods, community resolutions, restorative justice, drug interventions and custodial sentences, which are all part of a risk framework. However, those interviewed did emphasise the positives of learning problem solving skills along with relaxation techniques. This suggests young people would benefit more from a move away from risk focused interventions towards more positive behaviour management. At the heart of this contact is the relationship between YOT practitioners and young people, who in this research rated this relationship as crucial to help address reoffending. Contact, which prioritises the risk that young people pose and focuses on reducing that risk, tends to ignore the importance of personal relationships. YOT practitioners need to be given the time and space to build consistent and stable relationships with young people.

7.2.3 In-depth Measurement of Reoffending

The research has demonstrated that the way in which reoffending is defined has implications for how it is measured. The results from this research indicate that the current measure misses key aspects of reoffending. Along with the variety of explanations for reoffending, this research has demonstrated that multiple patterns of reoffending can be identified. There is diversity in the way in which reoffending manifests itself; some young people reoffend with high

frequency and others less frequently. Young people also commit a range of offences, which can develop as reoffending increases. There has been a distinct lack of research on the reoffending patterns of this cohort.

Previous research has found that using terms such as prolific and chronic to describe the level of reoffending by young people, masks a number of key aspects of offending; volume, frequency, persistence and the seriousness of offending, all of which are key to understanding reoffending (Johns et al., 2018). The current measure does not take account of these patterns and instead presents a binary count and does not provide information on whether multiple offenders are responsible for the re-offences. The current measure ignores the impact of severity, diversity and frequency on reoffending patterns. This should be amended to provide a more complete picture of who is reoffending, what re-offences are being committed and how diverse these offenders are. This could help both YOTs and policy makers explore any changes in patterns of reoffending and could indicate the success of interventions.

Taking into consideration these critical implications, there is now a strong body of evidence to support an individualised, child appropriate, positives focused approach to working with young people who reoffend. This group have a myriad of multiple and complex needs which require a multi-agency response, with recognition that their offending is a result of a combination of factors. This thesis has demonstrated that contact with the system has a negative impact on young people's reoffending trajectories. This indicates that where possible, young people should still be diverted away from the system. Where young people do require further support, this should be from a professionalised and specialised workforce, using a trauma-based framework to support young people break their cycle of reoffending.

7.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The thesis provided a unique opportunity to bring together the reoffending patterns of young people involved with LYOT along with their views and the views of practitioners. However, the results should be seen in conjunction with the limitations of this research.

The case-file analysis was reliant on the data recorded on the LYOT system, which was open to reporting inaccuracies. As discussed in *Section 4.3.1* the original aim of this phase was to replicate the national reoffending measure on a Lancashire cohort. However, it was not possible to gain access to the multiple data systems required to undertake this analysis. The LYOT system only records offences for young people they either work with or who they are notified about through the courts and the police. Therefore, there is a possibility that not all young people who offended in the time period were recorded on the system.

In addition, the offences recorded were either on the basis of an arrest by police or an outcome given at court, and therefore used both reconviction and re-arrest as a measure of reoffending. However, this was the nature of the dataset. When analysing contact with the system, young people were placed in two groups. There may have been unique cases which were not recorded where: (i) young people did not receive a YOT outcome but may have required a form of intervention; or (ii) where young people were classed as receiving a YOT outcome but did not receive intervention. The level of contact was not clear from the LYOT Careworks system, therefore a limited amount of cases could possibly have been classed under the wrong contact group.

During the practitioner interviews, LYOT was experiencing a restructuring process with staff unsure of their job stability. Previous research has demonstrated that this can negatively influence job satisfaction, providing opinions open to bias (Reisel et al., 2010). Interviewing in this job climate was challenging as some practitioners were focused on organisational change and the pressures they felt, but all staff were reminded of the voluntary nature of the interviews and that the aim of the study was to talk about their client group and the factors that affect reoffending. The practitioner accounts are considered to reflect their current working environment.

With regards to the young people interviews, those who participated were nominated to take part in the interviews and therefore were a group who engaged well with practitioners. This may have provided a biased sample in their opinions on the work that YOT conducted. Those who were repeat

offenders in the sample were also speaking retrospectively about their offending behaviour; as such, they may have provided a slightly distorted account of this behaviour. In order that young people felt comfortable to take part in the interview, they had the option of their LYOT worker joining them, which could have led to socially desirable answers, specifically around their relationships with the YOT workers. Nine young people wanted their LYOT worker to join the interviews, while four young people felt comfortable to speak to the interviewers alone.

More generally, the thesis did not investigate if the reasons associated with reoffending were different for female and male offenders. While the case file analysis and the interviews with young people included females, they were a smaller group (as outlined in *section 4.3.3* and *section 4.5.3*). As previous research has identified that girls have differing reasons for their offending, future research should explore the factors that contribute towards reoffending with girls (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2014). The results may differ with a larger female sample. As this sample was largely male, the results are more applicable to male offenders.

In addition to the above limitations, it should be observed that this research took place in a specific geographic area. LYOT wanted local information about what was happening in their areas, which this study provided. However, Lancashire itself is a very diverse area in terms of population and socio-economic status with rural and urban towns, therefore these results may not be comparable across the county. Furthermore, these results should not be extrapolated on a national level. As crime rates differ between rural and urban areas, and YOT areas, the explanations for reoffending could also differ (ONS, 2017). LYOT has a higher reoffending rate than most other YOTs, suggesting that there could be unique factors about Lancashire, which contributes towards reoffending, and this should be further explored.

7.4 UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This thesis has made a unique contribution to knowledge by focussing on the characteristics of young people who reoffend, within the context of youth justice.

Foremost, it is believed to be one of the first studies which triangulates findings from three methods into one methodology to provide a holistic overview on reoffending within the Youth Justice context. To have three elements in one study of this kind - the large cohort of offenders for quantitative analysis, coupled with offender perspectives and practitioner perspectives - is believed to be unprecedented. This will be of use to other scholars who can build on this approach, as well as those who want to understand the interdependencies between young people who reoffend and the YOTs who engage with them.

Secondly, the quantitative and qualitative analysis has shown that a more complex understanding of young people who offend has emerged. Whilst overall offending by young people has declined, there are a concentrated group of offenders who are increasingly recidivist. Little research has been carried out in the UK with this cohort of young people. While arguments have been put forward that this group of young people are experiencing more complex needs and are more serious offenders, there has been little empirical evidence to support this. A unique contribution to the knowledge area has been made by investigating the types of re-offence committed by young people who are already in the system, and the relationship that these offences have on further offending. The research presented here provides a much richer picture of this phenomenon (in both quantitative and qualitative terms), as well as highlighting the challenges this presents.

Thirdly, the study has examined the engagement of a YOT with this emerging cohort. This has demonstrated the variety of ways in which LYOT engage with young people who reoffend and the types of work they conduct. By piecing this system together, it has shown the strengths as well as areas for development in youth justice. Specifically, it suggests that current approaches of engagement with young people who offend need to adapt if they are to become more effective. Further, it shows that there are differing views amongst practitioners, and a lack of feedback in relation to reoffending behaviour.

Fourth, the thesis has demonstrated that both practitioners and young people advocate for a strengths-based approach, and support a move away from risk-focused youth justice towards a more holistic approach. This adds to the recent

evidence base, and supports those who have argued for a change in the way in which youth justice is delivered; this thesis concurs with these arguments and shows that in order to reduce reoffending, an alternative way of working is essential. In support of recent literature in the area, along with the findings of the Taylor (2016) review, a clear alternative method of working with young people who reoffend has been presented. This thesis has contributed towards the wider discussions on the context of youth justice and whether this service can be delivered as part of an integrated programme incorporating a wraparound service for young people. This research has also identified the variety of needs that young people who reoffend exhibit which lie outside of the justice system, providing additional support for an integrated youth support service.

Overall, this thesis has made a valuable contribution to the evidence base by presenting research on the factors that contribute towards reoffending by young people. As the literature review demonstrated, there has been a wealth of research on explanations for offending by young people, but a limited focus on reoffending, as the factors are often assumed to be similar. With the changes in the YJS, reoffending is now the focus of work with young people who offend, and this thesis has provided insight into how young people can be better supported away from a life of crime.

7.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis has highlighted a number of areas which require further investigation. Firstly, LYOT practitioners believed that they could identify which young people would become persistent offenders. This idea should be explored with further research to investigate if practitioners are able to correctly predict which young people will go on to reoffend. YOT practitioners have a wealth of knowledge and experience and should be involved in moving the system forward.

Secondly, this research has outlined how the frequency, diversity and severity of offending is important in understanding reoffending. Whilst the majority of the previous research focuses on adults, further research investigating reoffending

patterns of young people is necessary. The case-file analysis showed that there is diversity in the amount of re-offences committed by young people and a study on offender typologies could help provide greater understanding of reoffending.

Thirdly, although this thesis has provided extensive evidence for key factors which affect reoffending, it was not within the scope of this work to explore the impact of different disposals and interventions which young people receive. The results from the case-file analysis did demonstrate that some orders are associated with higher reoffending rates but this is in need of further research to fully understand the impact that YOTs and courts have on young people's reoffending. The results also indicate that while the relationship between the YOT practitioner and young person remains critical to address reoffending behaviour, the dynamics of this relationship need to be understood further in order to help YOT practitioners build stable and trusting relationships.

Lastly, future research should aim to interview policy makers on their opinions and perspectives on young people who reoffend and what can be done on a wider justice scale to help support those who are most vulnerable. This would allow the current findings to be explored with policy makers in order to resolve the current structural issues in the justice system.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to answer the question *'What factors are associated with why young people reoffend?*'. By using a mixed-methods approach, it found that there were multiple explanations for reoffending. There was a level of consensus between the three methods providing evidence for an alternative model of working. From across the research phases, a group of young people who reoffend at a high rate and who display complex needs was identified. This group requires specialised support from trained staff who can take account of the underlying factors which contribute towards their reoffending. The results also demonstrate considerable variability in the young people who receive YOT contact; they vary in the offences they commit, the outcomes they are given, the severity of offences and their reasons for reoffending. This provides evidence

for an individualised approach as a *'one size fits all'* model will not address the complex reasons why young people reoffend.

This research has also demonstrated that young people have complex identities and that their offending is only one element of their lives. A model, which focuses on the strengths and positives of young people, would take this into account. While there has been a move in the YJS towards a more positive youth justice, which treats children first and as offenders second, there are barriers to achieving this when the system focuses on risk of reoffending. A notable result is the significance of the relationship between the YOT workers and young people; where this relationship is consistent and empathetic, a positive change can occur. This relationship remains at the heart of the justice system but the dynamics are not fully understood. The findings from across the research phases also highlight that the YJS does not exist in isolation to the wider debate on justice; by focusing on diversion, the pitfalls of the YJS have been revealed; YOTs are working with a more complex cohort within the same system, which was created to deal with a larger group of young people who offend.

The YJS is expected to be effective, economical and efficient, although there are less resources, staff and money (Haines & Case, 2018). While this research has demonstrated that YOT practitioners clearly advocate for a welfare approach, they are restricted in what can be achieved as the YJS operates under a risk framework. There has been no clear narrative from central government on how this changing cohort of young people reoffending should be addressed. This is hindered by the lack of consensus between academics and policy makers about the most effective way to address reoffending by young people (Haines & Case, 2018).

What is clear from the research is, that although there have been substantial changes in the numbers of young people in the YJS, there continues to be unanswered questions about the cohort who remain in the system. This research has demonstrated that this cohort are responsible for a disproportionate amount of re-offences and display complex needs. This research supports previous literature, which has found that the underlying

causes of offending (and reoffending) lie outside of the justice system. Consequently, it follows that the solutions to addressing reoffending, also lie outside of the system. This thesis has argued that in order to address reoffending, young people need the support of specialised staff and an individualised approach, delivered as part of an integrated youth support service. The current cohort of young people in the YJS, reoffend at a higher rate and display complex needs, and the system needs to change its approach to better support this vulnerable group of reoffenders. The YJS is '*stuck on a cycle of repeat'* addressing this different group of complex young people, with the same approach as previously, therefore unfortunately ensuring that these young people also become '*stuck on repeat'* in their reoffending.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS

As this study was commissioned and funded by Lancashire County Council through their Youth Justice Management Board, a summary of the implications are outlined below split into operational and theoretical recommendations;

Operational

1. *Relationships*: work between young people and their practitioners should focus on building a stable and positive relationship. Practitioners should also consider helping young people build good relationships with those in their life, thereby providing a more holistic approach to desistance. This is currently outside normal YOT practice.
2. *Breaches*: the level of 'breaches', where those who breach their conditions of sentence are reported, is high in Lancashire. As more YJS contact is associated with more offending, LYOT need to explore this further and create a structured step-by-step approach to engaging with young people and the breach process.
3. *Desistance Training*: LYOT should ensure that all practitioners are fully trained in desistance theory and its relevance to their work.
4. *Practitioner Opinion:* LYOT should create focus groups with their practitioners to gather their views on working with a complex cohort of young people.
5. *Multiple Factors:* The work between LYOT and young people should focus primarily on the factors in their life, which contribute towards reoffending, rather than offence focused work.
6. *Individualised Programmes:* Young people who are repeat offenders should receive interventions which they have not participated in during previous orders and which meets their specific needs.
7. *Psychology Approach:* Exploring the Enhanced Case Management model, which takes into account childhood trauma, could help provide a new framework for working with complex young people who offend.

Theoretical

1. *Risk Approach:* LYOT should move away from viewing their clients in terms of risk and instead view them as children first and offenders second. Exploring if the Welsh government model could be transferred to LYOT would provide a new way of working with young people.
2. *What works in intervention:* Evidence concerning what works and in what context to reduce reoffending is still needed. LYOT would benefit from a more systematic approach to explore this. This should also explore the number of evidence-based programmes that have been used internationally in youth justice as a way of supporting their young people to reduce their offending (such as SNAP programme in Canada; Augimeri, Walsh & Slater, 2011; Augimeri, Walsh, Levene & Slater, 2015).
3. *Positive Approach:* LYOT should incorporate positive and future orientated work with their clients. By providing opportunities for young people to work towards goals, they are more likely to desist from crime. Employment and training opportunities were viewed positively by young people and this should be taken into account.
4. *Multiple Factors:* This work provides evidence for the argument that there are a range of explanations for reoffending, and the underlying causes are often masked. Therefore, a holistic approach, which covers both the individual and situational factors, is needed. These should be considered when working with young people to find the most appropriate method of delivery.

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Appendix 1: Offences, outcomes, previous convictions and reoffending rate

Types of Offences

The reoffending rate by index offence is provided in *Table 1* (MoJ, 2018b, 2018c). This data is unavailable for Lancashire YOT (MoJ, 2018b,). This data covers April 2015 to March 2016.

Table 1. Offences by reoffending rate.

	Reoffending Rate	Average N of re-offences	N of re-offences	N of reoffenders	N of offenders in cohort
Public Order	51.2%	4.72	2481	526	1028
Miscellaneous Crimes	49.7%	4.21	3296	783	1574
Theft Offences	47.1%	4.21	16429	3900	8288
Robbery Offences	46%	3.43	1583	462	1005
Summary non-motoring	43.2%	3.76	23954	6364	14739
Drug Offences	40%	3.27	5944	1818	4541
Criminal Damage & Arson	39%	4.01	1234	308	789
Summary motoring	37%	3.92	937	239	646
Possession of Weapons	36.3%	3.04	2650	872	2403
Violence against the person	31%	3.03	2251	744	2397
Fraud Offences	29.4%	3.02	178	59	201
Sexual Offences	15.2%	3.80	327	106	697

Type of Outcome

Table 2 presents the reoffending rate for each disposal used with young people (MoJ, 2018b). This data covers April 2015 to March 2016.

Table 2. Type of outcome and reoffending rate.

	Reoffending Rate	Average N of re-offences	N of re-offences	N of re-offenders	N of offenders in cohort
Custody	68.1%	5.35	3319	620	910
Youth Rehabilitation Order	65.4%	4.51	19793	4385	6704
Youth Reparation Order	61.9%	4.52	389	86	139
Other	59.5%	5.02	8490	1692	2845

Community Order	58.3%	4.30	258	60	103
Youth Fine	52.6%	3.85	1742	453	861
Youth Discharge	51.9%	4.27	7727	1811	3487
Referral Order	38.4%	3.17	10306	3251	8462
Caution (reprimand or warning)	30.8%	3.08	15976	5185	16847

Number of Previous Convictions

Table 8 shows the reoffending rate by the number of previous offences committed (MoJ, 2018b). This information is not available for Lancashire YOT. This data covers April 2015 to March 2016.

Table 3. Number of previous convictions and reoffending rate.

	Reoffending Rate	**Average N of re-offences**	**N of re-offences**	**N of reoffenders**	**N of offenders in cohort**
11 or more	76%	5.60	15845	2831	3725
7 to 10	64.9%	4.32	7819	1808	2786
1 to 2	42.3%	3.24	11804	3639	8603
No previous	24.7%	2.75	11176	4065	16446
3 to 6	5.68%	3.81	14625	3841	6764

Appendix 2: Phase 1- UCLan Ethics Approval

18 November 2016

Stuart Kirby / Natasha Mokhtar
School of Forensic and Applied Sciences
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Stuart / Natasha

Re: PSYSOC Ethics Committee Application
Unique Reference Number: PSYSOC 265 2nd PHASE

The PSYSOC ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Why do some young people continue to reoffend while others desist from crime? An analysis of a Lancashire YOT cohort and the implications for policy and practice'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).

Yours sincerely

Emma Bray
Deputy Vice Chair
PSYSOC Ethics Committee

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

Appendix 3: Phase 1- LYOT Approval

Lancashireyouthoffendingteam

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
UCLan
Fylde Road
Preston
PR1 2HE

YOT CMS Business Support
Room C17
County Hall
Preston
PR1 8XJ

JS / MM

14/10/16

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Natasha Mokhtar

I can confirm that Lancashire Youth Offending Team give Natasha Mokhtar permission to conduct research regarding the Re-offending Project and to use their computer system (Careworks) to access the case-files.

Yours sincerely

Mukhtar Master
Operations Manager
Lancashire Youth Offending Team

Appendix 4: Phase 1- Codes

1. Participant Number
2. Gender
3. Area of Lancashire
4. Ethnicity
5. Date of Birth
6. Age at first Offence
7. Onset Age Group
8. Year of First Offence
9. Type of First Offence
10. Outcome for First Offence
11. Gravity of First Offence
12. YOT Contact Given
13. Multiple Offences Committed
14. Multiple Outcomes Given
15. Reoffended
16. Age at first re-offence
17. Type of first re-offence
18. Outcome for re-offence
19. Gravity for re-offence
20. Multiple Offences Committed
21. Multiple Outcomes Given
22. Total Number of Arson Offences
23. Total Number of Burglary Offences
24. Total Number of Criminal Damage Offences
25. Total Number of Criminal Justice Matters Offences
26. Total Number of Driving Offences
27. Total Number of Drug Offences
28. Total Number of Weapon Offences
29. Total Number of Kidnap Offences
30. Total Number of Miscellaneous Offences
31. Total Number of Assault/Obstruct a Constable
32. Total Number of Robbery Offences
33. Total Number of Sexual Offences
34. Total Number of Theft and Handling Offences
35. Total Number of Vehicle Related Offences
36. Total Number Violent Contact Offences
37. Total Number of Violent Threat Offences
38. Total Number of Racially Aggravated Offences
39. Total Number of Cautions Received
40. Total Number of Police Reprimands Received
41. Total Number of Final Warnings Received
42. Total Number of Referral Orders Received
43. Total Number of Reparation Orders Received
44. Total Number of Youth Rehabilitation Orders Received
45. Total Number of Youth Rehabilitation Orders with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Received

46. Total Number of Custodial Sentenced Received
47. Total Number of Licence Recall Orders Received
48. Total Number of Other Outcomes
49. Total Number Offences Committed Pre-2015
50. Total Number Offences Committed 2015
51. Total Number Offences Committed Post-2015
52. Total Number Outcomes Received Pre-2015
53. Total Number Outcomes Received 2015
54. Total Number Outcomes Received Post-2015
55. Total Number of Offences Committed
56. Total Number of Outcomes Received
57. Year of Last Offence
58. Number of Offence Categories Offended in
59. Total Severity Score
60. Prolific Offending Group

Appendix 5: Phase 2- Topic Guide

Interview Schedule

Introduction

1) Firstly, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about yourself and your role at Lancashire YOT
2) How does a young person become engaged with YOT? How does the process work?
3) Why do you think some young people become involved in crime?

Reoffending

1) What is your opinion of the current reoffending rate in Lancashire?
2) Would you say that the majority of young people you work with are re-offenders or first time offenders?
3) Why do you think some young people re-offend? Do you think there are any particular factors which play a role?

Desistance

1) How would you define desistance from crime?
2) What do you think helps to encourage desistance from crime?
3) Why do you think some young people desist from crime? Do you think there are any particular factors which play a role?
4) How do you think some young people manage to desist from crime?
5) Do you think many young offenders, who you work with, desist from crime or just don't get caught?

Other

1) Would you say that the type of offenders you work with has changed from previous years?
2) The YJB have said that although there are less young offenders re-offending, those that do, are more challenging to work with, to what extent do you agree or disagree with this?
3) If an offender reoffends, do they tend to offend with the same patterns (severity of offence, type of offence)?
4) How important do you think early childhood experiences are in understanding why a young person might offend or why they stop offending?

Appendix 6: Phase 2- Consent Form

"Why is it that some young offenders continue to reoffend while others desist from crime?"

Consent Form

By taking part in the study, you are agreeing that you understand the information provided and agree to the following:

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

I understand that my involvement in the study will remain anonymous and once my responses have been submitted any identifiable information will be replaced with a code. I understand that if I want to remove my data at any point, I will need to reference my unique code. ☐

I understand that my participation will be anonymous and any details that might identify me will not be included in any reports or publications produced from this study. ☐

I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any questions and may stop the interview at any point. ☐

I agree to anonymised quotes being used within reports/other publications produced from the study. ☐

I agree to the interview being audio recorded. ☐

By taking part in the interview, you are agreeing that you have read and understood the above statement and you agree to us analysing the answers you give. ☐

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Participant:

Signed **Date**

Researcher:

Signed **Date**

Appendix 7: Phase 2- Information sheet

"Why is it that some young offenders continue to reoffend while others desist from crime?"

Purpose of study:
I am a PhD Student at the University of Central Lancashire working with Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT) to better understand reoffending with young offenders in the county. The purpose of the research is to understand why some young offenders continue to reoffend while others desist from crime and to investigate the factors that play a role in either reoffending or desistance. The first part of my research involves a series of one-to-one interviews with LYOT workers.

Why have I have been invited to take part?
For these preliminary interviews, I am interested in gaining a professional perspective on the challenges facing young offenders. I am interested in finding out your opinion on the types of offenders you work with, and what factors you think impact if a young offender will stop offending or will continue to reoffend. I am looking for a range of professional inputs from the LYOT teams, so a range of staff from police, probation, social work and LYOT workers will be invited for an interview.

Do I have to take part?
Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide if you want to take part. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any point without providing a reason. You do not have to answer all the questions and can stop the interview at any point.

What will I be asked to do?
Participation will involve a semi-structured interview about your perception of reoffending with young offenders in Lancashire, as well as any predictors of reoffending. The interviews will last for around an hour and will be recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed after the interview. If you do not want the interview to be recorded, you can still take part in the interview as notes can be taken instead. The interviews will take place at your YOT offices. Any information you provide during the interview will be kept anonymous.

How will my data be used?
Once your interview has been transcribed, it will be analysed for any themes or patterns in your answers. Any themes or patterns will be compared with other interviews to investigate if there is a trend. Anonymised quotations from your interview may be used in publications (academic journal articles, internal reports, and thesis) and for conference posters and presentations.

What are the benefits of taking part in the research?
There are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study. However, your input will be invaluable in forming the next stage of this research, which will involve a case file analysis of young offenders. The research will be provided to the LYOT to assist in developing processes and practice to reduce reoffending rates.

How will my personal information used during the research be kept confidential?
If you consent, your interview will be recorded using a Dictaphone. Following transcription, the recording will be deleted. The transcription, will be saved using a code, so your real name will not be used. Your personal information will not appear on any datasets or any reports. During the interview, if you use mention any identifying information about either the young offenders or yourself, this information will be omitted from the transcripts and all names will be changed. All of your data will be protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Your consent form and saved transcript file will be kept separate in password-protected folders or in locked cabinets.

Can I withdraw from the research?
You have the right to decline to take part in the research or to withdraw your data without any consequences. You also hold the right to withdraw at any point during the interview and you will also be able to request the removal of all or part of your interview from the research (for which you will need to provide your code number, given on interview, so that your data can be destroyed. **This will only be possible for two months after the interview has taken place.**

Contact Details
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if you require further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me, Natasha Mokhtar on nmokhtar@uclan.ac.uk or my Director of Studies, Professor Stuart Kirby on skirby1@uclan.ac.uk

What do I do if I have any issues or complaints?

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, they should contact University Officer for Ethics (OfficerforEthics@uclan.ac.uk) or Professor Stuart Kirby (+44 (0) 1772 89 4176; skirby1@uclan.ac.uk

Appendix 8: Phase 3- UCLan Ethical Approval

8th March 2016

Stuart Kirby/Natasha Mokhtar
School of Psychology
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Stuart/Natasha,

Re: PSYSOC Ethics Committee Application
Unique Reference Number: PSYSOC 265

The PSYSOC ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Why is it that some young offenders continue to reoffend while others desist from crime? An analysis of a Lancashire YOT cohort'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer.

It is your responsibility to ensure that:

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).

Yours sincerely,

K. Chantler

Khatidja Chantler
Chair
PSYSOC Ethics Committee

Appendix 9: Phase 2- LYOT Approval

Lancashire County Council

Natasha Mokhtar
University of Central Lancashire
Fylde Road,
Preston
PR1 2HE

Tel: 01772 532018
Email:
Your ref:
Our Ref: LYOT/MM

Date: 24 February 2016

Dear Natasha,

I am writing to give you approval of the following:

1) The use of the LCC email system, for your research purposes.
2) To conduct interviews of LYOT practitioners as part of your research.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Mukhtar Master.
Performance & Information Office Manager
Lancashire Youth Offending Team

LYOT Services,
Room B34a, County Hall, Preston, PR2 0TG

Appendix 10: Phase 3- Topic Guide

Questions for Young People

First Referral into YOT

1) Can you tell me a bit about the first time you came to YOT? (what was it like, what age were you, relationship with YOT worker)
2) Was there anything else that your YOT worker could have done? (did you speak to your YOT worker about it)

Current Referral

1) Can you tell me about why you are working with YOT now? (what happened, how old were you, how often do you see your YOT worker)
2) How long have you been working with YOT for? (have you always had the same worker)
3) Did weapons/drugs/alcohol play a part in why you are working with YOT?
4) Do you think your YOT experience has changed as you've had more contact with them? (If so, in what way)
5) What sort of work do you do with your YOT worker and what impact has it had? (what sort of things do you talk about in your sessions, any involvement with education, training or employment)
6) Can you describe your YOT worker in three words?
7) Do you think having a YOT worker helps young people from getting into trouble with the police?
8) What people or relationships are important in your life? Do they have an impact on you staying out of trouble? (do they support your involvement with YOT, do you get into trouble with friends)
9) Can you tell me about why you think you got into trouble this time now? (things that happened which led to your offending)
10) Is there anything else, which you think plays a role in why young people reoffend?

Behaviour

1) What role do you think weapons/drugs/alcohol play in why some young people get into trouble?
2) There are some young people who continue to get into trouble when they become an adult, whilst others stop. Why do you think that is?
3) Do you think your offending has changed over time? (If yes, do you think you are committing more serious offences)
4) In an ideal world, what would have stopped you from offending in the first place or stopped you from continuing to reoffend?
5) If you were a YOT worker, are there other things you would do to help young people?

Is there anything you have talked about today, which you would like me to pass onto your YOT worker?

Appendix 11: Phase 3- Information Sheet

University of Central Lancashire

Information Sheet

What is this about?

We are researchers from the University of Central Lancashire who are interested in learning about your experienced of reoffending and about the Youth Justice System. The research will form part of a PhD project, which looks at reoffending more generally.

Do I have to take part?

No! It is voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do want to take part, and then later change your mind, that's okay. If you contact us, we will delete your data.

What will happen to me if I agree to take part?

If you are happy to take part in the research, you will be asked to sign a consent form. When you give consent, it means you have understood what is involved in the research and that you are happy to take part. You will then be asked some questions about your experiences of working with YOT and what led you to working with YOT. If you would like, your case worker can join you for the interview. However, this is completely optional and you do not have to have them there if you do not want to.

What will happen after we talk?

If you are happy, we will audio record the conversation All of what you (and we) say will then be written down. We will then collect the documents together and look for patterns in what everyone says. This is to see if everyone says similar things. After any patterns have been found, what you say may be used in reports and presentations but you will NOT be identified. Only anonymised quotes of your interview will be used.

What will I be asked?

You will be asked questions about your experience of YOTs and what you think is really important to helping young people to stop offending. You may be asked about some of the work you do with your YOT worker

Do my legal guardians know I am taking part?

Yes! If you are under the age of 18, your legal guardian will have been sent a letter asking whether they consent for you to take part in the research.

What if I want to stop being a part of this?

You can stop taking part in the research at any point. You do not have to answer ANY questions if you do not want to. You can stop the conversation at any point without giving a reason.

How long will it take?

We only want to talk to you for about 45 minutes. If you have a to say, it might take a bit longer.

Will my information be safe?

Yes! Any electronic recordings will be kept on the University secure server. Your personal information will not appear on any datasets or in any reports. If you use any names during the talk, this will be deleted when writing it up. All of your data will be protected under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Why are you asking me?

We are interested in your opinions and think the best way to improve the system is by talking to those who are involved in it.

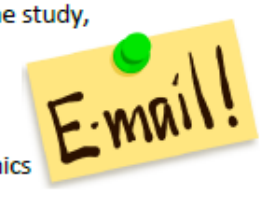
Just so you know...

The things you say will be seen by the research team and will not be shown to anyone else unless you disclose any information that may cause harm to yourself or anyone else or any information about your intended offending behaviour. **You should not disclose any information about any unknown offending. If you do, we will have to inform the relevant agencies.**

Contact Details

If you have any questions or if you require further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Natasha Mokhtar on nmokhtar@uclan.ac.uk



If you have any concerns...you should contact University Officer for Ethics (OfficerforEthics@uclan.ac.uk)

Appendix 12: Phase 3- Legal Guardian Consent

INFORMATION FOR LEGAL GUARIDANS

We are a team of researchers from the University of Central Lancashire. We are working with Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT) on how to reduce reoffending with young people. We would like to ask your child some questions about their experiences with the Youth Offending Team. We would also like to understand their thoughts on reoffending.

We need your permission for your child to take part. If you agree, a researcher will ask your child some questions. This will take place at the end of a LYOT meeting.

Your child will also be asked if he/she wants to take part. If they do, your child will be given an information sheet (see included). This explains the project to them.

What you need to know

Your child will NOT take part if he/she does not wish to.

Taking part or not taking part in this project will NOT impact your child's involvement with LYOT.

Only the University research team will have access to the information your child provides.

All of the things your child says will be anonymised. They will be stored safely.

My child's name will not be used in any reports or publications from the research.

If your child speaks about any unknown offences, we inform their caseworker.

If you have any questions about the project, you can contact the research team via email (nmokhtar@uclan.ac.uk) or ask your child's caseworker.

Please could you complete the slip below and hand it back to your child's caseworker.

I **give** my permission for my child to take part in the project. ☐

I **do not** give my permission for my child to take part in the project. ☐

Name of child……..,……

Signature of legal guardian……..
Date……..

Appendix 13: Phase 3- Assent Form

Assent Form

If you are happy to take part in the research, please tick the boxes and sign your name at the bottom;

☐ I have read and understood the information sheet. I have asked questions about anything I am unsure about.

☐ I understand that my name will not be used in any reports or publications. Only my participant number will be used.

☐ I understand that I do not have to answer all of the questions if I do not want to.

☐ I understand that I can stop the interview at any time. Nothing bad will happen to me if I want to stop.

☐ I understand that if I disclose any unknown offending behaviour, this will have to be passed on to my caseworker.

☐ I understand that, if after today, I do not want to take part any more; I have until **1st December 2017** to tell my case worker. The caseworker will then let the researcher know and my data will be securely deleted.

Would you like your caseworker to join you for the interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you consent to the interview being recorded?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant:

Signed: …….. **Date: ……..**

Researcher:

Signed: …….. **Date: ……..**

Appendix 14: Phase 3- Debrief Form

DEBRIEF FORM

Thank you for taking the time today to answer some questions. You have helped our research into why some young people reoffend and how we can encourage more young people to stop offending.

We are now going to write down everything that has been said today, and put it together with everyone's responses. This will eventually be written up as a report and published.

If you have any questions, please ask before you leave today.

If you change your mind in a few weeks and do not want us to use your interview, please let you know caseworker know. You have until the **1st of December** to let them know.

If you have anything you want to talk about or any concerns, you can speak to your YOT worker. You can also contact the helplines below;

Childline- 0800 1111

Samaritans- 116 123

Appendix 15: Phase 3- UCLan Ethical Approval

13 September 2017

Stuart Kirby / Natasha Mokhtar
School of Forensic & Applied Sciences
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Stuart / Natasha

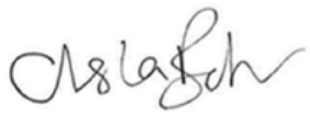
Re: PSYSOC Ethics Committee Application
Unique Reference Number: PSYSOC 265 Phase 3

The PSYSOC ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Why do some young people continue to reoffend while others desist from crime? An analysis of a Lancashire YOT cohort and the implications for policy and practice'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).

Yours sincerely



Christine Barter
Vice-Chair
PSYSOC Ethics Committee

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

Appendix 16: Phase 3- LYOT Approval

Lancashire youth offending team

6th July 2017
JS / MM

Miss Natasha Mokhtar,
School of Forensic and Applied Sciences
University Of Central Lancashire
Preston
PR1 2HE

Dear Natasha,

I am writing to give you approval of the following;

1) To contact Lancashire YOT staff to recruit young people for the interviews
2) To conduct interviews with young people involved in Lancashire YOT

Yours sincerely,

Mukhtar Master

Lancashire Youth Offending Team,
County Hall
Preston
PR1 8XJ

Appendix 17: Phase 1- Onset Age Results

Those who committed their first recorded offence prior to turning 14 were grouped as early onset young people (*N*=159, 64.90%), and those who offended after turning 14 created the late onset group (*N*= 86, 35.10%).

Table 4. Demographic Information for Onset Age Groups.

	Early Onset	**Late Onset**
Male	144 (90.57%)	71 (82.56%)
Female	15 (9.43%)	15 (17.44%)
White	150 (94.34%)	78 (90.70%)
Other	9 (5.66%)	8 (9.30%)
South Central Team	72 (45.28%)	30 (34.88%)
East Team	43 (27.04%)	26 (30.23%)
North Team	44 (27.67%)	30 (24. 88%)

First Offence

Table 5. First Offence by Onset Age.

	Early Onset	**Late Onset**	**Total**
Violent- Contact	34 (21.40%)	21 (24.42%)	55
Criminal Damage	42 (26.42%)	11 (12.80%)	53
Theft and Handling	30 (18.87%)	13 (15.12%)	43
Burglary	15 (9.43%)	5 (5.81%)	20
Violent- Threat	11 (6.92%)	8 (9.30%)	19
Miscellaneous	8 (5.03%)	8 (9.30%)	16
Vehicle Related Offences	5 (3.14%)	7 (8.14%)	12
Weapon	5 (3.14%)	2 (2.33%)	7
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	2 (1.26%)	4 (4.65%)	6
Driving	0 (0%)	5 (5.81%)	5
Arson	2 (1.26%)	1 (1.16%)	3
Sexual Offences	2 (1.26%)	1 (1.16%)	3
Racially Aggravated Offences	2 (1.26%)	0 (0%)	2
Robbery	1 (0.62%)	0 (0%)	1

When the offence categories were compiled into four groups; violent, property, drugs and other offences, there was a significant association in the type of offences committed for a first offence, by onset age, χ^2 (2, *N*=245) = 14.21, *p*<.001, V=.241. The early onset group committed more property offences (*N*=89, 55.97%) than the late onset group (N=30, 34.88%). However, 40.70% of

the late onset group committed a violent offence compared to 34.59% for the early onset group.

First Outcome

Table 6. Outcome for First Offence by Onset Age.

	Early Onset	Late Onset	Total
Police Reprimand	82 (51.57%)	5 (5.81%)	87
Final Warning	33 (20.75%)	2 (2.33%)	35
Diversionary/Triage	12 (7.55%)	21 (24.42%)	33
Referral Order	13 (8.18%)	20 (23.26%)	33
Other	12 (7.55%)	14 (16.28%)	26
Caution	3 (1.89%)	20 (23.26%)	23
Not Recorded	4 (2.52%)	3 (3.49%)	7
Custody	0 (0%)	1 (1.16%)	1

A chi-squared test of independence was conducted examining onset age and the outcome categories for a first offence. All outcomes that met the assumptions of the test were included in the analysis, only custodial sentences were not included. A significant association between onset age and outcome category for a first offence was found, χ^2 (5, N= 237) = 99.19, p < .001, V=.647. The late onset group received a greater number and proportion of diversionary outcomes compared to the early onset group, as well as a higher number of referral orders. There was also a higher number of cautions given to the late onset group whereas the early onset group received more police reprimands and final warnings.

First Re-offence

There was a significant association between onset age groupings and the type of offence committed for a first re-offence, χ^2 (3, N= 151) = 7.99 p = .046, V=.230.

Table 7. Type of Offence for First Re-offence by Onset Age.

	Early Onset	Late Onset	Total
Violent- Contact	47 (29.56%)	9 (10.47%)	56
Theft & Handling	21 (13.21%)	14 (16.28%)	35
Criminal Damage	27 (16.98%)	7 (8.14%)	34
Burglary	17 (10.69%)	9 (10.47%)	26
Violent- Threat	7 (4.40%)	7 (8.14%)	14
Vehicle Related Offences	6 (3.77%)	6 (6.98%)	12
Miscellaneous	6 (3.77%)	2 (2.33%)	8

Drug Offences	2 (1.26%)	3 (3.49%)	5
Robbery	5 (1.26%)	0 (0%)	5
Assault/Obstruct a Constable	3 (1.89%)	1 (1.16%)	4
Racially Aggravated Offences	2 (1.26%)	2 (2.33%)	4
Arson	3 (1.89%)	0 (0%)	3
Weapon	2 (1.26%)	1 (1.16%)	3
Sexual Offences	2 (1.26%)	1 (1.16%)	3
Criminal Justice Matters	1 (0.63%)	1 (1.16%)	2
Driving	2 (1.26%)	0 (0%)	2

First Re-offence Outcome

Table 8. Type of Outcome for First Re-offence by Onset Age.

	Early Onset	**Late Onset**	**Total**
Referral Order	49 (32.03%)	26 (41.27%)	75
Final Warning	38 (24.84%)	0 (0%)	38
Other	18 (11.76%)	10 (15.87%)	28
Caution	17 (11.11%)	8 (12.70%)	25
Diversionary/Triage	6 (3.92%)	9 (14.29%)	15
Police Reprimand	11 (7.19%)	0 (0%)	11
YRO	6 (3.92%)	4 (6.35%)	10
Order Related	4 (2.60%)	2 (3.17%)	6
Not Recorded	2 (1.31%)	2 (3.17%)	4
Custody	1 (0.65%)	2 (3.17%)	3
Not given yet	1 (0.65%)	0 (0%)	1

A chi-square test of independence found a significant association between the outcome for the first re-offence and onset group, χ^2 (4, *N*=181 = 24.27, *p*<. 001, V̀=.366. Young people in the early onset group were more likely to receive a referral order at this time point than the late onset group. The late onset group received more diversionary outcomes, suggesting that they received less contact with LYOT. The early onset group also received a higher number of final warnings, whereas the late onset group received a greater proportion of other outcomes (outcomes given at court which do not require YOT input) and cautions.

Reoffending

There was a significant association between the onset groups and if a re-offence had been committed, χ^2 (1, *N*=245) = 28.22, *p* <.001, V̀= .339. 70.9% (*N*= 153) of the early onset group committed a re-offence compared to 29.2% (*N*=63) of the late onset group. Over the time period, the early onset group

committed significantly more offences than the late onset group, *U*= 3383.50, *Z*=-6.53, *p*<.001, *d*=.74. Young people in the early onset group had an average of 20.75 offences each (*SD*= 19.35), compared to 8.70 (*SD*= 12.50) in the late onset group. This indicates that the early onset group committed more re-offences than the late onset group.

Diversity of Offending

There was a significant difference between the onset groups and the number of offence categories they offended in, *U*= 3360.50, *Z*= -6.600, *p*<.001, *d* =.95. Young people in the early onset group (*Mdn*=6) offended in significantly more offence categories than the late onset group (*Mdn*= 3). The early onset group had a significantly higher mean (*M*= 6.14, *SD*= 3.09) than the late onset group (*M*= 3.48, *SD*= 2.46).

Duration of Offending

The duration of offending was investigated to explore any differences in the length that young people offend for. A significant difference was found between offending duration and onset group*, U*=1259.50, *Z*= -10.63, *p*<.001, *d*=2.05. The early onset group offended for longer in years *(M*=4.68*, SD*=1.95*)* than the late onset group *(M*=1.30*, SD*=1.28*).*

Gravity of Offences

Gravity refers to the seriousness of offences committed and was recorded on the CareWorks database. Scores ranged from 0 (least serious) to 8 (most serious) and a more in-depth discussion about the measure of seriousness is provided in the method chapter (*Section 4.3.15*). There were non-significant differences between the onset groups and their gravity at both the first offence and the first re-offence time point (*p*>.05).

Summary

- The early onset young people were significantly more likely to commit a property offence for their first offence than the late onset young people.
- For the first re-offence, there was a significant difference between the onset groups, with the early onset group responsible for more violent contact, criminal damage, theft and handling offences.

- The early onset group were significantly more likely to commit a re-offence and had a significantly higher total number of offences than the late onset group.
- The early onset group offended in a larger number of offence categories suggesting that they are more diverse with their offending than the late onset group.
- The early onset group offended over a significantly longer time period when compared to the late onset group.
- Lastly, there were non-significant differences in the gravity of the offences committed by the groups at the first offence and the first re-offence.

Appendix 18: Phase 1- Severity

The following section will explain the main measure of severity and then detail the association between offending behaviour and severity.

Onset Age and Severity

There was a significant difference between onset age groupings and total severity, *U*= 3343.50, *Z*=-6.50, *p*<.001, *d*= .742. Young people in the early onset group (M= 66.91, SD= 65.72) had significantly higher total severity scores than those in the late onset group (*M*= 22.52, *SD*= 29.95).

Type of First Offence

There was a significant difference in the type of first offence committed and the total severity score, *H* (2) = 8.83, *p*=.012, η^2= .036. Young people who committed a property offence for their first offence had a higher total severity score (*M*= 63.15, SD= 66.91), than those who committed a violent (*M*= 43.40, *SD*= 51.81) or other offence (*M*= 41.61, *SD*= 57.75). There were no drug offences committed as a first offence. Pairwise comparisons, with adjusted *p*-values, show that the only significant difference is between the property and other group, with the property group having a significantly higher severity mean than the other group (*p*=.027).

Type of Outcome for First Offence

There was also a significant difference between the type of outcome received for the first offence and the total severity score, *H* (5) = 60.49, *p*<.001, η^2= .255. Young people who received police reprimands as their first outcomes had higher overall total severity scores than the final warning (*M*= 74.59, *SD*= 58.08), referral order (*M*= 56.40, *SD*= 74.12), other (*M*=44.89, *SD*= 60.77), cautions (*M*=16.51, *SD*= 16.96), and diversionary/triage outcomes (*M*= 15.93, *SD*= 26.89). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p*-values found that there were significant differences between the diversionary outcome group and those who received referral orders (*p*<.001). There were also significant differences between the diversionary and police reprimand (*p*<.001) group as well as differences between the diversionary and final warning groups (*p*<.001). The pairwise comparisons also showed a significant difference between cautions and both police reprimands (p<.001) and final warnings (*p*<.001).

Type of Outcome for First Re-offence

A significant difference was found between the type of outcome given for the first re-offence and the total severity score, H (6) = 26.91, p<.001, d=.134. Young people who received a police reprimand for their first re-offence had higher overall severity scores (M= 81.76, SD= 89.30), than those given a YRO (M=73.67, SD= 55.59), a referral order (M= 73.67, SD= 55.59), other outcomes (M= 63.63, SD= 61.44), final warnings (M=63.59, SD= 56.71), diversionary outcomes (M= 34.45, SD= 46.43) and those who received a caution (M= 25.08, SD= 32.88). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p-values demonstrated that there were significant differences between the caution outcomes and those who received an other outcome (p=.024). There were also significant differences between cautions and those who received a referral order (p<.001), final warnings (p=.002) and YROs (p=.040).

Overall Offences

There were a number of significant relationships between severity and total number of offences in each offence category (p<.05) *(Table 9).*

Table 9. Relationship between Severity and Offences.

	***r*-value**	***p*-value**
Criminal Justice Matters**	.881	<.001
Theft & Handling**	.654	<.001
Criminal Damage**	.595	<.001
Burglary**	.588	<.001
Violent- Threat**	.568	<.001
Violent- Contact**	.531	<.001
Vehicle Related Offences**	.474	<.001
Assault/Obstruct a Constable**	.443	<.001
Weapon Offences**	.416	<.001
Miscellaneous**	.361	<.001
Racially Aggravated Offences**	.338	<.001
Robbery**	.332	<.001
Drug Offences**	.276	<.001
Driving**	.272	<.001
Arson**	.271	<.001
Sexual Offences*	.179	.005
Kidnap	.098	.126

** indicates significant at p<.001 level. * indicates significance at p<.05

Overall Outcomes

As *Table 32* shows, all outcomes significantly relate to severity but cautions negatively correlate with severity. This demonstrates that the fewer cautions a young person received, the higher their severity score. ‘

Table 10. Relationship between Severity and Outcomes.

	***r*-value**	***p*-value**
Order Related **	.870	<.001
Other Outcomes**	.870	<.001
YRO**	.824	<.001
Custody**	.632	<.001
Referral Orders**	.620	<.001
YRO-ISS**	.541	<.001
Final Warnings**	.375	<.001
Licence Recall**	.352	<.001
Police Reprimands**	.299	<.001
Reparation Orders*	.181	.004
Cautions*	-.138	.031

** indicates significant at p<.001 level. * indicates significance at p<.05

Reoffending

There was a highly positive significant relationship between the total number of offences committed and total overall severity, $r = .993$, $p < .001$. This indicates as severity of offences increases, the total number of offences also increases.

Diversity of Offending

There was a significant relationship between the number of categories young people offended in and the total severity score, $r = .928$, $p < .001$. This suggests that as the number of categories young people offended in increased, the total severity score also increased.

Duration of Offending

There was a significant relationship between the duration of offending and the severity total, $r = .641$, $p < .001$. This demonstrates that the longer a young person offends for, the higher their severity total is.

Gravity of Offending

There was no significant relationship between the gravity score at first offence, or at first re-offence with overall total severity ($p>.05$). This suggests that there is no association between gravity for the first two offences and overall severity.

Summary

- The total severity score was significantly higher for those in the early onset group than those in the late onset group.
- Young people who commit a property offence for their first offence had significantly higher severity scores than those who committed an 'other' type of offence first.
- Total severity negatively correlates with the number of cautions given, highlighting that young people who have less cautions have a higher severity score. There were significant positive relationships between severity and all other outcomes.
- Young people who reoffend have significantly higher severity scores than those who do not reoffend.
- There was a strong positive relationship between total severity and the total number of offences committed.
- Young people who are more versatile in their offending have significantly higher severity totals than those who are more specialised.
- There was a positive correlation between total severity and offending duration with those who offend over a longer time period, also having a high severity total.

Appendix 19: Phase 2- Theme table

Theme	Sub-Theme	Quotes
1. Measuring Reoffending	Reoffending Knowledge	*"I think there's reoffending and reoffending" (P100)* *"I think is that the service requirement is that young people do not reoffend. They quite like that. But I think it's probably the scale of the reoffending" (P101)* *"And they just come in on a police caution or sometimes I might get serial reoffenders who keep going back into custody" (P101)* *"The reoffending, that stuff that comes into us, it's coming via the court. We would measure it through what comes back through the door in terms of that" (P102)* *"`You know, somebody I started working with when I first started here and still working with now" (P103)* *"I don't know what the figures are but if you were to ask me why people reoffend" (P104)* *"I don't know what the figures are" (P104)* *"I don't know the reoffending rates" (P106)* *"Well I don't think that graphs been emailed out to us so I'm not sure what our current reoffending rates are" (P107)* *"I had a graph the other day….it didn't make sense" (P107)* *"I don't have a lot of knowledge on reoffending mainly" (P108)*

		"No, I mean generally I couldn't say about recidivism rates really" (P110) *"I guess I don't know the rates of reoffending off the top of my head"(P111)* *"I don't know, what kind of research is out there and when you're asking questions, we don't know and I would like to know. Is there any value in our role and what the stories after" (P111)* *"I don't know anything kind of specifically about the rates of reoffending"(P115)*
	Defining Desistance	*"I mean my first thought is not getting caught" (P101)* *"I mean I would say that in the ultimate sense of the word, it means not offending at all" (P101)* *"They were burglarling houses, and they no longer do that, they do something else so to some extent, yeah we have but equally they are still offending" (P102)* *"But equally when young people continue to reoffend, they are continuing to offend" (P102)* *"Look at what it was at that point in time that prevented or stopped or ceased or they weren't detected, what was it about that and if there was something that was positive in place, you could try and put something in place. Or what went wrong and try and build on them positives" (P102)* *"Desistance for me would be that they don't reoffend, don't come into contact with the police again and for me I think it's important for our young people to be on the same path as other young people" (P103)* *" From a police perspective, there's still a victim, still committing a crime so I understand that there's a process that they've got to go through. So actually yes I was committing robberies but now I'm only committing shoplifting, I can understand that's heading in the right direction" (P104)* *"You commit a crime, you commit a crime. But I do see that's a road to eventually hopefully not" (P104)*

		"Well I suppose the first thing is that they don't come back to YOT but I suppose its difficult really because even though they don't come back to us doesn't actually mean that they are not reoffending and they are not doing something in the community" (P105) *"I would say that's something making a bit more, something positive and desisting from again" (P105)* *"Desistance, I suppose, in its pure form, would be they haven't reoffended but its about how they are desisting, not just from offending but from previous lifestyle choices I suppose" (P105)* *"Desistance is about the factors that are pulling them away from offending" (P106)* *"I think there's merit in, if the gravity of the offending is reduced, the frequency of offending is reduced then you can go that's really good!" (P106)* *"I think desistance, I think it should be black and white, it's a stop with the risk of returning and at that point, if there is a return then I think desistance is gone" (P106)* *"Desistance for me would be that they don't reoffend, don't come into contact with the police again" (P107)* *"Because you can have this argument can't you? Because about reoffending because you could say, you have a young person say whose committed a really serious offence or has committed loads and loads of burglaries but you've done a lot of work with them and then they don't do that anymore for a period of time….and then they've desisted for 5 months. You could count that, but they reoffended by being in possession of cannabis, could argue well that some interventions has worked because he's desisted" (P107)* *"Its how they reduce their offending" (P108)* *"Desistance is really around being able to stop offending or making some change, being able to make*

		some changes in their life that will alter the risk of offending and again" (P108) *"Whereas it's always been there, it's always been kind of the positive factors, a way, you know, but now it's classed as desistance" (P109)* *"To me, desistance a way, is not offending, and that can be for a number of reasons, it's the positive factors, focusing on their goals" (P109)* *"It's a cessation or at least a reduction in reoffending rate" (P110)* *"I'd say it was a change rather than desistance. If the offending is still continuing, it's impacting on other people because then as you know, we measure this risk of serious harm being caused to other people" (P110)* *"I guess the likelihood of a person reducing or refraining from further offending. Erm being diverted away from, refraining from." (P111)* *"They might talk about primary desistance where a young person may stop for a period of time erm but may then return to the behaviour" (P113)* *"I think people also talk about desistance although to me this isn't technically quite right, in terms of, a reduction in the seriousness or the frequency of reoffending" (P113)* *"Its about participation in sort of in positive futures isn't it and it might not always be about particularly somebody stopping offending as such or so for me, I would desistance is very much for me, its quite negative term isn't it? Which is about stopping doing something for me, change is about starting to do something and by filling the space that the old thing" (P114)* *"I don't think it really illustrates positive change" (P114)*

		"I thought we were starting to revalue young people, revaluate them in a positive, and in positive terms and I think it starts there really" (P114) *"I don't know many young people that do desist. I don't know you are talking kind of just generally so not offending…I don't think I've had that many that have actually completed [interventions]" (P115)* *"I don't know how I would define desistance in a sentence" (P115)* *"But it is a path, because they're not just I don't think many young people can just go, right I'm not going to do anything again" (P115)* *"I haven't thought enough to have a clear view on that" (P116)*
	Recording Reoffending	*"There's a matter of offending, I think that sometimes we erm charge people now when we really shouldn't be charging them" (P101)* *"I mean we all offend in some ways. We all get parking tickets, or a bit nasty on the roads sometimes" (P101)* *"It's very difficult because you could talk about reoffending but is that detected crime, how it is recorded, its all of the other bits and pieces" (P102)* *But a lot of young people who come through on the out of court disposals, the first time entrants, a lot of them don't come back" (P104)* *"Because even though they don't come back to us doesn't actually mean that they are not reoffending and they are not doing something in the community' (P105)* *"There's not as many young people going through the courts I don't think. And I think that's because the*

		police are trying to divert them away for the minor offences which obviously is very good" (P105) *"For low level offences who don't need a conviction can be dealt with by means of a caution and I think that's really taken off and we do that a lot now" (P105)* *"I think it's over policing in certain areas" (P106)* *"I think there's still the same amount going on, it's how its being recorded and delivered, captured" (P109)* *"I think that due to a lot of the not so serious offences being diverted from the justice system and out of court disposals and early actions teams and stuff like" (P110)*
2. Wider Justice System	Impact of Custody	*"I've said look I understand that you thought you were going to prison and you didn't go to prison, certain offences will trigger prison like selling drugs and serious violence but a lot of the time they don't want to send you to prison" (P106)* *"So they might be likely to self-harm" (P109)* *"However, when I've been sat in them sessions, the younger one or the borderlines ones who may think it's cool, have thought, oh wow didn't know prison were like that, he said it were easy and I didn't know it were like that" (P109)* *"Media and things about how cushy prison is and what it's like so that's completely difference to what they've actually just seen" (P109)* *"So I think in a few cases that does work" (P109)* *"It's one hell of a shock" (P110)* *Untidy, they're sort of picked on for that" (P110)*

		“It can work sometimes” (P111) *“Because I’ve only had three who have been in custody, it doesn't really work” (P111)* *“Lack of resources and lack of staff or whatever” (P111)* *“Its wasting opportunity” (P111)* *“Realise that it’s not big and hard to have the custody badge, I’ve been to jail” (P111)* *“Not on the whole no, I mean the odd case, it will do” (P111)* *“It can work sometimes, if you remove that person and I mean on the whole if you remove that person from the environment, give them that time to reflect” (P111)* *“Because I’ve only had three who have been to custody, it doesn’t really work because the frustrating thing is the lack of resources…that’s a class example, lack of resources, and a lack of staff of whatever” (P111)* *“I think custody is only right erm if it is used either for the protection of the public erm or for the, to mark the seriousness of offence you know” (P113)* *“It’s about what you then do with the young people when they are detained” (P113)* *“They just think I’ll go there and all my problems disappear for a bit” (P115)* *“I don’t think are very positive [YOI] because they are so they go in and they think oh yeah, it’s really easy so it’s not a real punishment” (P115)*

		"They are supposed to be doing education and they're supposed to be doing some kind of training and they're not actually forced into doing it" (P115)
	External Attitudes	*"I am getting from the papers is that people reoffend" (P100)* *"I think there are double standards and I think the people that we deal with most of the time are a real underclass" (P101)* *"They are treated and called young offenders, I try to call them young people who have offended you know?" (P101)* *"They don't give them a chance. We all have stereotypical notions about people, kids, races, whatever and it is part of humanity that we actually put aside those differences when we get to know them" (P101)* *"But I think the young people who do commit offences get a really bad press don't they?" (P105)* *"Because they are seen as demons and again they are not getting the full picture, and it's not about us defending them, youth offending, because I would never defend a young person if they've committed an offence, they've committed an offence and they need to be challenged on that and the work needs to be done" (P105)* *"I have a big issue with criminal responsibility being at 10 years age" (P107)* *"The magistrate will see he's from a good family, we don't want it going on their record whereas next offence, next lad, he's got trackkies on, mums swearing and it's you shouldn't judge, but you do. You make a judgement, human nature and they may get a different sentence, a lesser sentence" (P109)* *"It says in the Sun paper and also whose going to want me, erm and then some young people thrive on that and give them an identity and it can go either way" (P111)* *"I think there is a lot more negative erm sort of media response to young people" (P113)*

		"If a kid does a bad thing, they are a bad kid, whereas we separate out what people do from who they are completely, people are very multifaceted and the things that they do are just one of those facets" (P114) *"Quite often what I find in my role is that education agencies can be quite culturally quite judgemental and you'll probably remember this from being at school yourself, if a kid does a bad thing, they are a bad kid, whereas we separate out what people do from who they completely" (P114)*
	Role of Victims	*"I think victims play a part as well" (P102)* *"I think it's important of and be mindful o if a young person has committed an offence and then had some sort of mediation or contact with the victim and then gone on to do a similar offence" (P102)* *"Because victims do and would play a big part potentially in reoffending" (P102)* *"I would hope to think that challenge gave him some further insight into what he was doing because he was actually kind of blown away by that and he did write a letter of apology and I think it was a sincere one" (P102)* *"Do I think that stops them from going out and stopping doing things again? Probably with him no. But maybe someone else, that's the dynamic, that's the difficulty so I don't think you could blanket and say everybody who did that victim work would not but for some I think it be quite powerful" (P102)* *" And I'd say 99% of people would have said I'd never steal from an old person, I'd never do that to a child…it's a big no no." (P108)* *"`I'm impartial but I've got the victims interests" (P109)* *"I think that after that they are tapping into their moral compass and they actually have some kind of realisation that hang on a minute" (P109)*

		"The work we do with victims and sort of restorative work, around young people reaching a level of erm being able to have empathy and the effect of what they do to other people, I think that can help" (P113)
	The Court System	*"I think that sometimes we erm charge people now when we really shouldn't be charging them" (P101)* *"A similar system but with different labels" (P102)* *"Oh he's got a caution but he wouldn't see he's got 6 community resolutions for breaking into vehicles, criminal damage, assault" (P104)* *"Now if that had been 7 years ago, he'd have been in court and been convicted, so that's the way the landscapes changed" (P104)* *"You could have 5 or 6 disposals prior to that" (P104)* *"So 10 years ago, you'd have had a kid of 15 who'd have 10 cautions or 3 cautions and gone to court, now you can have committed 5 offences before you even get a caution, which are non-recordable" (P104)* *"Was an escalator you went up, but that's gone" (P104)* *"I think there's less people coming through court because I think they are being diverted out by the police for the low level stuff but I think the ones that are coming are coming in for quite serious offences and are coming back and back and back" (P105)* *"That they don't come back to YOT but I suppose it's difficult really because even though they don't come back to us doesn't actually mean that they are not reoffending and they are not doing something in the community" (P105)*

		"We are definitely seeing our first time entrants have committed, that's not their first offence that they've committed" (P107) *"because the issues are much more ingrained" (P108)* *"There's fewer young people who are criminalised for things they that they shouldn't be criminalised" (P108)* *"So that same, that person now comes on a referral order they might have pinched a bottle of pop, beat up a teacher, criminal damage, possession of cannabis and now he's on a referral order for assault" (P109)* *"It's one hell of a shock…explain to the young person what's going on so it doesn't come as such as shock, they're used to being able to miss appointments and it will kind of be alright..when you become a late teen, adult offenders, all of that sympathy kind of vanishes really and people tend to expect you to stop overnight. Even though you're the same person with the same experienced" (P110)* *"I would say that's more to do with structural changes within the criminal justice process" (P113)*
3. Complex Young People	Persistent Young People	*"There are a few hardened ones, tough I mean, we might pick them up at 10 and they are with us practically until they are 18 and they then go on to probation" (P101)* *"But then having said that I've got people on my case load who have been known to the youth offending team for the past 3 years" (P103)* *"Somebody I started working with when I first started here and still working with now" (P103)*

		"A number of them that will continue to come back and back and back" (P104) *"I think there's a core group of them that will always be in trouble" (P104)* *"You've got the small amount of kids who commit a lot of crimes and they go on through the system again and again and again" (P106)* *"I've got colleagues who breach and breach and breach and I think why are you breaching all that" (P106)* *"But again some young people will continue to be criminals all their lives and we know who they are" (P108)* *"There's always been the same ones" (P108)* *"We get a core of young people who consistently reoffend" (P111)* *"You either got someone who constantly reoffends or someone who does silly little crime and then off they go" (P112)*
	Multiple Needs	*"Is it a crime if starving people steal food?" (P101)* *"Again, their backgrounds are abysmal, or have been absolutely dreadful, you know, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse so it's no wonder really" (P101)* *"The young people, the vast majority of young people who come here are from a different class all together" (P101)* *I think placing them in care is not always useful at all, unless the carers are actually really strong and forceful and wiling to stick their necks out really" (P101)* *"The families that we have that have been with us for a number of years, very complex families, a number*

		of factors influencing the family dynamic and the young person and things that by the time the services get involved they can't undo" (P103) *"Instead of them coming here for their offence focus group, actually they are coming here for flipping everything" (P104)* *"A lot of the kids who here have got social problems as opposed to offending problems" (P104)* *"But I think young people have become more complex" (P104)* *"A little bit more complex because we know a little bit more" (P104)* *"Its huge. The factors that cause them to reoffend you know, with one person you could write down two reasons, with another person you could write down twenty two reasons and that's how difficult it is" (P104)* *"Build a relationship with some of the young people because they are varied. They've had a lot of disruption, chaos, and basically when we meet them we ask them some personal questions" (P105)* *"If you are in the care system, you are absolutely"(P106)* *"It's like the same approach for all young people doesn't work, it can't work" (P106)* *"I'd say we're getting far more complex young people coming through with a lot more issues" (P107)* *"There's a lot of different factors I think that play a part" (P107)* *"Because you tend to find that children that are looked after, they are offending within the home" (P107)*

		"I think the issues have become more complex" (P108) *"They are more complex because the issues are much more ingrained" (P108)* *"A young person in care, in a care home, they've done exactly the same thing, police are called, they've then got it on their record as criminal damage, so two young people, two same behaviours dealt with differently because of their status" (P109)* *"Poorly paid, erm the care staff don't have the knowledge, don't have the experience, don't have the training, don't have the qualifications…and they're dealing with really really complex young people" (P112)* *"I think to take a child out of a chaotic life at the age of 12/13 and put them in a care home with structured routine and expect them to abide by that, its not gonna work is it?" (P112)* *"I don't think its early intervention, I think its getting children's social care, to do what they should be really" (P112)* *"Just sort of the young people, more and more seem to have mental health problems" (P112)* *"Whereas with young people, you are dealing with everything else as well, and their growing and their development and their identity and all those things" (P113)* *"I think the severity of the welfare concerns has increased" (P114)* *"Kids are getting far more complex" (P116)* *"Often kids that are undiagnosed with ADHD and ADH, quite complex needs and aren't recognised" (P116)*
	Wider Situational	*"Because the pattern of behaviour hasn't changed" (P100)*

	Factors	*"They come back into the same environment that they went into: no chance" (P101)* *"There's lot of different things where it falls down for them, they failed and then they probably turn back to what's entrenched really" (P102)* *"How can you come up with something and how are we doing to get children to stop reoffending? It's huge. The factors that cause them to reoffend you know, with one person you could write down two reasons, with another person, you write down twenty-two reasons and that's how difficult it is" (P104)* *"And the only thing we can't control is where they live and how they live and who they live with. All the rest of it, it can be controlled" (P104)* *"If they are going back to a situation where there's no support in that and they are not with somebody with pro-social modelling who aren't supporting them" (P105)* *"If you haven't got that support network outside, I think that's that can be the thing because we can do a quick fix here but…. if they are going home and parents aren't reinforcing that message that we're trying to give, its difficult really" (P105)* *"Doesn't mean that we've got a magic wand" (P105)* *Nothing going to change unless mum gets stronger, but mums a bit of a victim in it all" (P106)* *"He's going to come out and not much is going to have changed for him" (P107)* *"When they leave here, you've got no control over the situational factors so they could go, they'd be going back to the same family, same street, same peers" (P109)* *"If you work with a young person and nothing else in their life has changed, they still haven't got*

		education, they haven't got an income, haven't got a family who care about them, they haven't got any prospects or any hopes, then there is no real reason why they would change their behaviour" (P113) *"I think things are starting much younger which is why there needs to be much more of an emphasis on this early action stuff" (P115)* *"`I think with their needs, slightly more, I think all thresholds are getting higher and the kids are getting far more complex" (P116)*
	Offence Types	*"You are left with perhaps the hard core aren't you? Going to be bigger and more serious types of crime?" (P100)* *"A lot of the kids are now carrying weapons, which I don't think they used to, so knives, hammers, things like that." (P101)* *"As children grow up and they get more criminally sophisticated they may well get better and more practised in what they're doing" (P102)* *"Its very unusual you'll get somebody in that commits a very very serious offence generally, there's been a build-up of minor offences to eventually a bigger one" (P104)* *"The more worrying ones are the drugs and the violent offences than as opposed to the theft offences" (P104)* *"But I do think there's been more possessions, the possession of offensive weapons and knives." (P105)* *"I think you are seeing different crimes now than you used to."(P106)*

		"In my career, the offences have changed massively with the internet, social media, legal highs, types of drugs that are being taken, not as much down the pub or nightclub activity" (P110) *"I think the types of offending changes but the same people, the same people from the same kind of family and backgrounds are the regular people" (P110)* *"I think that the types of offending that we see them for may have changed." (P113)* *"I don't think the type of young people ever changes" (P113)* *"They will continue to commit the same fairly low level, fairly annoying, fairly stupid offences, and for other young people, they will escalate and I would say that, that may be influenced by their peers and their circumstances" (P113)* *"Its been a huge escalation in the nature of violent offending and as well as an increase in the general overall violent offending" (P114)* *"A lot more violent offences taking place and the level of seriousness has definitely escalated in the last kind of year" (P114)* *"And there's obviously an increase over here in the really violent stuff and the carrying knives and stuff" (P115)* *"There are lads who obviously got mates in different groups but are committing offences together and really quite serious offences, carrying knives and stuff" (P115)*
4. Contributors to Recidivism	Individual Motivation	*"Young people, the vast majority of young people who come here are from a different class altogether" (P101)*

		“Same aspirations or hopes or anything that young people have” (P101) *“Recently thinking about getting a thrill, they get a thrill out of it and I’m not sure they get a thrill from anything else. Everything else is really quite boring” (P101)* *“A lack of hope for these young people” (P101)* *“Committing crime they are fulfilling a lot of their own needs” (P101)* *“Don’t have the same aspirations or hopes or anything that young people have” (P101)* *“I think it's a question of belonging” (P101)* *“Sometimes it’s just opportunists and the one that people always like to hear is they get in trouble because they enjoy it! They enjoy the risk taking aspect” (P103)* *“Might have substance misuse” (P105)* *“They don't feel they are worth anything, low self-confidence, low self-esteem” (P105)* *“It's a process of growing up and the brain developing and about making decisions because everybody makes silly decisions when they are young, you know” (P105)* *“I think all young people who get involved in offending, are generally not very happy” (P106)* *“Self-identity is one where they don’t hold very high self-esteem” (P106)* *“Void of aspirations, void of goals, labelled” (P106)*

		“Self-identity” (P106) *“If you don’t have the goals or the aspirations or the opportunities to do well..you are not going to go down the prosocial steps” (P106)* *“I think sometimes it's seen as just a way of life. As survival” (P107)* *“So I think its mainly the young people who have suffered poor attachment, chronic low level neglect” (P108)* *“I think drugs is another one” (P109)* *“I think a lot of it is that hopelessness, what’s the point of event trying because I’m not gonna get anywhere, so they end up diverting to offending” (P111)* *“Young people tend to be impulsive” (P111)* *“We have this diagnosis of ADHD bounded around a lot and some of the children we do work with are kind of clinically diagnosed but also I think a lot of it is behavioural trauma I there down to lack of parenting” (P111)* *“Just inability to be able to manage their anger…those feelings of kind of grief, loss, all those lack of identity with the family, where do I belong, raises a lot of feeling young people don’t know how to deal with” (P111)* *“Immaturity and impulsiveness and they may reoffend” (P111)* *“The kind of sense of belonging, sense of identity, financial gain, just a distraction from not being able to follow the normal path of life” (P111)*

		"Not being able to follow the normal path of life, immaturity, impulsiveness" (P111) *"Their hobby in a way, they don't see it's wrong" (P111)* *"I think in young people anyway it's a process of maturing so sometimes we work with them for a length of time during which they also mature and so their motivation to reoffend changes as well" (P113)* *"They haven't got any prospects or any hopes" (P113)* *"It's back to that nothing to lose, because there isn't anything to lose, what can you take away from someone who has nothing? (P114)* *"You know, mental health, drugs and things" (P115)*
	Relationships	*"And everything can be, a lot of things can be down to parenting, Laying boundaries, children being happy, and contained" (P100)* *"I can't stress enough how important parenting is" (P100)* *"They become a gang or a group of whatever and such" (P101)* *"The vast majority of young people who come here are from a different class all together" (P101)* *"I think peer groups" (P103)* *"There's a lot of gang mentality" (P103)* *"Where they live, the people they hang around with, and their upbringing" (P104)* *If you've got a young person whose family might be involved in criminal behaviour, and its entrenched in that family" (P105)*

		“It can be, you know, being part of a gang” (P105) *“If you’ve never had any relationship or never had any sort of attachment to anybody, never sort of had anybody to look after you or show any warmth or love, I suppose then as you get older, you just think well if nobody cares about me, why should I care? And that can start off potentially offending” (P105)* *“There is attachment issues, there’s bereavement, there’s wider family issues and influences that we can’t control” (P107)* *“It’s just family, family background, expectation of society” (P108)* *“You’re not clever, you’re not cool, you’re not pretty, you’re not muscular, you’re not good at sport, who are you going to fit in with, you might be an emo or you know, they will find a group to fit with. And if that's the group where young people are known to crime” (P108)* *“I think that early childhood experiences are really important in understanding everything about causes us to tick as humans” (P113)* *“I think that young people for whom boundaries don't exist or boundaries are very fluid or very inconsistent or where a family has erm a morality that doesn't see it as inappropriate to take something belonging to somebody else then that young person is bound to be influenced by that” (P113)* *“For me, it’s about attachment” (P114)* *“the young people that have crossed my desk just this very day, I know are all young people have been faced with awful upbringings, awful situations within their families” (P114)* *“I think peer pressure comes into it a lot” (P115)* *“Obviously depending on your family and your background but I think sometimes young people struggle to*

		get out of" (P115) *"In order to get status and peer group pressure" (P116)*
	Situational Factors	*"There are social difficulties which have to be addressed really before kids can stop offending" (P101)* *"The vast majority of young people who come here are from a different class all together" (P101)* *"School, I don't think society is geared really to help these young people and their problems become massive" (P101)* *"Problems with parents; substance misuse, mental health difficulties" (P101)* *"The environment that they live in" (P103)* *"The way they've been brought up" (P103)* *"I don't know if that's down to lack of their understanding of opportunities out there, or if there actually is a lack of opportunities" (P103)* *"Peer pressure" (P104)* *"The estates that they live on and it's in some ways the norm" (P104)* *"It's about looking at the whole picture and I think that's what obviously the assessment does, because when you look on a piece of paper and an offence then you think 'oh that doesn't sound very nice' but then when you get the full picture, you get the full picture about you know, the parents, what sort of issues, mental, emotional health. Its yeah, it's about getting all the information" (P105)* *"Obviously the neighbourhood, the labels they pick up from being in a neighbourhood" (P106)*

		"Peer groups are at it they linked by association" (P106) *"It's extremely dysfunctional, really warped views, behaviours, morals and values" (P107)* *If you've got a young person that commits a criminal offence at 10 years of age, they're not a criminal, they're all welfare, serious welfare concerns, within that" (P107)* *"Bored, mates, cannabis" (P109)* *"Learned behaviour, is a lot of it…. witnessed criminality depending on households" (P109)* *"Erm again, drugs, cannabis, if you've got a very little income or next to nothing but you've got a daily cannabis habit of £20, you don't need to be a great mathematician to work out that the money is gonnna have to come from somewhere" (P110)* *"Been exposed to domestic violence" (P111)* *"Cannabis, so one they lack motivation and goals, two, they're either offending to get drugs or they kind of poor thinking skills when they're taking them" (P111)* *"I think drugs are a massive factor" (P111)* *"I think drugs play a huge part, a lot of people, the majority of people we come into contact with are cannabis users" (P112)*
5. Pathway to Desistance	Individual Factors	*"I think people need to find a direction in their life" (P100)* *"I think it's also almost like a time and place, if you can catch them at the right time in the right place" (P101)* *"He said it never made sense then, it's made sense too late" (P102)*

		"Self-esteem is increasing, you know" (P102) *" I think as well for some young people, they need to want to make those changes, they need to be ready to make those changes" (P102)* *"They've got to be willing to change" (P104)* *"Until somebody's ready to change its very difficult to change them, even though you can keep doing things" (P104)* *"I think it's very difficult to get out of that cycle unless you make that positive step to do that" (P104)* *"I think it's about putting the work into them ones that are more complex and try and identify it, but I do think what we should do is that if somebody not willing to change then, we need to be firm and harsh, not harsh but we need to be firm with the way we deal with them" (P104)* *"I think they need to know who they are" (P106)* *"I think peer pressure got a lot to do with it" (P109)* *"They are tapping into their moral compass" (P109)* *"They say the brain doesn't fully develop until your 25, the pre-frontal cortex which is about empathy, and being able to perspective take and see the victims point of view" (P110)* *"You do see people who basically reach a point of maturity really, they settle down, get a relationship that's stable and before you know it" (P110)*

		"The main factor is wanting to desist" (P110) *"Give them some hopes and goals for the future, something to aim for, some hope that they can have a life again, increasing the self-esteem of that person, that will use themselves a bit more" (P111)* *"I think some will, the arrogance of youth" (P111)* *"People are generally meeting some needs by offending, so by replacing that need and getting them involved in a positive activity, give them some hopes and goals for the future, something to aim for, some hope that they can have a life again, increasing their self-esteem of that person" (P111)* *"They've got to 18 and the maturity kicks in" (P112)* *"That young people can just reach a point in which they've just had enough, it doesn't make sense anymore" (P114)* *"There's a lot of maturity that naturally happens anyway" (P116)*
	Relationships	*"How do you spend your time, and who you spend your time with" (P100)* *"Children need to know that they are safe and that they are content" (P101)* *"They are having contact with their family but most often it becomes meaningful contact with the family" (P102)* *"Stable families" (P103)* *"Not associating with the peers that they used to associate with" (P103)*

		"You see people from privileged backgrounds who come here and you think well why the hell have they done that" (P104) *"I think potentially moving away from your previous peer groups if they were negative" (P105)* *"Then something might happen and them just think actually just you know, they become an adult" (P105)* *"I think again going back to that relationship and having an attachment, whether that is to a parent or a grandparent or foster carers" (P105)* *"We always try and talk to somebody that they've got a relationship with" (P105)* *"But I think if you've got a positive early childhood, you can build on that" (P105)* *"I do think it's all down to the relationship" (P106)* *But again some young people will continue to be criminals all their lives and we know who they are because those are the ones who have, who do reoffend, who have been neglected, who have to go back to the same situations" (P108)* *"I'll go to relationships, strong relationships, personal relationships are a really important factor is in desistance" (P108)* *"Positive role models, having that structure, family safe, secure all that" (P109)* *"Education, training, jobs had been a big one" (P109)* *"Whenever lads have got a girlfriend who disapprove of them committing offences that tends to curb their offending" (P109)*

		"A strong working relationship is really important" (P110) *"I'll go to relationship, strong relationships, personal relationships is a really important factor in desistance because if you feel like you have nobody and nobody cares about you to quote someone nobody gives a shit about me so I don't give a shit about them, that's often what you find" (P110)* *"I think that the support of an adult, whether they're adults, whether they're parents who are support or in the care in the local authority" (P111)* *"If they meet like a nice girlfriend or something who has their head screwed on" (P111)* *"They don't have that, the positive role models" (P112)* *"You know you're interested, and want to help them. That makes a massive difference. I think that's doing that but often you feel like between a cross between a taxi driver and mum, a lot of the time" (P112)* *"I think that the work we do is in its purest sense is about engaging with young people and for me, behaviour change can only happen within the context of a positive relationships and we are one of the positive relationships that needs to be there" (P113)* *"I think the relationship is absolutely crucial" (P113)*
	Practical	*" They enjoy education, perhaps did enjoy it at school, or training or find something that they are good and interested in" (P100)* *"Well I think giving them sort of hope, that they will get a job and that they can be good at something" (P101)* *"They're accessing education" (P102)*

		“Education” (P103) *“Getting in some form of employment, education or training” (P109)* *“Education or structured activities: (P111)* *“And if they are engaged in education, it’s an obvious one isn’t it?” (P111)* *“I think you try and get their education sorted” (P112)* *“I think a lot of the practical stuff can help, like young people getting some training, or some education or some employment or something that will give them a structure and a purpose” (P113)* *“Obviously I’m gonna say education, predictably” (P114)* *“Something positive to do” (P115)* *“Getting involved in positive activities and engaging in other things to sort of steer them away from their peer group and that way of life” (P116)*

Appendix 20: Phase 3- Theme Table

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotes
1. Relationships	Family	*"[who are you close to] my brother..he's older than…I listen to him more than my mum" (P202)* *"[have your family relationships changed as a results of the offending] yeah" P203)* *"[who are you close to] my dad massively, my mum, it's a bit werid but my little baby sister" (P205)* *"I was lucky enough to have good parents and parents who stood by me and not just go, you done wrong, bugger off, some parents do" (P205)* *"my mum started accepting me wanting to get help" (P205)* *"[who are you close to] my mum, my nan and it would have been my grandma, yeah" (P206)* *"They were devastated, they just wanted me to stop being a little shit" (P206)* *"[family supportive] yeah" (P207)* *"[who are you close to] my mum, my nan and my mate" (P207)* *"I had many people who were on the inside; they were like my family and wanted me to change. I wanted to change for them" (P208)* *"[how did they feel when you were in custody] wounded" (P208)* *"I grew up in care and all that. I was bad to be around. I were horrible but now…like my family are the most important people in my life" (P210)*

		"I put my mum through a lot, so did it for that reason, Just got on with it"(P213)
	Friends	*"now the mates I have now, are just child and can have a laugh and can talk about real stuff, not like stuff that's gonna get you into trouble" (P203)* *"I purposely not surrounded myself with bad influence people" (P205)* *"still like a boundary of what I talk to them about but yeah I have one friend who I've known since I've moved up here" (P205)* *"We're all boring!" (P206)* *"I know a lot of people like I could go out with a lot of people But I just I'd rather stay in a group of one or two" (P206)* *"I used to hang around with like loads of people and we just used to cause trouble. But now like I hang around with about 5" (P207)* *"[Are there people in your life who have a negative influence] Yeah. There is some people yeah" (P208)* *"But the people I hang around with. They're all on orders and stuff, lots of orders trying to just chill at the minute. To do nothing" (P209)* *"But we all, you do, we all have a negative on each other so one time I wanted to do something, we all go out own minds, basically you say, if I said to my mate oh lets go and do a burglary, I might seem bad that night. But another night, he could say to me oh yes, lets I'm going to do a burglary. You know what I mean?" (P209)*

		"The friends that I've got yeah, I've just wiped all of my mates, anyone that not's good for me has gone" (P210) *"A lot of people in my life who were a negative influence" (P213)* *"I don't want to blame anyone else but peer pressure, you do things to impress other people" (P213)*
	YOT Workers	*"Chatty, trustworthy, non-judgmental, helpful, fun" (P201)* *"The best ever" (P202)* *"Sound. Understood me quite well. Quite easy to get on with" (P203)* *"She's alright" (P204)* *" They're not professional, well they are professional but they aren't like do this, do this, but yeah approachable" (P205)* *"Helpful, annoying!" (P206)* *"Understanding, helpful" (P207)* *"I feel like she cases about me and that she wants me to do well. I feel like she's probably proud of how I've changed since I got out and that you know" (P208)* *"If you can't speak to them, there is no point in coming to YOT is there really? Just you're not gonna listen, you're not gonna do what they want you to do" (P209)* *"Just someone there whose advising you not to go and do certain things, it's always there*

		someone helping you know?" (P209) *"He's a sick guy" (P209)* *"She is amazing. She is honestly. I love her. She's like a second mum. She's helped me with a lot" (P210)* *"You've got to find right person" (P210)* *"You've got to be willing to cooperate. Like your YOT worker will be there and she'll help you, or he will help you whatever, you've got to be willing to work back" (P210)* *"She's good, she's funny, and I get on with her" (P211)* *"Friendly, understanding, flexible" (P212)* *"Kind and helpful" (P213)* *"Definitely need good relationships" (P213)*
2. Offending Lifestyle	Individual Factors	*"Stopped and thought about it first" (P201)* *"Wouldn't have done it any been alone" (P201)* *" I don't like the type to get into trouble but things happen (P202)* *"To fit in, to think they're cool" (P202)* *"Or just to try and escape something. You'll never know" (P202)*

		“ Just get in trouble because they just need to get anger out” (P202) *“Some people are just born to not care. I can never be like that. I care for everyone” (P202)* *“Some of them lucky not to get caught. Some of them were” (P203)* *“[would have changed what happened] probably not” (P203)* *“Cause they can’t be bothered coming to YOT. They think it’s boring and stupid” (P203)* *“I do have ADHD, it could play a part but not a big one. Erm, it was medication I was on, the way it made me feel. I just srtaed and went crazy” (P203)* *“Depends how on you see it. If you see it as easy money, you’ll do it, but if you don’t, you’ll get a job (P203)* *“It’s a like a buzz, you get the police chase, or just causing trouble. Easy Money” (P203)* *“[would anything have changed what happened] probably not” (P203)* *“ Sometimes I get bored and won’t turn up” (P204)* *“Cause if I’m gonna hit someone, I’m gonna hit someone. Having a YOT worker is not gonna stop that” (P204)* *“I would do someone if someone says unless I was getting paid for it.” (P204)* *“I’m an opportunist” (P204)*

		"It makes know where they are if you get what I mean on the pecking order. Cause if someone moves to me, I'd law them out on the pavement. That's what I would do. But if they know that, they know wont step to you and do anything like that" (P204) *"knew I had done wrong and stuff originally" (P205)* *"But then when I was still finding my ground of trying to open up and trying to do it, I was still a bit of an idiot" (P205)* *" It's a bit overwhelming and it could have quite been like I can't be bothered" (P204)* *" I used to be exactly the same, but now I started coming to YOT, like I just you just realise, that is weird down how it's come across because before I come here I wasn't bothered about what I did, wasn't bothered about getting in trouble but coming here and the stuff that like they've shown me and said what could have happened, its helped me realise" (P206)* *"I just loved cars like I've wanted to drive a car. I've always had car games" (P206)* *"Some people just realise half way through that, what am I doing? Why am I robbing this shop? Like they could get a job, get their own money, buy the stuff I am robbing, realise that I am doing it wrong but other kids just think nah, it's just free whatever"(P206)* *"It's not the game, it's the people" (P206)* *"I don't listen to that, I don't like getting told what to do" (P206)* *"But it was just the key were there and you had the decision, you take the care, have a go and see if you can bring it back and if you can't, chill out, do what you were meant to be doing. If you can, pick your mates up, buzz your tits off" (P206)*

		“[on the first offence] I’m not too sure, I think it was always gonna happen anyway” (P208) *“ I feel like it’s just in some people, I don’t know, however much work you get, they’re just gonna keep coming back for their rest of their life” (P208)* *“I did the Addaction four times, the programme , I don’t think so nah, it has, like it’s made more aware about things but I am still choosing to carry out what with that I’m doing” (P208)* *“ I feel like the people who keep coming back, I dunno, the ones that are getting influenced by their mates to do things, and doing things off their own accord” (P208)* *“ It’s up to you what you do from it, from there” (P208)* *“I don’t know, I’m not too sure, I think it was always gonna happen anyway” (P208)* *“ people tell me the same things over and over again, I just like I’ve heard it all before, you know what I mean” (P209)* *“Just in the mood aren’t I?” (P209)* *“ Buzzing, I’ve done that” (P209)* *“Young and childish, just laughing and messing about” (P209)* *(And then I think I was just a bit young and immature and I had a lot of anger problems and mental health problems” (P210)* *“I reckon it’s to do with they’ve been troubled in their background, like stuff like that and they’ve got*

		so much anger in them" (P210) *"I think when I was offending; I was too in love with that lifestyle, Like I just didn't care about anyone or myself at that point. I just did whatever I wanted to do. I am so glad now I didn't end up in prison and stuff like that" (P210)* *"I think I was a just a bit young, and immature" (P210)* *"Always a bit more further ahead. You get what I mean? I wasn't as like childish" (P211)* *"There will always be lads like that. There's nothing you ever be able to do about them" (P211)* *"You gain trust like that, normally you get around and you try, you get lads in the past, what are still like trying to impress me, with their offending" (P211)* *"I cant say I regretted it, I got caught, I made a mistake" (P212)* *"People offend for all kinds of reasons, lack of care, no goals" (P212)* *"Had a motive to make actual money not for fun" (P212)* *"If fighting or something minor, people who get into trouble for that, angry, people involved in drugs often want to make money for family" (P213)*
	Situational Factors	*"Group encouraged the behaviour. Would have done it if had been alone" (P201)* *"To fit in. To think they're cool" (P202)* *" If either if they drugs they might obviously that changes how your body works" (P202)*

		"they've had a bad past, or a bad upbringing" (P202) *" I can look at people and tell you who, whose the people to hang around with and not" (P202)* *"Drugs" (P203)* *"[were you under the influence when you offended or were you offending because of that] A bit of both" (P203)* *"Peer pressure, one of them" (P203)* *"Wrong crowd, hanging around with them a lot. I offended" (P203)* *"Drugs is another one" (P203)* *"The ones I hang around with in the past, really, a bit older, lot older than me" (P203)* *"Drugs and easy money, and now the mates I have now, are just child and can have a laugh and can talk about real stuff, not like stuff that's gonna get you into trouble" (P203)* *"[Drugs or alcohol or both] I'd say a bit of both" (P204)* *"It makes people know where they are, if you get what mean, on the pecking order…but if they know that, they won't step to you and do anything like that" (P204)* *"Knowing now, a lot of people I know or have known, drugs are massive, it wouldn't surprise me" (P205)* *"Some parents do, I'm not saying that always the same, but like some parents come in, well they*

		don't come in" (P205) *" Some kids come in and then the parents like they'll just not be there for them or they'll be in the same position as them, they'll be doing wrong, all the time so then they its right and their not shown the right" (P205)* *"Because they take different drugs and drink different drinks" (P206)* *" I just loved cars" (P206)* *"I was stoned" (P206)* *" Just something to do" (P206)* *"Stop playing violent games and watching bad videos" (P206)* *"Most of it can show it off to kids innit. They'll have one older mate and they'll think if I rob that car, I'll get in with the older ones, I'll be the drug dealer, and I'll be, I don't know, they'll just od stupid things to try and get a name for themselves" (P206)* *"You've always got the main one of the group haven't you, that's all everyone is fighting to do but it's either fighting or robbing something" (P206)* *"They'll go do it again, try to show them off, just try to be the big one aren't they?" (P206)* *"But we all, you do, we all have a negative on each other, so one time, I wanted to do something…if I said to my mate, oh let's go and do a burglary yeah, I might seem bad that night. But another night, he could say to me, oh yes lets, I'm going to do a burglary, you know what I mean? It's just whatever, whoever says it. Just in the mood aren't I?" (P207)*

		“[did drugs or alcohol play a role] yeah pretty much all my offences” (P208) *“ Just what my group of mates did” (P209)* *“ They pass me on to all these other services” (P209)* *“I know all of them, they’re all my mates” (P209)* *“They’ve all took, they’ve all done stuff, they’ve all done things that us type of people do. Other type of people wouldn’t….were just different to some people” (P209)* *“But we all, you do, we all have a negative on each other so one time I wanted to do something, we all go out own minds, basically you say, if I said to my mate oh lets go and do a burglary, I might seem bad that night. But another night, he could say to me oh yes, lets I’m going to do a burglary. You know what I mean?” (P209)* *“All my money I get spend on coke, or weed and just get pilled up sometimes” (P209)* *“There just telling me the same stuff, oh this drug can do this, this can do that. But sometimes that makes me feel better when I do that” (P209)* *“ It’s just the area, friendships” (P209)* *“see I were in the wrong crowd” (P210)* *“I was on drugs a lot, I used to drink quite a bit as well. I think I was drinking when I did the serious assault charge. But yeah they do” (P210)*

		"or it's a crowd that you are mixing with and you are trying to show off and you want to fit in" (P210) *"I don't want to blame anyone else but peer pressure, you do things to impress other people" (P213)*
	Type of Offence	*"Same sort of stuff but they have changed" (P203)* *"One I won't again is probably affray. I won't do that again. Definitely not…..Stupid of me, If I did do it and I actually hurt him, I could have killed him. I could have killed someone. If I did, then your life gone. You have to live with the regret of knowing that you've killed someone or hurt him. (P203).* *"No, cause I haven't committed any more serious offences. You know what I mean?" (P204)* *"I wouldn't do armed robbery" (P204)* *" [most serious offence] I think the blade" (P204)* *"When I first came in, I didn't know how serious they were until people started explaining it" (P205)* *"[Do you think it was quite serious?] yeah" (P208)* *"The petty crime, that's what you see" (P208)* *" I had a couple of petty ones and then I had the serious one which I got locked up for and then a couple more petty ones before I got locked up" (P208)* *"When I was younger innit, throwing stones at cars, climbing on roofs, taking things but not like robbing intentionally….getting chased by the police. All sorts of things, just what my group of mates did. And then we just carried on just doing kid things and then as we got older, things started getting different, we started robbing and that. And we started doing burglaries" (P209)*

		"Yeah, obviously, the things I do now are a lot serious, Compared to just climbing on someone's roof, and just getting chased by police and that" (P209) *"Obviously with my first offence, it was just fighting, and assaults and stuff like that. And then it turned into robbing cars and then stealing form cards and stuff like that. I have a serious assault which was my worst charge that I had and I need up at crown court…It was a serious impact on my life that. Destroyed everything." (P210)* *[as you get older] a lot more serious" (P211)* *"I had an actual motive to make money, not for fun" (P212)* *"If fighting or minor, people who get into trouble for that, angry. People involved in drugs often want to make money for family" (P213)*
3. Context for Change	Individual Factors	*"Probably would change it because YOT has been really good" (P201)* *"Because when you're young, you're stupid, and you don't really understand the whole world of life and being a grown up. But I think it just you know it gives them a little knock on the shoulder like come on. You know you're growing up now" (P202)* *"I've been better at home. I don't really argue with the mum anyone" (P202)* *"Depends on how you see it. If you see it as easy money, you do it. But if you don't, you'll get a job" (P203)* *"You never know. I might be back. Hopefully not though" (P204)* *"I know why it happened, it was just because I never opened up. I never gave myself the*

		opportunity to try and sort it" (P205) *"I saw how bad they were and it made me go like I don't want to go there and I had that hope in my head" (P205)* *"Looking at everyone I disappointed and how they were and me not wanting them to be disappointed in me, made me want to change" (P205)* *"you do it for yourself, it's not really to please anyone, it's to sort yourself, it's for yourself" (P205)* *"It's helped me realise that could have happened not to do it again" (P206)* *"they've shown me and said what could have happened, like bad stuff" (P206)* *"You get some kids who don't have anything, and they aren't bothered are they? But I have something don't I? I have a family, I have something to look forward to. To go home to." (P206)* *"You just, they open up the range of thought and what could have happened, ah you could have hit someone off the road, you could have gone into a taxi, you could have killed your mates and then watching videos about families wasn't it? Like killing yourself when you're driving the car, you're not old enough, no licence, watching the videos and just thinking, oh why would I want to put my families through that? Sitting there crying because they lost their son through something stupid" (P206)* *"You've got your own mind, you tell your body what to do, Just don't listen to them" (P206)* *"I used to be really bad and but now I'm just like yeah. Mature." (P207)* *"Starting to settle down and stuff" (P207)*

		"At first I didn't care about it, the guy and that but then obviously, I started getting into it, when I started doing my YOT, obviously it made me think about it." (P208) *"I feel like I want to stay out of trouble innit. I don't want to do this stuff anymore, But I can't predict the future so I don't know" (P208)* *"I feel I've matured loads since then" (P208)* *"I've been lucky, could go to jail instead but obviously because I'm trying to show them that I was changing and that" (P209)* *"We are say were not gonna do it [offending] any more, but anything could happen. Anytime you know." (P209)* *"At first I'm not gonna lie, I didn't have any guilt at all but now I feel guilty about everything. Everything I've ever done, I fee l so guilty now." (P210)* *"Just sit down and have a big think about how it's gonna impact on their life. I have trouble getting jobs and stuff like that now like nobody wants to hire me"(P210)* *"You've got to be cooperating, you can't just go in and say oh I've done it. I've not been drinking but you can't do that." (P210)* *"I think like it just hit me" (P210)* *"I was just so unsettled and I thought I do need to do something with my life. I can't carry out like this and then I spoke to XXX and she helped me" (P210)* *"I got older now haven't I? I've got no choice. I'm not really out doing criminal activity anyway. I'd*

		have a long sentence if I did. So I need to settle down don't I? get my life together" (P211) *" Just depends if the actual person wants to do it" (P211)* *"Some aren't entirely bothered. Like I'm not that bothered if you've got like something to loose and you are bothered" (P211)* *"Why would I ever get back into crime?" (P211)* *"Some of them have not got much to loose have they? So they just get by their mum and dad and that, and family and that. They don't about that do they? Like the future and that. Obviously I already do" (P211)* *" You've just got to want to do it [change]" (P211)* *I'm older now, I've got no choice…need to settle down, get my life together" (P211)* *"If you're bothered about goals you'll change yourself, if not you'll reoffend. It's your choice" (P212)* *" I feel like I've learnt my lesson" (P213)* *"Depends on who they are. Realise is an immature thing" (P213)* *"Know what I know now, I wouldn't do the same thing. If I wasn't arrested, I probably would have stayed on the same path" (P213)*
	Situational Factors	*"Used to have loads of friends at school but don't really go out anymore" (P201)* *"You need, not matter what people say ah money isn't everything, you do need it. Because it keeps you alive. You don't have it then what are you supposed to do? Live on the streets. Not*

		really nice thing" (P202) *"He made me realise more what I'm not gonna have if I continue to gamble" (P202)* *"You need a job, You need GCSEs" (P203)* *"If someone like threatens me, I'd beat them up. You never know. I might be back. Hopefully not though" (P204)* *" My dad massively, my mum and it's a bit weird but my little baby sister" (P205)* *"I purposely surrounded myself by, I didn't just go and get in a group of mates like 20 mates and they are all being idiots" (P205)* *" I would have told my mum, and she would have dealt with it, she would have put something in place and done something, whereas I built it up in myself and nobody can help" (P205)* *"Oh why would I want to put my families through that? Sitting there crying because they lost their son through something stupid" (P206)* *"It depends really. You get some kids who don't have anything and they aren't bothered are they? But I have something don't i? I have a family, I have something to look forward to. To go home to." (P206)* *"Kids my age just want somewhere to sit, somewhere warm, instead of sitting with their mum watching Corrie. Just want something to do" (P206)* *" It helped me a lot with my education and as well, because before I wouldn't have done like one GCSE but now I've come out with quite a few and the right ones" (P208)* *" [did the mental health workers have an impact] yeah, definitely" (P208)*

		"My family wanted me to change and I wanted to change for them" (P208) *"Obviously it keeps you on the straight and narrow, for a certain period of time [YOT]" (P209)* *"I wanna be active, I don't wanna be sat about chilling every single day. Doing nothing" (P209)* *" I had a job and college and everything" (P210)* *"I think they should just sit down and have a big thing about how its gonna impact on their life. I have trouble getting jobs and stuff like that now, like nobody wants to hire me. And then it's the same as the tenancy because if they see you are a bad tenant, that's it. They don't want you." (P210)* *"I've got a kid and that" (P211)* *"I put my mum through a lot, so did it for that reasons. Just got on with it" (P213)*
4. Punitive Measures	YOT Approach	*"made posters for court as part of reparation work" (P201)* *"At YOT they have such good people but they won't they, why is it that people like you guys everywhere, why do you have to get into trouble to get you people?" (P202)* *" They can deal with kids, you've got XXX, they do people who've been traumatized, and obviously that's a good thing for people who've had a really really crap upbringing of their life" (P202)* *"Everything they possibly can, for people with different problems" (P202)* *"I think they've got everything in tact at the minute" (P202)*

		"I know we spoke about me in general, and my problems and my past and the stuff with my family" (P202) *"We did a session with like erm techniques on how to calm down and stuff like that and breathing techniques and stuff like that" (P203)* *"When I first started, we did about erm offending and why I offended. And reasons like lead up to offending. Reasons how like How I could have not offended" (P203)* *"Sometimes. Sometimes not. Sometimes it helps get it off your chest, sometimes it, you talk about it but a bit of both really" (P203)* *"[do you think having a YOT worker helps young people to stay out of trouble] sometimes. It depends" (P203)* *"Like they give you leaflets, they show you videos, like knife crime and stuff like that, criminal damage and I don't know. Lots of different stuff, you do work around what happened, if you kept offending what would happen if I keep doing criminal damage, fines and all that lot" (P203)* *"[On community work] sort of get to know your YOT worker a lot better, have a laugh with him or her and have a joke. It's get to know each other a bit better, have a chat, get down to have a laugh, not the theory stuff" (P203)* *"[on RJ work] yeah I did a letter to my brother actually, about assault and saying sorry for it, and how I'm not gonna do it again and that" (P203)* *"Basically she came and had a chat all of the time, it wasn't like much" (P204)* *"All their talking about is like what she at the weekend and what I on the weekend. Stuff like that. I*

		wasn't doing no victim awareness or DVDS" (P204) *"Didn't they try and make me dig holes and everything? I'm not happy about it" (P204)* *"All we did is chat to me innit. It was a waste of my time" (P204)* *"It was work around controlling, preventing and just generally not going down the same route. Just trying to come out of it" (P205)* *"Made me just feel better about speaking about stuff and then you just, it helps, because I was able to just like erm get a handle on what I was feeling and cause I just preferred opening up to them" (P205)* *"It and it didn't [help], it was but then when I was still finding my ground of erm trying to open up and trying to do it, I was still a bit of an idiot" (P205)* *"It was more just having, knowing that I had someone coming once a week, once every two weeks to speak to made me realise, not realise, made me think feel a bit more relived, I could speak to people about it. I couldn't call my like my friend and talk about it, and it was more like that security I had of having someone to speak to" (P205)* *"Community payback" (P206)* *"We just watched videos about we all did different things didn't we so sit through one video that the kid, let him get this lecture for him, watch a video about cars for me, then we'll just describe what could have happened, what the bag stuff and the good stuff really. And we'll just get a lecture at the end of it and then a goodbye" (P206)* *"It's not really, it's just something to do, when you think about it. It's not bad, because when you*

		here, it's just being at home really, you just, you want a brew, do you want a drink, are you alright" (P206) *"[did anything have an impact on you] not until I came here" (P206)* *"Open up a range of thought, about what could have happened" (P206)* *"They are doing the best they can aren't they? I just they're kid's innit. They've got to see what there trying to do to understand it haven't they?" (P206)* *"Managing my aggression and stuff, and erm I did decorating with XXX. I've just been doing Photoshop" (P207)* *"But now I'm getting like doing stuff. Like doing things. Instead of like sat there talking and talking about it" (P207)* *"[does having a YOT worker help to stay out of trouble] yeah a bit" (P207)* *" Like the YOT workers trying to make me think about how's its affected the victim, and then it was just victim work innit and think about understanding how they feel" (P208)* *"At first, I didn't care about it, the guy, and that but then obviously, I started getting into it, when I started doing my YOT, obviously, it made me think about it" (P208)* *"The caring is there in most of them" (P208)* *"Drug awareness courses and all that type of stuff" (P208)* *"It is and it isn't, obviously, it is for the obvious reasons but then if they are all coming to you and*

		like if something happens, everyone wants to come and speak to you and it just pisses you off doesn't it?" (P208) *"The only thing thy can do is inform you about what's happening but obviously it's up to you what you do from it, from there innit" (P208)* *"[what can YOT do differently] I don't think, just do what they do now" (P208)* *"Mental health workers [have they had an impact], yeah definitely" (P208)* *"You've got to go here and there, you just wanna chill really" (P209)* *"People tell me the same things over and over again. I just like I've heard it all before. You know what I mean?" (P209)* *"Here we clean it. Move the leaves cause of the time of year. Football clubs, anything that needs repairing" (P209)* *"If you can't speak to them, there is no point in coming to YOT is there really? Just you're not gonna listen, you're not gonna do what they want you to do" (P209)* *"They try getting me involved in all these drug action teams and but I'd say listen, I'm gonna grow out of it one day, I'm not just gonna be sad there off my head, and that all the time" (P209)* *"They're just trying to stop you from doing it full on and they just don't work" (P209)* *"[what would you change] I don't know to be honest. I could advise and just advise them innit. And then just try and show them things in life they'd be better ways" (P209)*

		"We just come in, have a chat, erm, see what's been happening and stuff and then we do work around offending and like to do with cards because that's my recent offence is. She helps me with the emotional stuff and my mental health, she helped with everything" (P210) *"Yeah for my first offence, I think that was assault. So like for that one, we talked about offending and how it can impact on someone and it can ruin your life and stuff like that. I did apology letters and stuff like that" (P210)* *"I had a lot of anger problems and mental health problems" (P210)* *"I did an apology letter for the car. We do quite a bit but I've got loads of stuff going on in my life so she helps me with everything" (P210)* *"I had adaction for 2.5 years and I got through that, I'm off drugs! That's good" (P210)* *"I think its support. Like if I've got a problem, I ring her and she'll sit there and listen to me and help me through it. And she'll get everything involved for me. I think it could be that" (P210)* *"At first, I'm not gonna lie, I didn't have any guilt but now I feel guilty about everything. Everything I've ever done. I feel so guilty now. So I'm glad I wrote them. I hope its alright for them. I wish it never happened" (P210)* *" At first, I was like oh my god, this is such a drag, I am wasting like an hour of time but then after that and you started to get a bond" (P210)* *" I don't know, I talked mostly with XXX, with reparation , don't we, we spend like most of the day with each other all of the time anyway" (P211)* *"We do all sorts, we go out to churches and clean the church yard and that. Stuff like that.*

		Allotment not that long ago" (P211) *"There will always be lads like that. There's nothing you ever be able to do about them" (P211)* *"I never did nowt with YOT until I came here" (P211)* *"Depends on the YOT worker is with the actual kid like you know, you aren't too close to them then it don't work so good does it?" (P211)* *"Why the fuck would I want to tell someone why I burgled their house?" (P211)*
	Custody	*"I think it's the thought of mostly going to prison" (P202)* *" Cause the older you get, the more like you are to get sent down, to get like fined or beach of YOT order, could get sent down" (P203)* *"The first time I got arrested, I was in that cell for three days, I was not happy" (P204)* *"No I wouldn't say it helps. Innit. Cause basically you get food, they tell you when to wake up, when to eat. Tell you when to sleep. Out here you've got to do it innit. Because when they come out there they've got like no schedule. Nothing like that. So they just back to what they know. I mean like criminal offences." (P204)* *"I was a bit like relieved because it could have gone a whole different way [talking about the threat of custody]" (P205)* *"Cells is bad enough, a weekend in there that, 21 hours sorted me out so." (P206)* *"More positive than negative experience [when talking about being in prison]" P208)* *"I come here so I don't get locked up" (P208)*

		“I feel like it’s a good thing that I had YOT set up and some routine for when I got out. Because its routine, 24 hours when you are in there if you come out with no routine, I wouldn’t have known what to do with myself” (P208) *“If I offend now, I am going to jail, custody. Cause of the burglaries, you get a lot of time on them” (P209)* *“I think that people that have done something bad, puts them in there, they deserve to be there and think about I did, I didn't want to go back to that place” (P210)* *“Used scare tactics, I might go to prison, it scared me” (P213)*
	Acceptance	*“But if you offend, it has to be done” (P203)* *“My own fault, I knew right from wrong like but it's a choice. It’s your choice what you do” (P203)* *“Well obviously more things have to happen [when you offend more seriously]” (P208)* *“I did worse things, and you get worse consequences” (P209)* *“The more you do, you get done harder and that” (P209)* *“I that people that have done something bad, puts them in there, they deserve to be there and think about it” (P210)*