Vancouver Coastal Ministry of Children and Family Development Youth Justice Services Consultation

Report to the Regional Planning Committee

Prepared February 14, 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During February 2003 two one-day sessions were held with providers of youth justice services, including contracted services, Ministry staff, and community partners to obtain their views regarding how well the youth justice system functioned, how it could be improved, and what should be in place to ensure best practices in youth justice programs. In addition to the day sessions, some service providers provided written input and a 'snapshot' youth survey was completed with a small number of youth.

The results of the consultation yielded suggestions to improve youth services, including moving towards a more holistic approach to dealing with youth, improving transition and support services, resource access and communication and coordination. It suggested specific areas for action to improve youth justice services and the integration of those services with the broader youth serving system. In particular the process identified the following areas for review/action by the by the Regional Planning Committee/Interim Authority:

- Program evaluability;
- Mandate of youth justice services/ youth probation;
- Delivery of youth services including residential services and services to smaller communities;
- Delivery of residential services;
- Delivery of holistic services; and
- Delivery of programs using best practice guidelines.

As a result of the consultation process the writer recommends that the PRC/Interim Board consider:

1. Providing direction to management that they work with researchers/academics to establish realistic, achievable and measurable outcomes for all youth justice programs.

2. Supporting the delivery of holistic services through development of youth service sites that are multidisciplinary and that focus on client support and service delivery rather than service mandate.

3. Providing direction to management to explore alternative service delivery models that ensure equitable access to services in local communities.

4. Asking management to determine how and whether youth probation services/youth justice services could become involved in early intervention/prevention activities that could enhance youth outcomes in the community.

5. Emphasizing the importance of providing adequate residential and non-residential supports to ensure youth are supported through their key transition periods.

6. Directing management to establish clearly articulated best practice expectations for youth justice programs. A working group of service providers and MCFD staff could undertake such a task.

7. Working with the Vancouver/Coastal Aboriginal Planning Committee to plan for the transfer to, and establishment of, the Aboriginal Authority's delivery of youth justice services.

REPORT

Subject:

This report sets out the results of, and recommendations arising from, a consultation process involving youth justice service providers and representatives of agencies and services who partner with youth justice services in delivery of services to youth.

Background:

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is embarking upon significant change that will result in the creation of ten (five Aboriginal and five mainstream) Regional authorities that will have governance responsibility for services currently delivered by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. As part of the preparation for the shift to the new Authority, the Vancouver Region undertook a consultation process to hear the perspectives of various service providers and service users around the region. This report presents the results of two, one-day sessions held with youth justice contracted agencies, youth serving contracted agencies, probation officers, and service partners from sectors such as education, health, municipal government, alcohol and drug, social work and policing, to discuss delivery of youth justice services.

The objectives for the day sessions were:

- To identify best practices for youth justice programs considering program types; and
- To identify priorities for youth justice service delivery.

The individuals who participated were invited to attend a one-day session that would address the following questions:

1. From your experience of youth justice services, what is currently working well and what could work better?

2. Given what you know about best practices in the delivery of services to youth and/or Youth Justice Services, what qualities should be present in programs that deliver:

    a. Extra judicial sanctions;

    b. Probation Services;
    c. Community Work Service (CWS);
    d. Day programs;
    e. Residential supports; and
    f. Intensive Supervision Programs?

3. Given the service areas that must be delivered, or are currently being delivered, in the region, are there some services you would describe as of higher priority than others?

4. Given we are delivering services in an era of fiscal restraint, are there logical partnerships with other Ministries/ agencies/ levels of government/ contractors, that might provide opportunities for efficiencies?

Sessions were generally well attended with 22 participants attending the February 7, 2003 session and 19 participants attending the February 10th, 2003 session. During the sessions background information regarding mandated youth justice services and best practices. During introductory remarks the manager responsible for youth justice services indicted the need to commence planning for the eventual devolution of youth justice services for Aboriginal youth to the Aboriginal community.

Format for the day included small and large group discussion, issue identification and solution generation.

In addition to the sessions conducted with practitioners, a small sample of youth surveys were conducted with youth who had completed probation and some who were still under supervision. Youth were asked to comment on youth justice services that served them well, those they didn't like, how services could be improved and how they would like workers to work with them. A summary of the results of those surveys is included in this report.

Results:

Feedback forms completed at the end of the session indicated that individuals who participated generally felt they had an opportunity to contribute and were heard. Feedback forms asked participants to indicate key issues from the discussion. The responses to this question supported the overall discussions of the two days. Discussions in the groups indicated cautious optimism for the suggestions raised in the process, but concern that nothing would come of this process.

One concern raised in the session, but not addressed, was how the Aboriginal Child and Family Development Authority would relate to mainstream services. This question was viewed by the facilitator as beyond the mandate of the current consultation process, however the issues raised by the participants indicated that there needs to be discussion and planning about:

- how Aboriginal services should be delivered;
- how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services should work together;
- how Aboriginal services can be assisted and supported in their formative stages, and
- the potential for the creation of inequities in small communities through the separation of the Aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth justice services.

These issues required joint planning sooner, rather than later in the process of separation of services.

Challenges and potential solutions for the Youth Justice System:

Participants discussed how the Youth Justice System works with other youth serving agencies, and how the system co-ordinates across Youth Justice Services. In general, comments indicated the Youth Justice System worked well, however eight key challenges were raised. These included[1]:

1. Lack of youth-friendly environment for the delivery of services;
2. Issues of communication and coordination between services including case management, forms and processes, and information sharing across partners/professions;
3. Issues of transitioning for youth;
4. Transitioning to independent living;
5. A need for holistic approaches to youth (as opposed to stove pipe approaches);
6. Rural access to services;
7. Access to resources, and

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[1] For a complete list of the identified challenges see Appendix A.

8. Regionalization and inequities in service access.

The following section sets out each challenge and then potential solutions suggested by participants.

Lack of a Youth Friendly Service Environment

Issues:

- Most services are delivered in service specific offices (based on service mandate).
- Separation of services leads to labeling of youth.
- Services are delivered in environments that may be pleasant for the professional, but are not conducive to youth attendance.
- Services tend to expect youth to attend an office during office hours.

Solutions:

The participants indicated that youth friendly space requires a rethinking of what service space should look like. They indicated that services should not be delivered in a 'government office' type space, but should provide qualities such as:

- Bright colours and lighting,
- Youth appropriate art, music,
- Street level offices,
- Accessibility but still have privacy,
- Centrally located with good transportation links,
- Comfortable space in waiting areas,
- Minimized security precautions,
- Allowance for office pets.

The philosophy of such a site would clearly be youth focused. As a result, all staff at such a site should be youth appropriate and should demonstrate respect for youth. Integrated services should be available on site to improve communication. (It was noted that rural areas often already have this.) The site should have a 'blurred' purpose so youth can attend without stigma and so that referrals can be made. There should be office space that allows confidential counseling services. It was felt that such sites could provide economic efficiencies. In addition or alternatively, youth P.O.s should provide outreach to schools etc. to deliver services.

Youth should be involved in the planning of these sites either in person or through alternative ways of providing input. Integrated case management policy should be adhered to, to support cross-agency planning for youth.

Lack of Communication and Coordination

Issues:

- Current restrictions on information sharing detract from good planning for youth.
- Schools are not advised when a youth is becoming at risk, or has become justice involved, and as result additional supports are not put in place.
- Multiple workers often don't know who is involved with a youth and this leads to lack of coordinated services and consistency.
- The current RFP process fosters competition that breeds a 'need to know' mentality as a result of shrinking funding and competing agencies.

Solutions:

MCFD establishes and maintain stability and completes its change process. The RFP process is modified.

Improve program information sharing for each community/region by using updated websites to provide an inventory of services, having regular face-to face meetings across services, having staff attend other organization's meetings and having cross agency training.

Improve information sharing with school systems to assist the educational system to understand what occurs in a child's life and to put supports in place for that child. One participant mentioned the prototype development of a Youth at Risk Database that may assist in information sharing across systems.

Improve understanding of different professional roles through joint training, community forums and networking.

The development of one-stop shopping and/or umbrella services was viewed as a key method of addressing coordination and communication issues. Multi-service sites were viewed as a way to move towards multidisciplinary programs through multiple funding sources. Development of such sites should include all relevant service providers including groups such as public health.

Increase support and communication with parents and caregivers. The participants indicated that currently too much work is focused on the youth in isolation of their natural support systems, and too much emphasis is placed on professional systems rather than the natural assets of the youth. The system needs to listen to and support caregivers/parents as they support the youth.

Explore/identify and emphasize 'points of convergence' where the interests of the agencies working with a client come together while maintaining current agency

mandate limits. Other professionals suggested exploration of alternatives methods of coordination that might break down some of the distinctions between professions.

Lack of transition between youth services

Issues:

- Difficulties exist for youth to transition between youth justice services and mainstream services.
- Labeling of youth acts as a barrier to youth access.

Solutions:

Direct services to think past the labels we have placed on youth and recognize that youth can and will change over time.

Move away from emphasis on youth justice youth as needing 'punishment' and refocus the system towards assets the youth can use towards 'mainstream' life.

Enhance case management practices to develop the time and capacity to review cases.

Re-assessment and exit assessments should be completed on youth and that these assessments should have the capacity to recognize decreases in the youth's assessed risk. A youth, who has been designated as high-risk, should be able to move away from that designation as their situation improves. This would allow efficiencies as youth can be reassessed to lower levels of intervention and open spots for youth who are currently high risk.

Provide supports that develop the youth's life skills so that they can gradually become self-sufficient and improve aftercare planning for youth.

Lack of transitioning toward independence

Issues:

- Current policy often places ill-prepared young people on independent living. These youth are frequently not ready for the responsibility of living independently and often don't have the skills required to self manage on a very limited budget. As result they fall back into old behaviours.
- Residential and support services need to be more accessible.

Solutions:

The current system of placing youth on independent living must be re-evaluated because it leaves too many young people at risk.

Youth Agreements be provided more consistently across the region.

Attached to any transition model there needs to be an effective assessment model and a gradual approach to the youth moving to independence (e.g. provide life skills training while still in care).

Planning towards independence must start earlier – for instance at age 14/15, rather than waiting until a youth has reached 16/17. This may require additional training for Foster Parents and greater use of more skilled Foster Parents (reinstate level 1,2,3).

Build youth assets and focus on youth strengths rather than their weaknesses. Build natural community supports.

In order for youth to be successful they also require an increase in their independent living rate and this rate needs to be more equitable across the province.

The process for placing youth on independent living must work more expeditiously as presently youth wait 6 to 8 weeks for processing and many have no resources in the interim.

Youth placed on independent living must have supports provided to them to assist in the transition.

The group indicated that holistically delivered services would assist with the transition process, would help to ensure youth received adequate supports, and could involve youth in their service planning.

Lack of holistic services

Issues:

- Programs available through youth justice services are only accessible to youth in conflict with the law. The system virtually requires a youth to become involved with the youth justice system before they can access services.
- Youth tend to be labeled due to service provider mandates and thus access to more 'mainstream services' may be limited.

- Youth are dealt with according to their Criminal Justice status rather than as individuals with families, friends, etc.
- The youth justice system focuses on youth's negative behaviour.
- Cost sharing practices currently limit the accessibility of programs (non-adjudicated youth can't access them).

Solutions:

Review Youth Justice System roles in order to make services more broadly available. They suggested that the justice system, such as Probation Officers, should also be involved in the support and delivery of preventative services.

Emphasizing earlier identification of youth at-risk. Focusing on early intervention would allow broad-based help to be put in place to support the youth and family, rather than waiting for the youth to be adjudicated.

Provide awareness and skill training for groups such as educators and families, Probation Officers and other members of the justice system.

Expand Probation Officer mandate to include at-risk youth who have not yet been adjudicated but who have similar difficulties.

Peer counseling could be provided as and when needed.

Focus on building family skills and support.

Consider reserving a percentage of spots in any program for high-risk youth regardless of their youth justice status.

Develop restorative justice programs as a means to address various community problems and youth justice issues rather than criminalizing youth. Restorative justice programs could deal with other community conflicts, such as S.W. placement problems and school or neighbourhood conflicts. This emphasizes prevention and involves the youth and their community in finding solutions to the youth's issues. Federal prevention funding should be sought to assist with these types of services.

An example of this type of program that could be expanded to other areas is the John Howard Society 'under 12 conferencing program'. This is focused on shoplifting cases and is used for young kids picked up for shoplifting. These young people become involved with the program and the program works with the school and others to address the young person's issues.

Lack of access to services by rural communities

Issues

- Rural communities cannot sustain full services in their communities
- Communities cannot access programs delivered in major centers.
- Rural youth must have equitable access to services.

Solutions:

Increase use of satellite offices to ensure reasonable availability of services. This would involve specialist service providers traveling to rural communities (i.e. youth forensics, A&D, etc.).

Better partnering of services could improve service availability, for example, train bail hostel providers to also delivery youth detox services.

Explore alternative means of delivering programming. For example, use of teleconferencing to involve youth in youth substance abuse management programs delivered in Vancouver, and use of the Internet through web cams.

Consider delivering services within the schools by sharing space with probation officers, police, counselors etc.

Where youth cannot access adequate services in their home community, then there should be transportation to the city and beds available to the youth, as well as support for the youth and family.

Access to resources;

Issues:

- Inadequate levels of services available.
- Services poorly coordinated across systems.
- Geographic "stove piping" of services may be created through current reorganization.

Solutions:

Policy should be developed 'at the top' to ensure equitable sharing of resources between regions, municipalities and communities.

Plan service delivery more strategically and holistically. Inventory of all youth services to identify redundancies and gaps in services and implement redeployment of services[2].

Design a blue print 'system of care' for the region.

Explore practical partnerships with other organizations such as establishing single volunteer coordinators rather than separate ones for each program; making better use of police/school linkages, sharing physical space such as community schools or use of schools for programs during summers; creation of multi-service sites; and supporting the development of processes and plans to identify and assist youth at earlier ages.

Support service providers who are meeting heavy service demands.

Reviewing services that deny service when a youth is 'difficult'. Providers who deny service must be challenged to find ways to continue to deliver services as otherwise the youth may go unassisted.

Provide advocacy services to youth to assist them in accessing services, or in requesting adequate resources.

Clarify program objectives and outcomes so that agencies and service providers can better determine which services to use for individual youth and what to expect when a youth attends. Current use of recidivism rates as outcomes may not be the best measure of success for most youth. Better articulation of outcomes/objectives might assist coordination and communication as well as improve usage of resources.

Regionalization and potential inequities in service access.

Issues:

- Specialized provincial services or services located in other regions may become less available.
- Regionalization may create new barriers to services.

Solutions:

Create more opportunity for the community to focus on what the community needs rather than on what Victoria wants them to do.

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[2] A contrary response suggested that all current services are fully used, so there may not be any redundancies.

Explore the potential to open up the referral base so that Social Workers and Probation Officers can access all programs rather than limiting program access to one or the other profession.

Develop community partnerships utilizing the expertise in other government agencies.
Establish protocols for cross regional and cross community access to specialized services where those specialized services cannot be delivered locally.

Develop community capacity to deliver services locally.

Subsequent to the discussion of challenges and solutions, participants were asked to identify their top three priorities for action/support by the region from amongst the solutions identified. After collating the results, the priorities were (in descending order):

1. Improving access to resources, (13)(10) total 23
2. Addressing regionalization issues (13)
3. Improving rural access to services, (9)(2) total 11
4. Improved Coordination and Communication across the youth serving systems(3)(7) total 10
5. Improving transitions to independent living.(7)
6. Delivery of holistic services. (6)
7. Development of youth friendly service environments. (5)
8. Improved transition services (3),

Results of youth surveys:

Three youth who had completed probation and seven youth still on probation were asked to complete a questionnaire that asked them about youth justice services. While the numbers of youth interviewed is small, the survey provides an opportunity to obtain a snapshot of youth perspectives.

With regards to what services served the youth best, youth were asked to comment on CWS, Probation or programs they were referred to by the probation officer. They were also asked whether the services made sense given the crime they committed.

The responses from youth who had completed probation indicated that connections to workers were some of the positive aspects of their involvement in the youth justice system. They indicated connections with individual Genesis teachers and Dare support workers were important to them. Comments regarding CWS indicated they did not believe the work they were asked to complete had any relevancy for them. Youth commented that flexible services were important, as were services 'offered at the right time'.

Youth currently on probation indicated that they liked individual A&D counseling and psychological sessions. Some commented that probation supervision and CWS were 'alright', while others indicated that CWS did little good. Addiction work was generally described positively, while anger management programming was described unfavorably by one youth. Youth suggested a need to improve placements for perform community work service. Where commented on, programs/sentences were viewed as appropriate to the offence committed. Also described positively was the Restorative Justice Conferencing Process as it allowed the offender and victim to heal.

With regards to services they did not like, youth indicated YSAM (Youth Substance Abuse Management). A number indicated they would prefer one to one A&D counseling. Anger management was mentioned and Probation reporting was described unfavorably because it placed controls over their lives and they did not perceive a specific purpose for the supervision.

Youth who were on probation commented they wanted to be treated as a person – not a criminal. They viewed teachers as good, and Probation Officers in a neutral to negative light. Comments of these youth were that they just wanted to be left alone, and did not want professionals sharing information about them.

With regards to suggestions for positive change, the suggestions included provide alcohol and drug programs, have better placements for CWS, provide counselors with their own office, and provide a job counselor who can assist youth with transportation to apply for jobs. From the perspective of the youth who had completed probation, key factors in success include support and respect for youth's capacity to make decisions –good or bad; and continued support and linkages to strong supportive individuals such as mentors, teachers and workers. Specific programs were not viewed as important as the workers themselves.

Youth Justice Best Practice Expectations

The participants considered the best practice information provided (Appendix B) and what they know of young offenders and provided suggestions regarding best practice expectations. They were asked to articulate what best practice expectations they would have for each of the following services:

1. Extra-Judicial Sanctions
2. Day Programs
3. Community Work Service
4. Residential Supports
5. Intensive Support and Supervision Programs (ISSP), and
6. Probation Services.

(For a full description of best practices for each service type, see Appendix C.)

The participants supported the direction of the best practice information and made the following general points about youth justice services:

1. Program objectives and outcomes must be clarified so that all parties know what the program is seeking to do.
2. All programs must provide adequate assessment, monitoring of progress and reassessment. At present it is felt that complete assessment may not be completed, nor youth reassessed.
3. Prioritize youth by level of risk for access to services.
4. Match clients and their workers and clients and the programs. Stop using the 'shotgun' approach to referrals.
5. Staff should be trained to deliver clinical services based on sound theory.
6. Focus on relationships in delivering services. This suggests the ISSP program should focus more on support, than supervision.
7. Provide transitional services
8. Build on youth assets to address youth risks.
9. Foster long-term relationships with clients.
10. Recognize that one program cannot serve the needs of all youth. Youth are diverse; therefore programs must have the capacity to respond to that diversity.
11. Programs must have the capacity to deal with youth behaviours.
12. Interventions must be meaningful to the youth and their community.

Subsequent to discussion of best practices participants were asked to identify which of service areas were most crucial to development of healthy youth in the community. They indicated:

- Residential services are key;
- Intensive supervision and support (focused on support) is key;
- Programs must be of sufficient duration;
- Educationally focused programs are key;
- Community Work Services is of the lowest priority.

Discussion:

The two groups of participants represented slightly different demographics both in terms of the geographic communities they represented and the proportion of MCFD staff to service partners. The differing makeup of the groups led to some differences in dynamics, emphasis, and creativity of solution, but overall the areas of concern and the suggested solutions were relatively similar.

The key issues of the groups can generally be sorted in two groupings:

1. Resource issues, and
2. Youth Justice System relationship to other youth services.

The resource issues first relates to equitability of resources and sufficient resources in the community. As has been reflected in the results section of this report, equitable access to services is a key issue for service providers delivering services outside of the Vancouver core. Whether it is Powell River, Squamish, Sechelt, the North Shore or Richmond, or the smaller communities of Bella Coola, Klemtu, or Bella Bella, reasonable access to services is an issue. While large programs such as Day Programs, or even Intensive Supervision and Support programs can be available in the Vancouver area, accessing these services outside Vancouver is a challenge for youth.

The participants felt that special attention needed to be paid to supporting delivery of services at a local level whether through exploration of partnership opportunities with other local service providers, (e.g. work with local A&D or family services providers to develop local day programs), delivery of services through new technology, use of satellite offices/itinerant workers, or ensuring youth from outlying areas can attend services in the City.

A second resourcing issue is whether adequate services exist within the region. In an era of fiscal restraint the participants recognized the need to become judicious and creative in delivery of services. Participants indicated the need for broad-based planning with partner agencies in recognition that there may be potential savings if partner agencies work together. There was also recognition that there may be a push towards a single large agency, but this needs to balance with the need for diverse responses to youth. As well, the concern was raised that given the pressure on all services, the discussion of 'redundancies' may be incorrect.

Also relating to the use of resources was the overwhelming message that youth residential services are woefully lacking in the region. Over and over again, lack of supportive residential services was viewed as a key impediment to good services to, and positive outcomes for, youth. Consistent with risk/need analysis of youth, lack of stable residence was a key barrier to establishing youth in

positive change and will continue to impact on the capacity of any other resource to positively impact the youth.

A key issue relating to residential services and all other youth justice services was the need to clarify the outcomes/objectives of these services. Historically youth justice services have not clearly articulated evaluable program objectives/outcomes. As a result it is difficult, if not impossible, to know if service expectations are met, nor whether services/interventions accomplish positive changes.

Participants felt that; consistent with best practices, service outcomes for youth justice programs must be articulated and that the programs must begin to differentiate between programs such as short-term residential beds, longer stay beds, supportive residential programs, etc. While they may all be 'residential services' what we intend the specific resource to accomplish must be considered when articulating 'success' and when we consider which youth are best placed in a certain resource (best practices re client matching). Such steps to articulate what youth justice services can accomplish should assist in the evaluation of program effectiveness, and result in more judicious use of resources.

Lastly regarding resources, the participants indicated a significant issue with transitional and aftercare services. Participants spoke to the need for longitudinal relationships with clients (best practice), and the need for youth to be supported when they leave a program and return to 'non-justice' services. The youth snapshot reinforced the importance of such long-term relationships. Also tied to transition issues was the need to rethink current ministry practice to limit assistance to youth by placing them on independent living prior to the youth being ready for that responsibility.

Under the current system youth are apparently supported only until their court order is complete. At that time all supports may be cut off for the youth and as a result the youth often backslides to old behaviours. Preferable would be a system that builds long-term supports for the youth. For example, build alternative natural supports so that when youth justice services are finished, there are still supports in place.

This relates to the relationship of the Youth Justice System to the broader youth serving systems. Discussions of the groups presented some interesting and divergent opinions on the roles of youth justice services. Some participants (most notably contracted agency reps or reps from community partners) felt that youth justice services should broaden its mandate to provide earlier intervention/prevention services. Others felt that the role of the Probation Officer should be revisited. Consistent with this was the view that services currently reserved for youth justice clients should be enhanced so that non-justice youth could also attend (e.g. specialty A&D or support resources). The alternative

perspective – that youth justice services should retain its specific separate mandate – was articulated primarily by current MCFD staff.

Interesting discussions about these options focused on the program limitations arising due to funding arrangements for youth justice programs. The group suggested there might be an opportunity to either explore partnering of funding through federal prevention initiatives, or else the youth justice funding formula should perhaps be revisited to seek options that would meet funding requirements and still allow creative use of resources.

Regardless of the differing opinions re youth justice mandates there were a number of areas recommended that could enhance relationships within the youth justice system, and with the broader service system. These primarily related to finding ways to deal with youth holistically rather than based on specific agency mandates. The groups felt that youth must be dealt with in the context of their families and that youth assets and community supports had to be developed within the community to support these youth. Stove piping of services had to be addressed. Participants expressed concern that the current regionalization may be creating a new system of regional 'stove pipes' that will also act as service barriers.

To help ameliorate the tendency toward 'mandate limitations' and service stove pipes, the groups frequently raised the need to develop co-location opportunities. While the vision of some participants focused on the co-location of individuals with different mandates, others pushed the boundaries in suggesting review of probation roles and the ability of some workers (probation officers and social workers) to fulfill similar roles.

At the least the participants indicated a desire to move towards more youth friendly environments that are no longer delivered in government offices, but instead are delivered either in a youth friendly structure, or via outreach to local recreation facilities, schools, and other service providers.

With regards to best practices, the lists of recommendations provided in the results section of the report provide a reasonable starting point for establishing parameters of expectations for programs.

Conclusions:

The one-day facilitated sessions provided interesting input regarding the organization and focus on youth justice services. It appears that the Regional Planning Committee/Regional Authority must determine the direction they wish youth justice services to go in terms of:

- Program evaluability;
- Mandate of youth justice services/ youth probation;
- Delivery of youth services including residential services and services to smaller communities;
- Delivery of residential services;
- Delivery of holistic services; and
- Delivery of programs using best practice guidelines.

The writer recommends that the Board consider:

1. Providing direction to management that they work with researchers/academics to establish realistic, achievable and measurable outcomes for all youth justice programs.

2. Supporting the delivery of holistic services through development of youth service sites that are multidisciplinary and that focus on client service delivery rather than service mandate.

3. Providing direction to management to explore alternative service delivery models that ensure equitable access to services in local communities.

4. Asking management to determine how and whether youth probation services/youth justice services could become involved in early intervention/prevention activities that could enhance youth outcomes in the community.

5. Emphasizing the importance of providing adequate residential supports to ensure youth are supported through their key transition periods.

6. Directing management to establish clearly articulated best practice expectations for youth justice programs. A working group of service providers and MCFD staff could undertake such a task.

7. Working with the Vancouver/Coastal Aboriginal Planning Committee to plan for the transfer to, and establishment of, the Aboriginal Authority's delivery of youth justice services.

Appendix A

How does the justice system work with other segments of the youth serving system when serving youth? What are its challenges?

What works well	Challenges
• Works well with guardianship/protection • Psych assessments, • Schools, • Information sharing with (contracted) partners has been a concern (at times) • Bringing the services to kids via one stop shopping, • Workers communicate with each other via ICM, • Parallel to health care, • Youth takes responsibility to make and go to appointments • Help with things like jobs, • In spite of forced clients, take on the youth agenda (forced clients is not necessary a barrier – youth have choice) • Including youth in planning – youth stories • Culturally appropriate service – transfer of Aboriginals to Aboriginal services • Facility needs to be youth friendly, set up well for service providers and not government • Transformative justice • Continuity of workers • Flexible in seeing kids – still open to seeing them even when service over • Relationship is positive so far and anticipated to improve over YCJA • Youth P.O.s utilize other services • P.O.s connect with youth • P.O.s look to others for input • There is easy communication with P.O.s • There is integration but more is needed	• Voluntary vs. involuntary • Agencies understanding the forced role of P.O. • Need to engage youth • D&A co-morbidity with other problems • Dual Diagnosis – can't separate A&D problem out • Too many changes in workers – need to follow along with kids • Some agencies e.g. school don't get the information they sometimes need • Confidentiality • Aboriginal females often want to work with those who know their backgrounds • What "lens" do we see through when working with youth • Our plan (service providers) vs. youth's plan • Aboriginal families to have choice • Difficulty in transitioning Y.J. youth from specialized school programs to mainstream schools • Information sharing should be coordinated through case manager for consistency and good practice • Regional biases based on availability of services within different communities • Youth involvement in case management process • Information sharing and planning around I/L can be a problem. • Access to youth in custody by other professionals • Staff attitudes in custody is not supportive of treatment • New communication issues under the YCJA • When should probation orders be shared and with who (and destruction

	of documents later)
	• Trust issues are still key between providers – where trust exists between providers, then information is shared. If no trust, then no sharing.
	• Need more community partnering
	• Need more specialized P.O.s
	• Need more community partnering
	• Need more specialized P.O.s
	• Need more coordination between P.O.s and S.W.s this requires strong team leadership, clarity of roles, and clear policies- collocation doesn't heal all
	• Inconsistency
	• Raised expectations of the system and parents that youth who go to a service will be 'fixed'
	• Needs to be clarity of roles and expectations between P.O.s etc.
	• Needs to be improved communication with schools
	• Narrow mandates of a service (stove piping) does not allow collaborative work
	• Need prevention/earlier intervention
	• Need to work with other authorities
	• Communication within region
	• Transitions from youth to adult need to be improved
	• We currently criminalize kids to get them help.

How well do youth justice services coordinate across youth justice services when serving youth and what are the challenges?

What works well	Challenges
• Wonderful programs • In small towns there are good relationships, communication, well co-ordinated • Case management plans are developed at the outset of ISSP • Safe school centres – educationally proactive programs in the schools	• Delays from incident to consequence • Need a person to coordinate between Crown, police, probation and victim services • Access to consequences needs to be timely • Lack of financial resources to comply with legislation – redefining community partnerships • Multiple points of access • Stove Piped programming • Different and conflicting philosophies between agencies, different understanding and different languages • Access to resources from rural areas – referral points from inside the community • Lack of communication through the criminal justice system as well as contractors • Lack of knowledge of referrals • Lack of cross-training of professions • Redefine youth justice system – police are 'dragged into the system' • No overarching plan or integrated planning process • Labeling youth through use of specialist programs results in youth being seen as difficult • Rules may be too restrictive • Prejudged referrals • Lack of services (governance can't use the services in current jurisdiction) i.e. Powell River) i.e. Sex Offender Counsellors for youth, no street outreach services • Within ISSP challenges include lack of communication between service providers • Lack of effective communication between schools and P.O.s • Lack of resources and incentives to youth on independent living • Under the new governance there will be less access to residential programs

	• If High risk youth are to stay in community (rather than custody) there need to be more programs • YJS not effectively working with community partners • Lack of prevention measures in place and no funding for them • Y-VIP and Y-SAM not available to non-adjudicated youth. • Lack of uniformity in measuring success • Differing focus of school (police) liaison officers and probation • Conflict between smaller (regional and local) needs and the need to provide some services based on a larger provincial picture • Municipality only taking kids from their region – therefore funding could be a problem • Regional differences in funding and policy impacts equitability of services.

Appendix B

Youth Risk factors – research has been able to substantiate these factors as related to criminal behaviour.

1. Anti-social attitudes, values, beliefs, rationalization, etc.
2. Social support for anti-social behaviour,
3. Fundamental personality/ temperamental supports such as weak self-control, aggression and adventurous pleasure seeking.
4. Early onset of anti-social behaviour
5. Problems at home
6. Problems at school/work
7. Lack of appropriate leisure activities
8. Substance abuse

Program Best Practices – research has shown effective programs show these qualities

1. Focus on addressing major risk factors
2. Clinically relevant and psychologically appropriate
3. Community based
4. Focus on high risk cases
5. Proper assessments
6. Focus on reducing major risks and assessing needs (criminogenic)
7. Client matching with program style mode and influence strategy
8. Match clients and workers
9. Include aftercare, structured follow-up, continuity of care and relapse prevention – monitor progress and intervene
10. Allow professional discretion
11. Service plan and modification

Program Integrity – research has shown sound programs have these qualities.

1. Based on sound theory
2. Proper selection of workers
3. Proper training of workers
4. Clinical supervision by trained supervisor
5. Program manuals
6. Monitor intermediate services process and client progress
7. Take action to maximize process and client progress
8. Adequate dosage, duration and intensity
9. Involves researcher in design, delivery and evaluation.

Appendix C

Extra Judicial Sanctions:

- The group indicated these services were not appropriate for high-risk youth and that client matching was not a significant issue for this service.
- Proper assessment must be completed on youth.
- Services must be delivered in a timely basis so that there are direct consequences for youth actions. (3)
- Consequences must be meaningful for youth.
- The system (e.g. the court) must be well informed of these sorts of interventions.
- There should be supportive counseling available to the youth and family.
- Programs should be individualized.
- Youth assets should be recognized and build upon.
- There should be timely enforcement of failures to comply.
- It should have a restorative component.

Day Programs:

- Assessments must be accurate,
- A complete service plan must be established,
- Youth will demonstrate antisocial behaviour and this must be addressed.
- There should be an attempt to separate youth by level of risk.
- Given the diversity of youth, multiple services must be delivered as part of the program. It must have the capacity to deliver different levels of service and to handle difficult youth - youth should not be kicked out of the program if they fail,
- Clients must be matched to their worker,
- Youth assets should be recognized and built upon.
- Services should build relationships and be based upon these.
- Services must be delivered in the community,
- Services must be meaningful to the youth.
- Staff must be trained and receive clinical supervision.
- The family must be involved in the program,
- Both individual and group programs should be available.
- A transitional process for youth to return to their community (mainstream) must be provided, recognizing cultural diversity and self-determination.
- Aftercare must be delivered.
- There must be equal access to day programs for youth from rural communities,
- Residential supports must be available for youth from rural areas or those needing additional support.

- Services could be delivered on an outreach basis where the youth are (for example in rural communities) rather than expecting youth to come to the program,

Probation services:

- Caseloads must be prioritized in relation to client risk so that more time is spent on higher risk cases.
- Focus probation work on relationships with clients,
- Long-term relationships with clients should be encouraged – that's what these kids need.
- Services should be delivered in safe settings,
- Community programs should be the emphasis.
- There must be a range of services available to meet the range of youth requiring services (e.g. school districts provide a range of services)
- Resources must be utilized appropriately. Referrals to services must be appropriate to the youth (rather than a shotgun approach) and must clearly reflect an understanding of the service mandate – these must be defined,
- Have specialized Youth P.O.s who deal with conduct disordered, sex offenders etc.
- There needs to be ongoing input from the field to policy makers regarding what is working or not, and review of community practice.

Residential programs:

- Clarify the objectives of various types of residential services, e.g. VRAP, versus long-term beds, versus respite, etc.
- Appropriate goals must be set for clients,
- Effective case management must occur, (1)
- Match the services to the youth and clarify for the home what we expect from the residential providers in terms of services, clinical support etc.
- There should be various models (individual care home or groups) and one type of service should not be expected to fit all youth.
- Longer-term support should be available to higher risk youth, allowing for the development of longer-term relationships.
- Services should be coordinated in the therapeutic framework.
- Provide staff resources to assist with linking youth to specialized resources.
- Youth should be referred appropriately,
- Homes/residential resources should have the capacity to deal with violence or youth with addictions (speaks to training of homes/care providers)
- Recognize that youth in group homes tend to get charged more as these settings tend to be more volatile.

- Determine whether youth justice beds should be held separate from child protection beds.

Community Work Service:

- Clarify the theory behind CWS. Why is it being done?
- Clarify the philosophy behind CWS. Is it reparative, punitive, positive?
- Clarify who should supervise these projects – there may be opportunities to build stronger links to the community.
- Select and train workers. Match kids to the work.
- Match workers culturally with the youth.
- The work must be meaningful - not make-work projects- there should be connection to the crime the youth committed.
- It should create community connections for the youth. Focus on community development and find meaningful resources such as community projects. In one jurisdiction, CWS and POs are out with the youth building houses for Habitat for Humanity.
- Look at reparation – victim CWS, though not necessarily the youth's specific victim.

Intensive Support and Supervision Programs:

- Programs should be based on sound theory and developmental models.
- There needs to be a clarification of the two roles of support and supervision and how those roles can work together. The emphasis should be on support. If staff don't agree with this focus, then the staff shouldn't work there.
- Should be focused on medium to high-risk youth.
- Staff must be trained to ensure skills and focus on support.
- Have diverse staff so language barriers/cultural awareness needs can be addressed,
- Build relationships with youth and family,
- Work with family skills to carry on after ISSP worker is gone.
- Provide adequate dosage and intensity based on youth – do what the youth needs.
- Have a community balance
- There must be a mechanism to assess and reassess the youth and to modify the service plan correspondingly.
- Where a breach is considered, the purpose of the breach must be clear and should relate to the youth's progress. Breaching for failure to keep a curfew may not be in the youth's best interest in situations where the youth is otherwise doing well.
- Deliver this service in smaller communities in a manner that is not totally focused on supervision.

- ISSP orders should allow youth to be out after curfew if in the company of their ISSP worker.
- The youth must have a stable residence to be able to participate in such a program and as part of the aftercare of the program otherwise there is the potential for the youth to fall back to previous behaviours and coping strategies. Youth should not simply be expected to be able to maintain themselves on underage IA, because of their multiple needs such as A&D, and Mental Health issues.